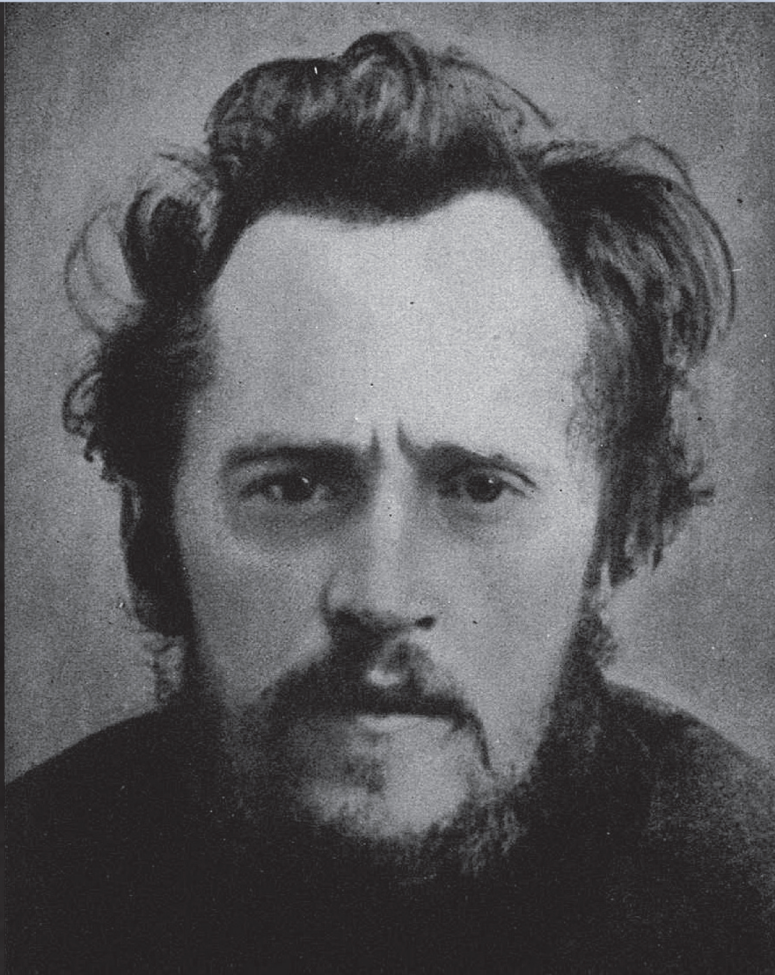


Studies in Critical Social Sciences

*Bartłomiej Blesznowski
and Cezary Rudnicki (Eds.)*

Metaphysics of Cooperation

*Edward Abramowski's Social Philosophy.
With a Selection of His Writings*



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Edited by

Bartłomiej Błesznowski and Cezary Rudnicki

Translated by

Michelle Granas



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Contents

Acknowledgments IX
Notes on Contributors X
A Notes from the Editors XIII
Bibliographical Note XV

Introduction 1
Bartłomiej Błesznowski, Cezary Rudnicki

PART I

Sociology

Sociology of Associations
Edward Abramowski between Socialism and Sociological Theory 23
Bartłomiej Błesznowski

Edward Abramowski's Writings

Issues of Socialism 59
I The Principle of Social Phenomenon 59
II The Sociological Issues 76

Individual Elements in Sociology 87

Socialism and the State 140
II The Doctrine of the Revolution 140

PART II

Ethics

The Metamorphoses of Subjectivity, the Transitions of the Social
The Ethics of Edward Abramowski 167
Cezary Rudnicki

Edward Abramowski's Writings

- Ethics and Revolution 189
- Friendship Unions I 223
- Friendship Unions II 229
- Experimental Metaphysics 231
- v Human Identity. The Ideal of Fraternity 231
- VI The Question of Will 237
- VII The Life Ethics of Friendship 241

PART III***Politics***

- Revolution from Below
*Edward Abramowski's Stateless Socialism and Possibility of Prefigurative
 Politics* 247
Kamil Piskala

Edward Abramowski's Writings

- Workers' Revolution 277
- Issues of Socialism 293
- IV Ethical Questions and the Politics of Revolution 293
- Socialism and the State 321
- v The Politics of Stateless Socialism 321
- A General Conspiracy Against the Government 340
- I We Declare That We Will Fight! 340
- II What Is Freedom? 345
- III How Should We Fight? 348
- IV How Should the Conspiracy Be Conducted 351
- v The Fight in *gmnias* 357
- VI Thus, Let Us Remember! 358

PART IV***Cooperativism***

The Free Creators of Life

The Cooperativism of Edward Abramowski 363

Aleksandra Bilewicz

Edward Abramowski's Writings

The Cooperative as a Matter of Liberating the Working People 391

Introduction 391

I The Economic Principle of Consumer Cooperative 392

II The Benefits of a Consumer Cooperative 397

III Consumer Cooperative Federations and Institutions 408

IV Consumer Cooperatives' Production 416

V People's Associations in Cooperation with Consumer
Cooperatives 426

VI The Ideas of Cooperativism 426

The Significance of Cooperativism for Democracy 440

I The Consumer Cooperative Places National Trade in the Hands of
the People 440

II The Consumer Cooperative Places Production and National
Resources in the Hands of the People 441

III The Consumer Cooperative Places Education and Health in the
Hands of the People 442

IV The Consumer Cooperative Teaches Self-government and
Freedom 443

Associations and Their Role 444

I On Associations in General (What Is an Association?) 444

II Forms of People's Associations 452

The Principle of the Cooperative Commonwealth 462

1 The Principle of the Cooperative Commonwealth 462

2 The Nature (Form) of the Cooperative Commonwealth 462

3 Governance in a Cooperative Commonwealth 462

4 The Law of the Cooperative Commonwealth 462

- 5 The Concept of Human and Civil Rights in a Cooperative Commonwealth 463
- 6 The Notion of Life in a Cooperative Commonwealth 463
- 7 The Antagonism of the State and the Cooperative Commonwealth 463
- 8 Socialism and the Cooperative Commonwealth 463
- 9 The Cooperative Commonwealth and Politics 463

PART V

Psychology

- The Subconscious Origin of Ethics
- Edward Abramowski's Psychological Theory* 467
- Lena Magnone*

Edward Abramowski's Writings

- The Sources of Subconsciousness and Its Manifestations 489
- I The Problem of Method 489
- X Aesthetic States 498
- XI Religious States 510
- XII Things Beyond Thought 531

- Afterword: All the Best! 541
- Andrzej Mencwel*

- Bibliography 549
- Index 570

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He is currently working on the issues of situated epistemologies and the political significance of pleasure. Author of a short popular philosophical essay *O przyjemności* (*On Pleasure*). He has published articles on Deleuze and Guattari, Foucault, Abramowski, Heidegger, Benjamin and Mumford. He has also edited a Polish edition of Deleuze's & Guattari's *Kafka. Toward a Minor Literature*. Co-founder of Machina Myśli (<http://machinamysli.org/>), a website to popularize philosophy.

A Note from the Editors

We have provided the texts by Edward Abramowski collected in this volume with footnotes containing short biographies of the people mentioned, and above all explaining terms proper to the Polish language (such as *gmina* or *folwark*) and less conventional or now somewhat forgotten terms (such as “agnosia” or “idioplasma”). We used asterisks for these footnotes, in contrast to the footnotes that derive from Abramowski himself, which are numbered. We marked our translation choices only rarely, placing the original Polish word in square brackets (e.g., [*pojęciowość*]). The same square brackets mark various interventions in the main text and footnotes, for instance, insertions or the omission of less important fragments. One of our translation decisions, however, requires a more extensive explanation.

The Polish word *wspólny* (formerly sometimes written *spólny*) corresponds to English words such as “common,” “joint,” “communal,” or “collective.” Sometimes we translated the word as “joint,” for example, in such compounds as “joint capital” (*fundusz wspólny*), “joint control” (*wspólna kontrola*), or “running a jointly owned factory” (*prowadzenie wspólnej fabryki*). The name of the cooperative journal for which Abramowski wrote, “*Spółem!*” (“*Jointly!*” literally “together”), also echoes this word. In many cases, however, Abramowski gives the word the nature of a philosophical-political concept in which property (*własność*) is contrasted with that which is held in common (*to, co wspólne*). In these cases, we decided to translate (*w*)*wspólny* as “common,” for instance, in such compounds as “common wealth” (*wspólne dobro*) or “common property” (*wspólna własność*). In this way, we wanted to include Abramowski’s thought in a contemporary discussion that stems from two traditions: one referring to the concept of “the commons” formulated by Elinor Ostrom; the other referring to the problem of “the Common” considered in Italian post-operatism. Our studies of Abramowski’s writings, which we have been conducting for many years independently of each other, and then the joint discussions related to the preparation of this volume, confirmed our belief that the Polish philosopher was a theorist of “the common” *avant la lettre*.

As in the thought of contemporary post-operatists, so for Abramowski, the common good is the basic mode of community reproduction, being the result of cooperation and mutual relations between the actors involved, which are not mediated by any external instance (e.g., a state, corporation, church, or nation). Thus understood, the common is the basis of Abramowski’s doctrine of stateless socialism. This concept directly connotes another idea often used by Abramowski, namely *braterstwo*, which we have chosen to translate as

“fraternity.” Fraternity, which is an essential social element in the soul of every person, introduces the metaphysics of the common into the area of ethics and psychology. Thus, it brings Abramowski’s philosophy closer to the latest philosophical theories emphasizing the “biopolitical” function of the common as a mode of reproducing social subjectivity.

Bibliographical Note

The source for this selection of Edward Abramowski's writings is the edition: E. Abramowski, *Pisma. Pierwsze zbiorowe wydanie dzieł treści filozoficznej i społecznej*, 4 vols., edited by K. Krzeczkowski, Warszawa 1924 (vol. 1–2), 1927 (vol. 3), 1928 (vol. 4), Nakładem Związku Polskich Stowarzyszeń Spożyców, except:

“Experimental Metaphysics” – the text of the Abramowski's lectures prepared by his student, Henryk Suchorzewski, National Library (Warszawa), Manuscript Repository Rps 11060 IV. Edition confronted with the volume: E. Abramowski, „Metafizyka doświadczalna,” in: idem, *Metafizyka doświadczalna i inne pisma*, selection and introduction by S. Borzym, Warszawa 1980, PWN, pp. 579–598.

„Cooperative as a Matter of Liberating the Working People” – E. Abramowski, *Kooperatywa jako sprawa wyzwolenia ludu pracującego*, Warszawa 1912, Drukarnia L. Bogusławskiego.

“The Sources of Subconsciousness and Its Manifestations” – E. Abramowski, *Źródła podświadomości i jej przejawy (Psychologia postrzeżenia i stanów bezimiennych)*, Warszawa 1914, Drukarnia Polska.

Introduction

Bartłomiej Błesznowski, Cezary Rudnicki

Edward Abramowski's life reflected a tension between scientific rigor and freedom of imagination, between sociological theory and political ideology, between sober planning and utopianism. While his life story undoubtedly belonged to the era of the "long nineteenth century," his thoughts anticipated ideas and issues that would shape the twentieth century: the relationship between the state and society, the beginning of independent "civil society" institutions, a critique of the omnipotence of the revolutionary state (constituting an ominous prediction of Bolshevism), psychological experiments that were to form the basis of empirical research on the phenomena of the subconscious, and innovative concepts about memory that would return with cognitive science at the turn of the millennium. Though multi-faceted, Abramowski's life was typical of a certain type of socially engaged Polish intellectual, whose worldview Andrzej Mencwel once described as "social radicalism,"¹ that is, a worldview strongly emphasizing the dignity of the individual within the community and exalting the model of being an activist fighting at the foundations of society—a silent hero and ethical reformer who works hand-in-hand with the worker or peasant.

The Polish intelligentsia of that period was permeated with political ideas and sociological theories learned abroad (mainly in the context of political emigration). They thus believed that the human individual is a reflection of the social world while at the same time being its basic atom and the beginning of its transformation. The individual's needs are satisfied only by real participation in socio-economic relations. Needs are not satisfied in a society that alienates labor from its product, the citizen from the government, and turns the consumer into a mindless market object. Abramowski's philosophy, which was sensitive to the "social question," arose in connection with this conviction.

Born on August 17, 1868, Abramowski was indubitably a child of the period following the January Uprising. The point here, of course, is that he was born shortly after the defeat of the military and political uprising of 1863–1864 in the territories of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania, which was then subject to the Russian Empire. This uprising was of fundamental importance for

1 A. Mencwel, *Etos lewicy. Esej o narodzinach kulturalizmu polskiego*, Warszawa 2009, Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej.

the shaping of social and economic relations in Russian Poland:² the imperial authorities de facto paralyzed any manifestations of grassroots self-organization, banned all political groups, subjugated the economy to the Kingdom of Russia, and made social activity very burdensome—all formal matters were dealt with at the central level in St. Petersburg, and any clandestine organizational activity was strictly forbidden.³ The period after the uprising, however, was also a time of the country's "accelerated modernization," with the construction of large industrial centers such as Łódź and the Dąbrowskie Basin, the development of the proletarian class, and the enfranchisement of the peasantry, from whom the yoke of serfdom—which had kept the country in perpetual "feudal underdevelopment"—had been lifted. The result of these two processes was the awakening of a mass political identity in individual social groups (including modern nationalism and socialism).⁴ Among the political and intellectual elites (the nobility, part of the bourgeoisie, and the intelligentsia deriving from these groups), awareness of the national defeat combined with ideologies flowing at the time from the West: especially socialism; the latest trends in science, sociology, and psychology; and a specific version of "social radicalism," in which the struggle for national liberation did not conflict with socialist postulates—as was clearly visible, for example, during the events of the workers' revolution in 1905, when social slogans were accompanied by calls for the restoration of Polish statehood.⁵

The Abramowski manor house in Stefanin in the Kiev governorate, where little Edward was born, was filled with the "post-uprising" spirit, above all because the brothers of both his parents had participated in the battles of 1863–1864. His father, Józef Edward Abramowski, the owner of the property and a successful lawyer, had various scientific interests (especially a passion for chemistry, which he pursued in his home laboratory) and broad political horizons. Therefore, he accustomed his son, from early childhood, to political questions, international issues, and discussions.

After the death of his mother in 1878, Edward moved to Warsaw with his father and grandmother. It is worth emphasizing that at the time young Edward

2 M. Augustyniak, *Myśl społeczno-filozoficzna Edwarda Abramowskiego*, Olsztyn 2006, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warmińsko-Mazurskiego, p. 14.

3 S. Wojciechowski, *Historia spółdzielczości polskiej do roku 1914*, Warszawa 1939, Nakładem Spółdzielczego Instytutu Naukowego, p. 235.

4 W. Marzec, *Rising Subjects. The 1905 Revolution and the Origins of Modern Polish Politics*, Pittsburgh 2020, University of Pittsburgh Press.

5 F. Tych, "Rewolucja 1905–1907 i dążenia niepodległościowe Polaków," in: *Idea niepodległości i suwerenności narodowej w polskiej myśli politycznej XIX i XX wieku*, edited by J. Maternicki, Warszawa 1989, Centralny Ośrodek Metodyczny Studiów Nauk Politycznych.

did not attend public school. His father believed that the school system, which was subordinated to the partitioning authorities, was not suited to the education of his offspring, and also that private instruction provided much greater intellectual independence. Thus, Edward had as teachers, among others, Maria Konopnicka, a poet whose emancipated lifestyle and socialist views certainly marked him, and Konrad Prószyński (aka “Promyk”), an educational activist, supporter of national solidarity, and co-founder of the conspiratorial Society of National Education. Zygmunt Pietkiewicz, who was later Abramowski’s comrade in the Workers’ Union, also appeared in his circle then. Although the teenage Edward had already read the works of Western scholars, including Darwin, Spencer, Taine, and above all Marx, he was pushed toward socialism by Konopnicka—thanks to whom he met the brothers Józef and Kazimierz Pławiński, who had a significant place in the socialist movement of the time—and by Prószyński and activists of the first Polish workers’ party, Proletariat, including Maria Bohuszewiczówna and Michał Manciewicz.

Although he could not be accepted into the party due to his young age, he was nevertheless fascinated by the life of underground socialist activists, grassroots educational activity, and the organization of self-help. As a fifteen-year-old, he wrote his first published texts for the journal *Zorza*; they were on encouraging the idea of alcohol-free inns, which would function to spread folk education and shape self-help attitudes.⁶ Already in these early texts the concept of “fraternity”—which was later so important to him—appeared; it is the basic rule of the code of ethics he shaped.

In 1885, Abramowski went to study in Kraków, which at the time was within Galicia, part of the Habsburg Empire, but he did not stay long. As a socialist activist, he drew the attention of the local police and had to go hurriedly abroad. He went to Switzerland, where students from Eastern Europe encountered no barriers in access to education, and began studies at the University of Geneva. The city was then a Mecca for political refugees, dissidents, freethinkers, and subversives,⁷ and at the same time one of the leading research centers in Europe, where Abramowski could, on the one hand, expand his studies (in philosophy, economic history, and the exact sciences) and make contacts with socialist activists in exile, and on the other hand, define his own academic interests, which were sociology and clinical psychology. Abramowski joined in the social and political life of socialist youth. His apartment became a regular

6 The titles were “Pogadanki o rzeczach pożytecznych,” *Zorza* 1883, nr 33, 36, 37, 41, 42, 44, 47; “Pogadanki z gospodarstwa społecznego,” *Zorza* 1884, nos. 6, 7, 8.

7 F. Hillis, *Utopia’s Discontents: Russian Émigrés and the Quest for Freedom, 1830s–1930s*, New York 2021, Oxford University Press, pp. 38–40.

meeting place for young revolutionaries, and this led to the establishment of the socialist Polish Youth Association Abroad, and of a publishing house, the Polish Worker's Library, which published propaganda brochures for the masses.⁸

During trips to Geneva, and later Paris and Brussels, Abramowski was influenced by ideas from francophone lands; he thus connected Polish socialism with the voluntarist concepts of Henri Bergson and Alfred Fouillée.⁹ Abramowski also attended the lectures of Jean-Jacques Gourd, a professor at the University of Geneva. He adapted Gourd's *Le phénomène: esquisse de philosophie generale*, published in 1883, to sociological research; and the work shaped his later phenomenalist position.

After the arrests that occurred in 1889 in the workers' movement in the Kingdom of Poland, he returned to Warsaw to organize socialist groups anew in coordination with émigré circles. In Warsaw, he became involved in the activities of the so-called Second Proletariat, along with Marcin Kasprzak, who was later among Rosa Luxemburg's collaborators and one of the most important figures in the Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania. The main idea of Abramowski's program was mass work, self-help, and the building of grassroots structures in which the workers could govern themselves; but this program met with resistance from radical party members who were promoting subversive and terrorist methods.¹⁰

Abramowski believed that the party's task was not only to fight for the future social system, but also to win over the workers to the cause of Poland's regaining statehood, because only an independent Poland would enable the implementation of a just system and a people's democracy. On leaving the Second Proletariat along with other activists (including his wife, Stanisława Motz-Abramowska), he founded a group whose aim was to promote the ideals rejected by the Proletariat. Although the Workers' Union existed for less than two years, it became the first laboratory for Abramowski's ideas, creating independent workers' structures, promoting various forms of direct socialism, and establishing Workers' Education Clubs and Resistance Banks, whose operation went beyond simple party divisions.

8 Including the brochures *Dzień roboczy* (*The Working Day*) and *Revolucja robotnicza* (*The Workers' Revolution*).

9 A. Dziedzic, *Antropologia filozoficzna Edwarda Abramowskiego*, Warszawa 2010, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, pp. 40–42.

10 K. Krzeczkowski, *Dzieje życia i twórczości Edwarda Abramowskiego*, Warszawa 1933, Wydawnictwo Spółdzielczego Instytutu Naukowego, p. 24.

During this period, Abramowski was collaborating with *Tygodnik Powszechny*, which was the first legally operating socialist periodical in the Kingdom of Poland and was edited by Ludwik Krzywicki, a well-known Marxist sociologist. Abramowski also published a number of other texts, including *Tribal Societies*, an extremely popular pamphlet in which he argued that communism was the most primal form of human coexistence. He wrote a historical and economic study, *Feudalism*, for publication and began preparations for another: *Capitalism*. However, these works were published only after his death.¹¹

The year 1892 was not kind to Abramowski: in the spring his wife gave birth to a daughter, but both wife and daughter died soon after. In despair, Abramowski suffered a nervous breakdown, from which he spent years recovering. At the same time, repressions by the tsarist police intensified, which finally put an end to the activities of the Union. Abramowski, mentally exhausted, suffering from tuberculosis, and threatened with arrest, escaped again to Geneva, then travelled to France, where on November 17–23, 1892, he actively participated in a congress of Polish socialists, which gave rise to the Polish Socialist Party (PPS). He authored a program for the emerging party in which he emphasized the need for the Polish workers' movement to cooperate with similar movements in the West and in Russia. He also stressed the importance of educational and self-organizing activities for workers. Abramowski was elected to the board of the Foreign Union of Polish Socialists, but he had to leave Paris quickly as a result of repression by the French authorities, who were acting under pressure from Russia.

After a short stay in London, he moved again to Zurich, where he worked on behalf of the party for almost a year, writing, *inter alia*, articles and appeals for *Przedświt*, the press organ of the PPS. In Switzerland, however, he gradually moved away from revolutionary activity, seeing no place for himself in the increasingly polarized workers' movement. The 1890s saw ever fiercer dissension between the PPS and Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland. The conflict manifested itself both in open polemics and in behind-the-scenes informing and intrigues.

Abramowski never regained his health, and thus he redirected his limited strength to scientific activity. A period of in-depth sociological studies resulted in the publication of a number of works presenting "sociological phenomenalism," a theoretical concept which derived social phenomena from individual

11 E. Abramowski, "Feodalizm," "Społeczeństwo feodalne," "Kapitalizm," in: Idem, *Pisma. Pierwsze zbiorowe wydanie dzieł treści filozoficznej i społecznej*, vol. 3, Warszawa 1927, Nakładem Związku Spółdzielni Spółzyców RP.

human acts, and perceived individuals not as products of laws governing the social structure but as causative actors who transform the conditions in which they are raised. Abramowski published his first works on sociological theory in French, as *Les bases psychologiques de la sociologie* (1897) and *Le matérialisme historique et le principe du phénomène social* (1898).

Abramowski tried to show that if individuals are the factual subjects of the social process, social transformations yet occur in essence in the cognitive sphere and have an ethical dimension. Thus, Abramowski's departure from active involvement in the party's activities was accompanied by a departure from the classical postulates of Marxism, which in the works of many theorists relegated the individual to the role of an ignorant historical structural factor. Abramowski contrasted the determinism of historical materialism with the materialism of subjective practices and was thereby able to reformulate the very goal of socialist politics: it was supposed to be an "ethical revolution," constituting a transformation of "human consciences."

In the years 1893–1899, Abramowski wrote a series of works in which he developed a theory of cognition and social psychology, in connection with a critique of the socialism of the Second International: these works include *Theory of Mental Entities* (1899), *What is Art?* (1898), *Individual Elements in Sociology* (1899), *Issues of Socialism* (1899), and *Socialism and the State* (1904). In the latter two especially, Abramowski expounded his doctrine of "stateless socialism," which was a proposal to base the action of the labor and agrarian movement not on top-down state reforms conducted by legislative or revolutionary means, but on grassroots associations acting to oust the state and market from social and economic life. His postulates of boycotting the state and building associational socialism became the basis for his next stage of activity, in which, inspired by the ideas of Charles Gide and by the Nîmes school, whose achievements he had studied during his trip to France, he developed his own idea of what associational socialism should be.

After returning to Warsaw in 1897, Abramowski became involved in a number of organizational undertakings implementing the idea of stateless socialism. As his student and biographer Konstanty Krzeczkowski wrote, "He left as an orthodox Marxist and party activist; he came back with a new theory of stateless socialism—his own, apolitical; he came back as a utopian supporter of the immediate implementation of the ideals of communism and statelessness, as an anarchist, though perhaps he did not want to acknowledge it to himself."¹² Regardless of whether Abramowski would have considered himself

12 K. Krzeczkowski, "Edward Abramowski 1868–1918," in: E. Abramowski, *Pisma*, vol. 1, Warszawa 1924, Nakład Związku Polskich Stowarzyszeń Spółzyców, p. LXXXIX.

an anarchist, it is indubitable that both Pyotr Kropotkin's ideas of collectivist anarchism and the anarchist themes of Leo Tolstoy's work, along with the anarcho-syndicalist traditions of association that he had encountered in Belgium or France, left a deep mark on his thinking. A very important element, however, was his continuation of the ethical socialism outlined earlier. Its similarities to certain ideas of the Russian Narodnik socialists and anarchists of the late nineteenth century are striking, especially the likeness to the ideas of the above-mentioned Kropotkin and also of Pyotr Lavrov, who, like Abramowski, emphasized the direct relationship between social rights and free ethical acts of the individual. The culminating idea was social solidarity, which would combine the needs of the individual with social forms of organization.

Until the outbreak of the Workers' Revolution in the Kingdom of Poland, Abramowski was particularly deeply engaged in organizing a network of associations of various clubs: the Educational Club, which operated on behalf of students and, *inter alia* organized school strikes against the Russian Empire,¹³ and in which, among others, the famous Polish pedagogue Helena Radlińska was actively involved; the Assessment Club, which promoted politically and socially engaged reading; and above all, the Ethics Club, which aimed to develop the self-help capacities and ethical sensitivity of the participants. Although the clubs were assumed to have a supra-class character, in practice they were mainly attended by young people associated with the socialist and independence movement, especially students. Abramowski also developed organizations which he called "communes," whose purpose was to put the ideas of solidarity, self-help, and fraternity into practice. These communes, which he founded in Geneva, Warsaw, and Zakopane (where he frequently spent time due to his tuberculosis), were loose groups with a fairly flexible structure, permeated with a common spirit.

Maria Dąbrowska, who later became a famous writer and who was a proponent of cooperativism, recalled that members of these organizations called Abramowski a "sorcerer" and had an almost pious attitude to their mentor.¹⁴ Some members of the workers' movement, however, saw a dangerous kind of trickery in Abramowski's activities, or at best a kind of aestheticism. Ludwik Kulczycki, a hardliner in the PPS and supporter of terrorist methods in the fight for socialism, subjected Abramowski's article *Ethics and Revolution* in *Przedświt* to severe criticism in the same journal. However, there were also those who saw in Abramowski's ideas true socialism, taking people as they are

13 M. Augustyniak, *Myśl społeczno-filozoficzna Edwarda Abramowskiego*, op. cit., p. 30.

14 M. Dąbrowska, *Życie i dzieło Edwarda Abramowskiego*, Łódź 2014, Redakcja pisma „Nowy obywatel,” p. 17.

but giving them the tools to change their fate and transform social consciousness through joint work. Stanisław Wojciechowski, a friend and colleague of Abramowski's from the 1880s who later became president of the Republic of Poland (1922–1926), wrote to the London headquarters of the party: "The ethicists do us no harm and much of their 'ethics' is even helpful, especially when the workers come to us in the hope of immediately breaking out on top or filling their stomach."¹⁵ Abramowski's ideas were far from the promise of a quick transformation of social life by political and military means. Instead, he envisioned the "moral revolution" as a long-term process in which all members of society engage in cooperation, independent of superior institutions, in order to build a new world in the here and now.

A similar role was to be played by "Friendship Unions," which he began to establish at the end of the 1910s and which he hoped would increase the social energy of the workers' and peasants' cooperative movement in the Kingdom of Poland. The tasks of the unions were therefore similar to the clubs and communes established earlier but operated within the larger cooperatives, in hopes of creating a "moral assembly point at which a human's spiritual rebirth takes place, where the true cooperativist, a new human being, is educated."¹⁶ The idea was to maintain the spirit of socialization without losing the economic efficiency of the cooperatives.

Despite the allegations of "utopianism" voiced by many radical members of the workers' movement at the time, it emerged in retrospect that the "ethics clubs" and "friendship unions" had a profound influence on the formation of the modern political narrative in Poland and became essential to the idea of grassroots social and economic redevelopment in the 1920s and 1930s. Some commentators even claim that when the PPS collapsed after the Revolution of 1905 in the territory of the Kingdom of Poland, such clubs and unions constituted the territory's largest mass workers' organization. Approximately seventy such organizations were established¹⁷ and became transmitters of Abramowski's ideas among the "radical intelligentsia" and the proletariat. Self-education centers had a huge impact on the formation of the civic ethos in interwar Poland. Abramowski's former collaborators and students implemented his ideas by operating in the expanding "Społem" association, which in the 1930s had acquired almost half a million members.¹⁸

15 S. Wojciechowski, *Historia spółdzielczości polskiej do roku 1914*, op. cit., p. 182–183.

16 E. Abramowski, Friendship Unions I, in: this volume, p. 225.

17 B. Urbanowski, *Kierunki poszukiwań. Szkice o polskich socjalistach*, Warszawa 1982, Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza.

18 S. Żerkowski, *Spółdzielczość spożywców w Polsce 1918–1939*, Warszawa 1961, Zakład Wydawniczy CRS, p. 80.

In 1905, a wave of strikes, followed by manifestations of a revolutionary nature, shocked Russia and the Kingdom of Poland. While Abramowski was at the time distanced from the core of the Polish workers' movement, the wave of revolutionary events made a great impression on him; and he started intense organizational activity again, co-creating the Polish People's Union,¹⁹ a left-wing peasant entity. Established under the leadership of Stefan Julian Brzeziński in 1904, it was the first political organization of the masses in the Kingdom of Poland. Although at the beginning, Abramowski was elected to the main committee of the Union and wrote its draft program, discrepancies soon emerged between the *realpolitik* of the Union's leaders. Abramowski's ideas proposed boycotting the state and eliminating tsarist administrations and institutions by replacing them with peasant self-government bodies. Although the Union's leaders were themselves set on education and the development of associations aimed at establishing an agrarian republic in the future independent Polish state, they considered Abramowski's ideas to be overly utopian and optimistic.

The People's Union was quickly broken up by the police, and thereafter Abramowski gave his energy to promoting cooperativism, which for years he had viewed as the implementation of his own concept of stateless socialism. He wrote then two pamphlets addressed to workers and peasants: *Our Policy* and *A General Conspiracy against the Government*.²⁰ At the time, he also collaborated with the Association of Social Self-Help Societies, an organization whose aim was to promote all forms of education and self-government, fuel the development of the economy, and encourage cooperatives. Especially in the latter question, Abramowski's involvement turned out to be invaluable. Within the Union, he co-founded the Cooperativists' Society, which gained independence after the collapse of the Union in 1907 and gave rise to the Union of Consumer Cooperatives, popularly known as "Społem." The Society published a journal devoted to the ideas and practice of cooperatives and also created a system of training and courses to help expand the then-fragile cooperative sector in the Kingdom of Poland.²¹ Abramowski wrote a number of articles for *Spotem*, including *The Social Ideas of Cooperativism* (1907), and

19 R. E. Blobaum, *Rewolucja. Russian Poland, 1904–1907*, Ithaca and London 1995, Cornell University Press, p. 213.

20 Z. Chyra-Rolicz, "Wpływ rewolucji 1905 roku na rozwój spółdzielczości w Królestwie Polskim," in: *Dziedzictwo rewolucji 1905–1907*, edited by A. Żarnowska, Warszawa–Radom: 2007, Muzeum Niepodległości, Radomskie Towarzystwo Naukowe, p. 208.

21 A. Bilewicz, *Spotem 1906–1939: Idea, ludzie, organizacja*, vol. 1, Warszawa 2017, Oficyna Naukowa, p. 42.

a series of essays published under the joint title *The Cooperative as a Matter of the Liberation of the Working People* (1912).

Acting within the framework of the society, Stanisław Wojciechowski undertook to convert Abramowski's cooperative ideas into practice. As he recalled, "Abramowski was unpredictable in his organizational ideas,"²² so the idea of a cooperative republic had to be adapted to the restricted size of the movement in Poland. "Społem" was established in 1908, and the number of its cooperatives increased from 157 in 1910 to 274 in 1913.²³

Many activists and ideologists associated with the PPS viewed the 1905 revolution not solely as a workers' uprising but also as an opportunity for Poles to reclaim an independent state. Abramowski also linked his plan for social modernization through cooperatives to national revival. A network of cooperatives, ethical unions, and associations was to run through the future Polish state. The project of a "cooperative commonwealth" was an attempt to implement modernity "through the back door" as it were. Given that the Polish lands had a backward, feudal-capitalist economy on the fringes of the Russian empire, with a power structure that excluded any self-government or representation, Abramowski tried to use cooperatives to give a voice to the masses of the people who were subjected to double oppression (both from their own bourgeois and aristocratic elites and from the bureaucratic-military apparatus of the empire).

Starting from the 1890s, Abramowski was engaged in psychological research in parallel to his political and social activities. This research involved not only in-depth theoretical studies, but also psychological experiments, which he conducted in the modern laboratories of Théodore Flournoy and Édouard Claparède in Geneva, and of Alexandre Herzen, son of the famous Russian writer and socialist activist, in Lausanne.²⁴ There, he conducted preparatory studies for research on attention and memory issues. He learned the methods of psychometry and galvanometry, which he later used to study the physiological symptoms of spiritual experiences. After returning to Poland, Abramowski continued his psychological work, gathering around him a circle of collaborators, including Adam Cygielstrejch (1886–1935) and Józefa Kodusowa (1865–1940). In 1910, he established the Psychological Institute, an independent research body dealing with experimental research on subconscious processes, and equipped the first psychology laboratory in Warsaw (the third within the territory of the former Poland) on the model of those he had known in Switzerland. Despite

22 S. Wojciechowski, *Moje wspomnienia*, vol. 1, Warszawa 2017, Muzeum Historii Polski, p. 86.

23 Idem, *Historia spółdzielczości polskiej do roku 1914*, op. cit., 250.

24 K. Krzeczowski, *Dzieje życia i twórczości Edwarda Abramowskiego*, op. cit., p. 45.

the slim budget at its disposal, the center became a pioneering institution in tsarist Poland. Works by members of Abramowski's team were printed, among other places, in *Przegląd filozoficzny* (*Philosophy Review*) and *Sphinx*, and later in the periodical *Prace z psychologii doświadczalnej* (*Papers on Experimental Psychology*) which Abramowski had founded (only three volumes were published before his death). Abramowski himself published his works in Polish journals, although some were first printed in the professional Francophone press, including in the Brussels *Revue psychologique*, the Geneva *Archive de la psychologie*, and the Parisian *Journal de psychologie normale et pathologique*. Two collections of psychology writings by Abramowski, *L'analyse physiologique de la perception* (1911) and *Le subconscient normal: nouvelles recherches experimentales* (1914), were also published in Paris.

During this period, Abramowski was primarily interested in empirical research on “nameless states,” that is, those that do not have an intellectual elaboration mediated in consciousness, or culturally created cognitive categories, yet nevertheless constitute a “movement of the will” and shape the deepest layers of the subject's identity. Like many of the pioneers of psychology at the time, he combined the most modern techniques of laboratory research with an interest in parapsychology, spiritism, and telepathy, which he considered to be phenomena not so much “paranormal” as resulting from not yet fully explored, powerful cognitive powers of the human mind. As part of the institute he founded, he ran the Metempsychic Section. The three volumes of *Experimental Research on Memory* (1910–1912) and *Sources of the Subconscious and Its Manifestations: The Psychology of Perception and Nameless States* (1914), a fragment of which we are publishing in this volume, were the crowning achievement of Abramowski's psychological work.

In November 1915, Abramowski took over the first department of psychology in Poland, at the University of Warsaw, which had been reborn during the German occupation of Warsaw. With the organization of a psychology seminar, he initiated the institutionalization of psychology studies at this university. Despite his deteriorating health, he gave two enormously popular lectures there: one on general psychology, the other on “The Study of Individual Types.” He also continued his subsequent research and publications. Konstanty Krzeczkowski recalled his mentor's last lectures:

[H]is lectures had an extraordinary charm and attraction. Everything in them was unknown and new, revelatory, because when he illuminated even the most banal and well-known theories, they took on new shapes. [...] Whoever saw Abramowski at the lectern will never forget his lofty forehead, uncommon pale visage and weary look, his drinking black

coffee, and lecturing with difficulty at first, stammering and repeating himself, until he gradually began to catch fire, to warm up, and then he fascinated everyone with the ease and fluency of his pronunciation, his choice of arguments, his unusual perspectives. He dazzled everyone with his knowledge and the structure of his thoughts, with their strange linkage to an infinitely great system. You could see the intense work of mind and will over his weak bodily nature. He then enthralled everyone, captivated them and bore them away with him.²⁵

In early 1917, with the last of his strength, he conducted a series of open lectures in the hall of the J. Milkowski Higher Pedagogical Courses. These lectures constituted a certain synthesis of his philosophy, political views, and psychological research. They were written down by one of the listeners, and later became a kind of philosophical testament of the dying thinker. He died on June 21, 1918 after a long and serious illness.

• • •

We have prepared a selection of Edward Abramowski's writings in order to present to English-language readers the most important elements of this extremely original thinker's output. The volume is divided into five sections covering the most important thematic fields of his work: "Sociology," "Ethics," "Politics," "Cooperativism," and "Psychology." We were inevitably obliged to omit texts on issues that Abramowski dealt with only marginally, for instance, the essay *What is Art?* (in response to Tolstoy's essay with the same name), which is nevertheless an unusually interesting work. We have preceded each of the five sections with a research article prepared by a specialist in the field, who discusses the philosopher's theses in depth. Although all the brochure texts, essays, lectures, and book excerpts included in this volume were written at the turn of the nineteenth to twentieth centuries, we wanted to show that Abramowski was a thinker of the most contemporary kind. Thus, as far as possible, the authors of the articles have applied Abramowski's theoretical ideas to discussions that only took shape decades after his death.

In the first of these texts, for the "Sociology" section, Bartłomiej Blesznowski presents Abramowski's social theory as belonging to an alternative line of development of the social sciences. According to the division introduced by Bruno Latour, Abramowski would fit not so much in the "sociology of the

²⁵ Ibidem, p. 59.

social” trend, but rather in the “sociology of association.” Abramowski placed acting, causative individuals, and the relations between them at the core of his social theory. He was interested in society not as a ready entity, abstract structure, or set of absolute laws, but as a bundle of dynamic processes of social transformation. The processes are not only “objective” and economic (as orthodox Marxism, with which Abramowski argued, would have it), but also “volitional” or “conscious.” Abramowski tried to return the category of individual consciousness to the social sciences. In contrast to approaches depicting the actions of human individuals as fully determined by social structures, he emphasized the ethical and pragmatic nature of these actions. His sociological position is an extension of his psychological theses: society, he argued, has no reality independent of the human self.

This does not mean, however, that Abramowski took the position that there was some kind of social atomism. On the contrary, he argued that the human self is inherently socialized in a dual sense. On the one hand, it is in the self that what is social is born: the individual objectifies his interior by creating certain social facts, for instance, institutions. On the other hand, the same individual, in turning toward his inner self (by directing attention to those facts in the act of apperception), understands them through categories that are constructed in the intersubjective cognitive process, and thus depend on his life environment. In other words, every social phenomenon has—according to Abramowski—a double, objective and mental nature: it is the internalization of institutions and other supra-individual facts, and the externalization of properties of the ego itself. Such an approach to the matter translates in sociology into a methodological directive that requires the examination of both institutions and individual actions, or rather, as Blesznowski expresses it, the mutual relation between individual actions and collective conditions in the practice of a social entity. Abramowski rejected not only the attempt to reduce primary socialization either to the psychology of individuals, understood as self-contained beings, or to the laws governing the social organism. He also rejected the very division of social reality into micro and macro levels and constructed his social theory (and the underlying psychology) in such a way as to overcome the classical antinomies of sociology. To this end, he devised a series of specific concepts, such as the above-mentioned notion of an objective and mental social phenomenon, and the (subjective-objective) concept of a need.

In Abramowski’s sociology, the assumption of the causative nature of human individuals is not purely theoretical. If the task of social science is to track acting subjects and the relations between them, then it turns out to be an applied science as well: an eminently political science. Following Abramowski, Blesznowski tries to show the strong feedback relationship between social

theory and political activity. In its academic form, sociology is usually associated with the dominant political power: sociology legitimizes that power and takes away the agency of living people, proposing instead its own ideas and models to the authorities, thanks to which the sociological dream of a well-ordered world can come true. Abramowski contrasts this form of social theory with a theory which Błesznowski describes—in reference to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari—as a “minor science.” This minor sociology, which examines popular institutions and social ties that are established without the mediation of macrostructures (such as the state or the market), entails involvement in a completely different kind of politics: in socialist and perhaps even anarchist politics (because Abramowski defined his socialism as stateless). Thus, Abramowski constructed his social theory in such a way that it immediately and necessarily implies a commitment to changing the social system.

This change, however, should not be based, Abramowski argues, on a political revolution (in the ordinary sense, including, for example, a coup d'état), but on a moral revolution. The latter, as Cezary Rudnicki shows in his article on the ethical aspects of Abramowski's thought, does not, however, consist in any modification of the moral law or axiological system in force in a given society, but in an independent transformation of the form of subjectivity (or form-of-life) by the individuals who constitute that society. Abramowski's ethical writings reveal their full potential only when read through the prism of a conceptual grid which has developed in the discussions of thinkers ranging from Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze to Peter Sloterdijk and Giorgio Agamben. For if Abramowski the sociologist shows that it is in the human “soul” (subject) that “the social” is born, then Abramowski the ethicist proves that this “soul” does not have a single form, determined by God or Nature, but is shaped by multiple historical processes, including processes in which the individual, “equipped” with this “soul,” is the causative factor.

Rudnicki focuses on discussing Abramowski's theory of the relationship between the social form and the form of human subjectivity, distinguishing between the static and dynamic aspect of this relationship. The first is when society is in a state of (temporary) equilibrium: then there is agreement between the two, and the moral obligations accepted by the individual coincide with the laws of that society. For example, in such a situation, marital fidelity or respect for private property are at once part of the general legal framework and a moral need of individual persons. However, when certain factors (i.e., a change of living conditions) throws society out of balance, the relationship between the social form and the subjective form becomes dynamic, and a process leading to the transformation of both these forms is launched. Rudnicki explains this (double) morphogenesis using an example from Abramowski's

historical studies of the society of late antiquity. Abramowski preceded the formulation of his ethical theory with in-depth research on pre-state communities, the Greek polis, the Roman empire, feudalism, and capitalism—each time trying to extract those factors that were responsible for the transition from one system to another.

Without going into detail here, it should be said that Abramowski distinguishes three phases in the process of social change: economic, ethical, and legal and political. When reconstructing each of them, he first asks about its nature, that is, to what extent the factors related to it are revolutionary and to what extent they are conservative. As may be easily surmised, he assigned a particularly important role to the ethical phase, which consists mainly of promoting a new ideology and creating specific spaces (“institutions”) in which individuals can practice their new subjective form. These findings came to be key in Abramowski’s proposed strategy for fighting the all-embracing state apparatus and the capitalist economy—a strategy largely based on the grass-roots creation of associations; cooperatives; and finally, Friendship Unions. For while the reader will easily notice that Abramowski’s entire theoretical project is permeated with his political commitment, the soil from which his political thinking grows is a specific concept of ethics, as Rudnicki argues.

Inevitably, the separation of the “Ethics” and “Politics” sections was to some extent an artificial procedure. Abramowski’s writing differs rather in the distribution of accents than in a delimitation of perspectives. Kamil Piskała demonstrates this well in his article by combining a discussion of Abramowski’s political writings, as a socialist and independence activist, with references to various aspects of his ethical theory, and also to his biography—a decision that should be self-explanatory if we remember that ethics always refers to a specific *way of life*. Piskała comments, in chronological order, on texts devoted to issues of power, political mobilization, and the politics of the workers’ movement. In considering Abramowski’s first, adolescent brochures, in which he still promoted orthodox Marxism, Piskała ponders the origins of the philosopher’s political involvement (in the so-called First Proletariat). Then he looks at Abramowski’s further fate: his departure to Geneva, his subsequent return to Poland, and finally his participation in the Paris congress at which the most important of Polish left-wing parties was established: the Polish Socialist Party (PPS). This period also includes Abramowski’s first stand against the orthodox Marxism of the Second International, his in-depth studies of contemporary philosophy and politics, and work on his own sociological theory. The fruit of all these efforts was *Issues of Socialism*, published in 1899, containing a critique of socialist politics from the perspective of sociological phenomenism.

In *Socialism and the State* (1904), Abramowski provided further political concepts, including the distinction—which was characteristic of all his later thought—between “state socialism” and “stateless socialism,” with the proper methods of political action for the latter. Unequivocally taking the side of stateless socialism, Abramowski showed with full clarity—at times almost clairvoyance! —the distortions to which left-wing politics must necessarily lead in placing its hopes in the state apparatus. Using the conceptual grid he had previously constructed, he launched a considered attack on the two dominant trends in the socialist movement of the time: reformist (whose heir was later Social Democracy) and Blankist (in a way, the predecessor of Soviet communism). Piskała notes that Abramowski expressed his consistent and uncompromising criticism during the impressive flourishing of the Second International, and this might have determined the reception of his ideas.

Just a year after the publication of *Socialism and the State*, the Russian Revolution of 1905 erupted. Abramowski then wrote *A General Conspiracy against the Government*, one of his most influential pamphlets, in which he presents a strategy of boycotting Russian state institutions (i.e., the partitioning state’s institutions) based on the ideas of stateless socialism. Many of his contemporaries considered a program of “general conspiracy” to be impractical and utopian. Such a program has never been fully put into practice. However, as Piskała argues, it had a significant impact on subsequent Polish political life—including on the huge mass demonstration of workers in 1980 and the creation of the so-called First Solidarity. However, not solely the Polish context should be taken into account here. The introduction to the “Politics” section ends with an attempt to show the more universal significance of Abramowski’s strategy. Piskała juxtaposes the proposals of the Polish thinker with discussions currently underway in the field of (left-wing) political philosophy. In particular, he compares Abramowski’s proposals with concepts developed within post-operative Marxism and in connection with the theory of “the common” (Michel Hardt and Antonio Negri), open Marxism (John Holloway), and “post-capitalist politics” (Katherine Gibson and Julie Graham).

Abramowski’s whole practical and theoretical project culminates in his concept of cooperatives. Aleksandra Bilewicz, in her article opening the section “Cooperativism,” reconstructs the path that led Abramowski to engage in this area and to establish the Cooperativists’ Society, out of which “Społem” grew. Like Abramowski’s ethical and political theory, his cooperative theory derived from his sociological phenomenalism. Bilewicz shows how Abramowski, from assigning the highest value to an (immanently socialized) individual, and from his concept of a moral revolution, came to believe that the only way to introduce true socialism was a bottom-up revolution against the state and capitalist

economy, that is, a revolution that would not only grow out of universal social discord but would also be wholly social in its “method”: based on the grassroots organization of people into all kinds of democratic mutual aid associations. It was not in parties and coups that Abramowski saw effective tools of socialist policy, but in popular cultural institutions; educational societies; neighborhood aid groups; and above all, in trade unions and cooperatives. At the same time, he privileged the latter, especially those associating consumers, over traditional workers’ organizations.

Abramowski believed that capitalism is weakest precisely on the side of consumption, not production, and that this is where the offensive against it should be launched. Bilewicz briefly describes this strategy for combatting an exploitative and competition-based economy and the theory that the organization of consumer cooperatives is a first step toward the gradual elimination of the state from various spheres of human life. Following Abramowski, Bilewicz points out the similarities and differences between mainstream socialism and the cooperative movement. Although both arise from the same experience of human poverty, and both have the same goal of socializing the economy, they differ in their understanding of this socialization. For orthodox Marxists and other mainstream socialists, it is synonymous with nationalization, while for cooperativists it is synonymous with the creation of free associations (including cooperatives), which are federated together. Bilewicz explains that for Abramowski these associations were not only instruments of political struggle but also spaces in which individuals could develop new moral predispositions: independence, a sense of fraternity, and the ability to take the initiative.

Bilewicz ends her article with a discussion of the impact that Abramowski’s theory had on the Polish cooperative movement: from the first years after the 1905 revolution, through the interwar period and the difficult period of the Polish People’s Republic, to the cooperative movement that is reviving today in Poland.

Lena Magnone’s opening article for the last section, “Psychology,” aims to trace the evolution of Abramowski’s psychological views and to highlight their most important turning points. The beginning of Abramowski’s interest in psychology coincided with his stay in Geneva (1893–1897), where he wrote his first work in the field, *A Theory of Mental Entities*. In it, Abramowski deals with psychological atomism and argues that psychology should not model its methods on those of the exact sciences but should be based on internal experience. Abramowski assumed that only those phenomena that are correlated with our consciousness are the subject of experience: what exists is what can be the subject of thought. Such an approach leads him, on the one hand, to accept a certain version of Kantism (the belief that it is impossible to reach reality

in itself), and on the other, to reject the concept of the unconscious (i.e., the sphere of the psyche inaccessible to introspection). The latter view stands in clear opposition to psychoanalysis. Contrarily, some historians have wanted to see in Abramowski a thinker akin to Sigmund Freud, or perhaps even his predecessor. This is due to the concept of subconsciousness that Abramowski introduced and the division he made between intellectual (apperceptive) consciousness and non-intellectual consciousness, based on intuition. Magnone discusses the issue in detail, looking both at Abramowski's contacts with psychoanalysts and Freud's writings, and at the differences between the two theories.

Abramowski developed his theory of intuition—the intuition which gives access to so-called nameless states, that is, undefined feelings not developed by the intellect—in his extensive later dissertation entitled *Sources of the Subconscious*. His analyses of the dual, intuitive-apperceptive nature of perception led him to formulate a theory of cryptomnesia, or latent memory, which stores the intuitive side of perceptions, their emotional equivalent. For Abramowski, cryptomnesia is synonymous with the subconscious and consists of both unnoticed impressions, which escaped the action of attention and never turned into perceptions, and memories—the nameless-emotional, non-intellectual form that a forgotten perception takes. Cryptomnesia is a kind of “mental past,” available for introspection in the internal perception of the body, in a “feeling of oneself.” Abramowski was simultaneously conducting extensive experimental studies on memory, including those aimed at recalling the forgotten and showing that memory gaps are not empty spaces, but only a loss of the intellectual image of emotions.

Another important concept introduced in *Sources of the Subconscious* is agnosia. Abramowski called this the phenomenon of attention suspension, by which mental activity is limited and sensory material can be captured in its “nameless and emotional” form. In agnostic states, which are caused by strong emotions, absent-mindedness, weariness of attention, or hypnosis, and are also possible under the influence of chemical agents, or aesthetic and religious experiences, the apperceptive (i.e., intellectual, conscious) veil is lifted. In other words, when we suspend thought and attention, we come across the unknown, the thing beyond the thought, which philosophers call the thing in itself. Thus, Abramowski departed from his earlier Kantism in order, in the last years of his life, to project a science which he called “experimental metaphysics” and which was supposed to give access to this “Thing beyond Thought.” It is a metaphysics dealing with the intuitive cognition occurring in states of suspended intellect, when the phenomena constructed by apperception do not stand in our way and thus allow us to come into contact with noumena. As

Magnone shows, according to Abramowski, the forms of access to this extra-phenomenal (noumenal) reality that have been distinguished are aesthetic and religious states. Abramowski thus developed a psychology of aesthetic experience and religious experience. Magnone's introduction ends with a discussion of the psycho-Lamarckist theory of inheritance, and its crowning concept of the *Übermensch* as the goal of human development, which appeared in Abramowski's lectures on experimental metaphysics.

The reader has undoubtedly noticed by now that the articles in the various sections overlap. When discussing Abramowski's sociology, we needed to refer to his epistemology and psychology; in presenting his ethics, we had to mention certain solutions within social theory; and in referring to the concept of cooperatives, we had to speak of his political and ethical writings. Abramowski's thinking is thus systemic—individual problem-fields are lined with the same ontology: the ontology of cooperation. However, to honor Abramowski's memory, we have included the word "metaphysics" in the title of this volume—a word he used and understood in his own way. The *Metaphysics of Cooperation* is certainly not the name of a theory that posits the existence of some kind of supra-world or supra-empirical order. The *Metaphysics of Cooperation* is the name given to a concept of Being that sees in that Being a multitude of heterogeneous and dynamic connections formed solely on the basis of the infinite Power of Nature, without being subject to any transcendent Laws. Other than that ... let's face it, wouldn't anyone engaged on a theory of social self-organization like to have a work with this title among their achievements?

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PART I
Sociology



Sociology of Associations

Edward Abramowski between Socialism and Sociological Theory

Bartłomiej Blesznowski

The beginnings of sociology in Poland are directly connected with the development of socialism. During the Partitions, the scholarship of the most influential Polish thinkers and social researchers correlated with their involvement in social movements and in the development of socialist ideas. It could even be asserted that the core idea of Polish socialism at the end of the nineteenth century was that the processes governing society and the practices influencing change in the social system were linked. As Alina Molska has written, for the theoreticians of socialism at the time, “any theory of social development was [...] scientific in so far as it revealed the objective necessity of socialism and in so far as it helped people to choose the goal and the means to achieve this goal.”¹ The connection between sociology and political action was thus for them something more than a tool-and-goal relationship; it was a distinctive feature of modern “scientific socialism,” a political doctrine based on reliable knowledge about the social world.

In 1883 the Polish sociologist and socialist Ludwik Krzywicki wrote, in polemicizing *inter alia* with the views of Herbert Spencer, that “for us, the task of sociology does not consist in what forms and institutions occurred but in what institutions are best and what social system would make us, ordinary mortals who suffer in misery, most happy.”² In this sentence of Krzywicki’s we find the characteristic trait of the Polish social sciences at the end of the nineteenth century. Krzywicki describes sociology as an “engaged science,” whose objectivity is not an abstract ideal placing it above or beyond the social context; but rather its credibility and scientific precision are instruments of political engagement, and knowledge is a condition for effective operation in the social world.

In following the example of the natural sciences and seeking objective laws governing society, in the manner of August Comte or Herbert Spencer, classical positivist sociology in fact led to a specific version of sociological

1 A. Molska, *Model ustroju socjalistycznego w polskiej myśli marksistowskiej lat 1878–1886*, Warszawa 1965, Książka i Wiedza, p. 66.

2 L. Krzywicki, “Jeszcze o program,” in: L. Krzywicki, *Dzieła*, vol. 2, Warszawa 1958, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, p. 14.

presentism: the state of a given society was identified with its reality, its proper form, and often even with the “norm.” In opposition to this trend, Polish sociologists such as Krzywicki, Stanisław Krusiński (a Marxist journalist researching the processes of social change through the concept of a “social soul”),³ or Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz (whose “sociological law of revolutionary retrospection” showed the relationship between tradition and social transformation in revolutionary processes),⁴ defined the sociological realm through categories of change, dynamics, and becoming. While for the classical positivists, the aim of the social sciences was to discover the eternal laws governing the functioning of the community, independent of humans, for the Polish sociologists of the time, social laws themselves were the product of the social entities under study, the historically variable rules of operation of subsequent communities. This fact was of great importance for the research method itself: although most Polish sociologists held to positivist findings on the use of natural science methods to study society, they did not treat the laws sought by the sociologist as independent of human agency. Their aim was rather to determine the point where the inexorable rules of history meet the agency of human subjects governed by will and chance.

The above comments also apply to Edward Abramowski, whose sociological works were one of the most advanced projects of engaged sociology. He combined theoretical reflections on social relations in new forms of association with sociological experiments conducted in vivo. From his first historical and social works, such as *Tribal Societies (Społeczeństwa rodowe)* or *Feudalism (Feudalizm)*, he saw the main subject of social science not as “society,” understood as a ready entity, abstract structure, or set of absolute laws, but rather as dynamic processes of social transformation, the conditions for the transformation of existing social structures.⁵ This methodological postulate was more than just an attempt to place greater emphasis on social dynamics than on the statics appreciated by the classic thinkers of sociology.

Abramowski had a more comprehensive aim—he wanted to reformulate the principles of the sociological method, which in his time still held “an eminently metaphysical position, because it searches for a sufficient principle for the existence of social facts beyond human souls, in their synthesis, which is

3 A. Molska, *Model ustroju socjalistycznego*, op. cit., p. 225.

4 H. Chmielewska-Szłajfer, *Marxism and Sociology. A Selection of Writings by Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz*, Leiden 2018, Brill.

5 Z. Krawczyk, *Socjologia Edwarda Abramowskiego*, Warszawa 1965, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, p. 137.

available only to our set of concepts [*pojęciowości*].”⁶ Abramowski believed that the elementary social components were “in the component of real cooperation itself, that is, in the human soul, and not only in its processes, but in every single moment of life.”⁷ Sociology would then follow phenomena in their complex causality without losing sight of the only social fact: the living subject—real individuals in their social condition. Each sociological study should concern real people in their agency, and not abstract forms in their supra-real being. While examining, for example, the transformations of social formations, the transition from feudalism to capitalism, and thus “revolutionary” moments in the development of societies, Abramowski started in truth from the role of economic factors such as technological transformations or the formation of capital, but he tried to show how they function in relation to phenomena of an ideological or cultural nature. Therefore, he understood productive forces as the abilities and needs of specific individuals and the processes of gaining awareness within wider networks of cause and effect: the influence of factors beyond the individual. According to him, social processes have always had a mirror in the individual psyche, and only this constituted the true reality of society, insofar as it was a place where external forces joined together—ideas or economic or geographic influences. Each social revolution was an expression of “subjective” factors, that is, the specific reaction of individuals to changing social conditions. Social reality, or what we consider to be the “state” of a given community—its identity, structure, and way of life—was the result of this fusion: the contact of a multitude of forces with an individual mind.

As an attempt to go beyond the classical divisions in the social sciences—divisions between positivism and humanist sociology, Marxism and social psychology—Abramowski’s social theory belongs to an alternate line in the development of the social sciences. This line was once described by the sociologist and social anthropologist Bruno Latour, one of the main creators of actor-network theory (ANT). He differentiated two basic models of sociology, which, in his opinion, constituted separate ways of thinking in the social sciences, developing in parallel.⁸

6 E. Abramowski, “Les bases psychologiques de la sociologie. Le matérialisme historique et le principe du phénomène social,” in: Idem, *Pisma. Pierwsze wydanie pism treści filozoficznej i społecznej*, vol. 2, Warszawa 1924, Nakładem Związku Polskich Stowarzyszeń Spożywców, p. 380.

7 Ibidem, p. 382.

8 B. Latour, *Reassembling the Social. An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*, Oxford 2005, Oxford University Press, p. 9.

He called the first of these narratives the “sociology of the social” and pointed to its methodological connection with the notion of “society” as a structured whole of social relations that are independent of human agency. Thus understood, the notion of society comes from the discourses of classical liberal economics on the one hand⁹ (the market as an autopoietic system), and on the other, it reveals theological connotations: to understand how individual actions translate into maintenance of the social (or market) structure, a kind of “divine” dispatcher¹⁰ is needed—an invisible hand, a natural selection, or a body politic ... Political economics seems to constitute the hidden core of the classical social science, its “ideology,”¹¹ thus revealing the link between the emerging “social” and the state. As a response to the social question posed in the nineteenth century, the sociology of the social treats the reality of collective life as a coherent world with its own ontology, independent of the world of nature or the world of thought.

In opposition to the ontological model in the classical sociology of both Karl Marx and Émile Durkheim, Latour offers a “sociology of association”: an examination of the very ties and relationships between individuals that make something “like” society appear. The sociology of association breaks with “substantialist” thinking. Social scientists such as Comte or Durkheim established the subject of social research as a “methodological entity,” thus artificially separating social reality from reality in general.¹² Pioneers of association sociology, such as Gabriel Tarde or Harold Garfinkel, “maintained that the social was not a special domain of reality but a principle of connections; that there was no reason to separate ‘the social’ from other associations like biological organisms or even atoms; [...] that sociology was in effect a kind of inter-psychology.”¹³ In the case of the “sociology of association” we are not dealing with anything like society, because this would capture a complex reality composed of constantly fluctuating forces that form in sequences of imitations interspersed with eruptions of new qualities, and in the movement of great innovations.

As a representative of the “sociology of associations,” Abramowski held a position that we would today describe as eminently constructivist: he was

9 B. Latour, V. A. Lépinay, *The Science of Passionate Interests. An Introduction to Gabriel Tarde's Economic Anthropology*, Chicago 2009, Prickly Paradigm Press, pp. 82–83.

10 B. Latour et al., “The whole is always smaller than its parts’—a digital test of Gabriel Tarde's monads,” *British Journal of Sociology* 2012, vol. 63, issue 4, p. 601.

11 J. Vogl, *The Specter of Capital*, translated by J. Redner and R. Savage, Stanford, California 2014, Stanford University Press, p. 33.

12 B. Latour, V. A. Lépinay, *The Science of Passionate Interests*, op. cit., p. 84.

13 B. Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, op. cit., p. 13.

interested in how society is built in complex networks of connections that cannot be reduced to a superior economic factor, a *sui generis* social reality, or the transformation of human culture and the production of symbols. At the core of his sociological theory, he placed acting subjects and the relations between them, which are expressed in the human mind, and he searched for the sole reality in the transformations of the human self, which creatively transforms social reality. He wrote that “sociology must give a real and separate value to the factor of creativity, if it finds its social expression in special institutions.”¹⁴ Although sociology was established to analyze the institutions of social life, such as the state, law, or religion, Abramowski believed that in order to fulfill this vocation it was not enough to study the existing social facts. Social institutions are not entities existing once and for all but secondary products of bonding processes which are an expression of individual selves in given social conditions. It is the individuals who bring to life the creations we have been accustomed to consider universal and eternal.

The Epistemological Socialism

Issues of Socialism (Zagadnienia socjalizmu), one of Abramowski’s most important works, combines sociological inquiry with an attempt at a political synthesis outlining a path for contemporary socialism. From Abramowski’s perspective, these are not two separate domains, but, as it were, two sides of the same issue (theoretical and practical)—or socialism understood as “applied social science.”

On the one hand, Abramowski defines socialism as an activity whose domain is free will—the ability to act and create policies that respond to the needs of the working class—and on the other hand, he sees socialism as a set of historical and social laws, knowledge of which is one of the tasks of “science.” He writes that “the synthesis of both methods, combining science and creation into one, gives socialism this specific character, allows it to take such an exclusive position in the history of the human mind that one and the same doctrine is at the same time the subject of scientific research and a battle cry.”¹⁵ Abramowski’s reflections on the significance of the sociological method for the workers’ movement place his works at the center of a discussion which had been ongoing in the Polish socialist movement from the 1880s on the

14 E. Abramowski, “Individual Elements in Sociology,” in: this volume, p. 130.

15 Idem, “Issues of Socialism,” in: this volume, p. 65.

importance of sociological concepts for revolutionary practice.¹⁶ Findings regarding the status of “truth,” impartiality, and objectivity, with the simultaneous applicability of the findings of science to collective action, were in themselves an important political stake. Socialism is, therefore, in Abramowski’s conception, not solely a political ideology but also a cognitive perspective. Interestingly, Abramowski placed this science not in the field of abstraction but in practical reason, making its task the “disentangling” of the social question, which was in fact not only a question for the social policy of the state, but also a question for the organization of the working class.

The point of contact between Abramowski’s social theory and his political doctrine is his epistemological investigation of the “principle of a social phenomenon.”¹⁷ At the source of this concept was the classic Kantian differentiation of the world of “phenomena”—objects perceived sensually and classified into categories of reason—and “things in themselves”—noumena, entities existing independently of the consciousness of the knowing subject. Hence, if phenomena result from the action of the external world on the human subject, noumena are extrasensory yet conceivable indirectly by reason as general categories constituting syntheses of sense data. They are therefore borderline concepts that appear in a purely negative way in experience. Sensory cognition is thus the only possible form of cognition, but “with the present system of our intellect”¹⁸ it applies only to the cognition of phenomena—empirical phenomena.

If the phenomena are objects that are fully dependent on the capabilities of the cognizing subject, “what exists *positively* for us is only that which falls in some way within the scope of our experience, in our life, as real or possible, physical or spiritual things.”¹⁹ Thus, what Abramowski calls phenomena are not only external facts but also a subject’s experiences and thoughts, which in cognition have the attribute of distinctness, even though they are the image of, for example, literary characters or gods. In this sense, according to

16 A. Molska, *Model ustroju socjalistycznego w polskiej myśli marksistowskiej*, op. cit., p. 82.

17 First announced in France in the articles “Les bases psychologiques de la sociologie. Principe du phénomène social,” *Revue internationale de sociologie* 1897, no. 8–9, 10; “Le Matérialisme historique et le principe du phénomène social,” *Revue internationale de sociologie*, Paris 1898.

18 Abramowski accepted Kant’s theory of phenomena and based his sociological findings on it; in accord with Bergson he considered that a real metaphysics, understood as a positive science, would be possible thanks to new methods of cognition, which would not flee from extra-rational forms of cognition but might even synthesize empiricism with intuition or extra-categorical cognition.

19 E. Abramowski, “Issues of Socialism,” in: this volume, p. 70.

Abramowski, a person always lives in the world among other beings, but only those with which he interacts, only those that become important to him, can be categorized and socialized by means of the cognitive apparatus. Thus, the self is the only certainty of cognition that enters into a relationship with the external world: it “rests on nothing, has no justification, no criterion of certainty, it is a *sufficient cause for itself*, its only justification.”²⁰ From the standpoint of the theory of knowledge, it is therefore pure negativity, the sphere of noumena, and from the standpoint of the external world, it is what conditions its existence—the laws that govern the formation of phenomena. As can be seen, for Abramowski, ontological considerations are directly connected with questions concerning the status of cognition: the relationship between the mind and reality has an active and creative character.

According to Abramowski, subjectivity has, in a way, two sides: positive, belonging to the deepest layers of consciousness, pre-mental and thus noumenal; and negative—phenomenal and conscious, subject to conceptual development and therefore also to social influence. Hence, Abramowski distinguishes two equal cognitive modes. The first, intuition, means for him cognitive moments that can be known introspectively but are not directly accessible to the subject (though this does not mean they are unconscious): intuition is the emotional dimension of cognition, not yet subject to intellectual development. The second, apperception, is the active side of cognitive processes, thanks to which the selection and categorization of empirical data is conducted, leading to the aggregation of individual perceptions in a concept. “What constitutes our ‘I,’ what we sense as our own selves, is a social substance, and our whole life of thought and mental states are subject to apperception—are social.”²¹ As can be seen, the dual nature of the self implies two apparently contradictory conclusions. First, if human cognition is a creative activity, then the history and development of social institutions are also not determined by any laws external to the subject but are the effect of the agency of living persons. Second, social rights are not immutable and absolute content but rather constitute a set of forms or scripts dependent on time (history) and space (of a given community), which on the one hand determine the actions of individuals, but on the other hand are themselves created by these individuals in performative acts of cognition. For Abramowski, cognition is therefore not only social but also political—it is an act of taking the floor, of going beyond the usual canons, of crossing the cognitive barriers that arise in our mind during socialization.

20 Ibidem, p. 73.

21 E. Abramowski, „Zagadnienia socjalizmu,” in: Idem, *Pisma*, vol. 2, Warszawa 1924, Nakładem Związku Polskich Stowarzyszeń Spożyców, p. 63.

Thanks to apperception, the raw empirical material that reaches the mind through sensory cognition is selected and categorized. Apperception—as Abramowski writes—“socializes phenomena”²² with the help of concepts, that is, cognitive scripts that are the result of the social relations in which the subject exists. Concepts—as a reaction to the outside world—do not arise spontaneously but are the result of a social game; the subject never “thinks alone.” They allow people to get to know and subordinate the world to themselves; they are also responsible for symbolic communication between the subjects themselves, constituting “portions of sense,” which, however, never reach true, noumenal reality. That reality is inaccessible to apperception because there is a clear difference between phenomena and concepts: although the former are the result of a conceptual binding process, the latter never encompass the complexity of phenomena but merely approximate and synthesize them.

In *Theory of Mental Entities (Teorii jednostek psychicznych)*, published in 1899, Abramowski presented an epistemological and psychological critique of contemporary trends in psychology. This approach later became the basis for his analysis of sociological concepts, in such works as *Individual Elements in Sociology (Pierwiastki indywidualne w socjologii)* or *Socialism and the State (Socjalizm a państwo)*. In formulating his own position, which he called “phenomenalist,”²³ Abramowski relied on a critique of psychological positivism, especially the atomistic concept of Wilhelm Wundt, which was being widely discussed at the end of the nineteenth century. According to Wundt, complex mental states are a synthesis of “elementary feelings” or “pure impressions”²⁴—cognitive portions transmitted separately by individual senses, and therefore the fundamental role in synthesizing the cognized phenomenon is played by apperception, a structural mechanism of the psyche, thanks to which the multiplicity of heterogeneous empirical data is selected and conceptually elaborated. According to Wundt, this mechanism is unconscious. Thus, for a consciously perceived phenomenon to occur, a cognitive mode independent of consciousness is needed. Abramowski regarded this position as an extreme simplification, calling it “psychological atomism.”²⁵

The method of “sensory atomism” leads fatally to the notion that our consciousness is only an appearance of true consciousness, an illusion of

22 E. Abramowski, „Les bases psychologiques,” op. cit., pp. 382–383.

23 E. Abramowski, „Teoria jednostek psychicznych,” in: idem, *Pisma filozoficzno-psychologiczne*, Warszawa 2016, Fundacja hr. Augusta Cieszkowskiego, p. 42.

24 Ibidem, p. 11.

25 Ibidem, p. 23.

mental reality. What is felt is not what is felt, and what is in consciousness is not what is in consciousness! There is enormous mental complexity behind the mask of simplicity; under the mask of uniformity of feeling—an enormous variety.²⁶

Abramowski believed that only what can be directly and consciously felt and experienced is a phenomenon. After all, we do not feel individual impulses but overall emotional or intellectual states. In consciousness we are immediately dealing with a full mental state, and thus Wundt and other associationists in psychology²⁷ confused the known phenomenon with their own research prejudgments which, due to the lack of direct data concerning the process of synthesizing conscious thought, they established as a separate reality—an abstract, deduced instance from observed mental states. Such thinking consequently led psychologists at the end of the nineteenth century to establish an additional mental instance—the unconscious, which would synthesize complex states of consciousness somewhat independently of the cognitive apparatus. In this way, the associationists confused the abstraction of the scholarly concept (mental facts or the laws of the unconscious) with the reality of phenomena in their perceptual plurality; and therefore they had to introduce an additional mental instance: the level of the unconscious that is somehow under the consciousness available to the subject, or a previously ready and unchanging perceptual mechanism of the self, independent of the incoming data.

Abramowski sharply opposed this form of conceptual fetishism, or as he called this way of thinking, “intellectualism.”²⁸ He saw the self rather as a complex relation, a point of contact between external data and the conditions of the subject, rather than an instance divided into the conscious and the unconscious. He considered states of consciousness not as clumps of a multiplicity of elementary nervous stimuli but as coherent representations of the entire set of these stimuli, mental equivalents of the multitude of impulses that reach the human cognitive apparatus.

Thus, an individual may be seeing the whole landscape as well as one detail, hearing a single tone as well as a melodic chord or uproar [...]. Consciousness does not become complicated depending on what it accepts; the moment remains a uniform moment regardless of the

26 Ibidem, p. 32.

27 Ibidem, p. 104.

28 Ibidem, p. 117.

diversity of its origin; and mental complexity occurs only in the successive course of various states.²⁹

Even if we isolate their elementary parts intellectually, in fact states of consciousness are directly there, as a whole, “forever.”

Critique of Sociological Reason

Abramowski, like Immanuel Kant and Georg Simmel before him, believed that in the apperceptive process of creating concepts, the most essential features of a given group of phenomena are not abstracted. The act of apperception is, after all, the action of the mind of specific people, who are subject to various social and cultural influences, which focus their perception on the features of phenomena relevant to the time and social space of their socialization, without regard for the simple fact that the phenomena themselves function continuously, in a changeable and fluctuating environment. The “essence” of phenomena depends, therefore, on the cognizing subject, and notions are inevitably characterized by intersubjective particularity.

Abramowski’s critique of rationalist beliefs on the basis of the phenomenalist theory of cognition became a starting point for his assessment of contemporary trends in the social sciences.³⁰ Using an analysis similar to his critique of psychological atomism in *Theory of Mental Entities (Teorii jednostek psychicznych)*, in his sociological works at the end of the nineteenth century, Abramowski criticized the “intellectual” discourse of contemporary sociology.

He spoke sharply against essentialism in understanding social phenomena and against ahistoricism in the perception of historical time in sociology, noting that the former is the result of confusing the image with reality and that the latter is nothing other than the result of thinking that the current state is the proper and normal one. A morbid craving for order, which he believed derived from the discourse of Enlightenment science, was not due solely to errors or insufficient measuring tools. He noticed a strong feedback relationship between academic scholarship and political power. The former gives the latter legitimacy, subordinating reality to power through its concepts and findings. The latter enables the former to have agency—using its ideas and models, it realizes a dream about a well-ordered world. Like Marx, Abramowski was

29 Ibidem, p. 55.

30 Z. Krawczyk, *Socjologia Edwarda Abramowskiego*, op. cit., p. 183.

convinced, however, that these abstract patterns, models, and utopias have nothing to do with the real social life of humankind, but are only “specters” or ghosts populating the social world, taking agency away from specific “living people.”

The revolutionary ideology only comes afterward; [...] it gives a uniform expression to the new desires, translates them scientifically, adjusts philosophy to them, looks for the simplest practical solution for them, and builds a theory of a political system [*system polityki*]. But it does not create the very question of revolution; it finds it ready in thousands of those small, individual revolutions that have taken place and are still taking place in human life and brains, and in the absence of which it would at most be capable of proposing a sterile thesis, living only in the offices of scholars, or a dreamlike utopia that binds some handful of its followers, but without any influence on social life. Today’s revolution has not been produced by the *Communist Manifesto*, nor by any theories of Marx and Engels, but itself sparked the manifesto and theories.³¹

Abramowski believed that all these products of “intellectualism” really only serve the scholars and ideologues who pull the strings of social change, placing them in the position of managers, sages, or heroes.

In analyzing the theories of Durkheim, Marx, Simmel, and even Gabriel Tarde, Abramowski noticed that they all ignore facts in favor of theoretical products they mistakenly call “social facts.” According to Abramowski, all these social thinkers have one thing in common: by admitting social facts, economic factors (which in Marx’s case are actually synonymous with social relations),³² forms of social action, or the psyche of individuals—which, according to Tarde, constitute the reality of social life—they consider that social reality is some coherent and special sphere of existence. Thus, the object of sociology is not facts in their “living” view but abstract mental creations, which are taken for reality. Abramowski’s criticism of “sociological intellectualism” was certainly immersed in the anti-rationalist tone of his era, as provided by the philosophy of Henri Bergson,³³ or—very importantly for Abramowski—the voluntarist philosophy of Alfred Fouillée, whose criticism of some trends in psychology he

31 E. Abramowski, “Socialism and the State. Contribution to the Criticism of Contemporary Socialism,” in: this volume, p. 156.

32 D. Harvey, *A Companion to Marx’s Capital*, London-New York 2010, Verso, p. 33.

33 S. Borzym, *Bergson a przemiany światopoglądowe w Polsce*, Wrocław 1984, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Wydawnictwo PAN.

shared. Fouillée, by means of his theory of *idées-forces*, that is, a multidimensional ontology based on abolishing the distinction between materialism and spiritualism/idealism, between what is physical and what is spiritual, between determinism and freedom, conceived of consciousness as a transformer.³⁴ This idea, which allowed Fouillée to perceive the human being as an active center of cognition, later became the basis for Abramowski's social theory and evolutionary vision.³⁵

Undoubtedly, reading William James' *Pragmatism* also had a significant influence on Abramowski. Its main thesis on reducing metaphysical discussions to their practical consequences, to creative interference with reality, is perceptible in Abramowski's writings from the end of the 1890s. If Bruno Latour finds the progenitor of the new materialism in Gabriel Tarde's sociology, in reference to pragmatism and French voluntarism, Abramowski would also seem to fit very well in that honorable group of founders of a "minor sociology,"³⁶ who, instead of seeking laws governing the "social organism" or crowd psychology, focused on analyzing the "comprehensive dependencies" that characterize the social process.

Abramowski postulated the study of social facts in their individuality and specificity, without perceiving them through the prism of superior structures or laws. He believed that modern sociologists concentrated their attention on the formal side of the social process, while ignoring the living content. He criticized Simmel and the German school of formal sociology by arguing that the study of social types or forms means focusing on "dead statistics," which are then artificially grouped into sociological concepts completely separated from constantly fluctuating social phenomena.³⁷ In this way, sociology loses the possibility of genuinely approaching the social process in its becoming and shifts research attention toward logical schemas that replace real social phenomena. The task of a sociologist is to understand the emergence of a social phenomenon in relation to other phenomena, and the point of contact between them is nothing other than the human self.³⁸ For this reason, Abramowski tried to redirect the attention of sociologists from researching the state, the church,

34 L. S. McGrath, "Alfred Fouillée between science and spiritualism," *Modern Intellectual History* 2015, no. 2 (12), pp. 295–323.

35 A. Dziędzic, *Antropologia filozoficzna Edwarda Abramowskiego*, Wrocław 2010, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, p. 42.

36 I am referring here to the concept of „minor science” developed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in their influential volume: *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia 2*, translated by B. Massumi, London-New York 2004, Continuum.

37 E. Abramowski, „Les bases psychologiques,” *op. cit.*, p. 380.

38 Idem, „Individual Elements in Sociology,” in: this volume, pp. 110–111.

and the market toward the study of the individual entities that create them, the specific members of these structures.

In *Issues of Socialism*, Abramowski also criticized Durkheim's sociology, whose method he considered to be extremely essentialist—as did Durkheim's main adversary, Gabriel Tarde. In Abramowski's interpretation, Durkheim's concept of a social fact leads to one of two possible consequences: the identification of society with a superindividual consciousness, which consists of “elementary feelings” synthesized in the consciousness of the subject,³⁹ or treating society as a separate reality, which would have laws specific to a natural reality and as such should be treated as a separate object of study. “The human individual then becomes only an illusory point of intersection of these various social circles, without any sociological value, and this in practical terms appears as a postulate that a person can only talk about his rights as long as he is a link in a certain social organization.”⁴⁰ Like atomistic psychology earlier, now Durkheim's thesis about society as a *sui generis* reality appears to Abramowski to be a methodological misunderstanding causing the above-mentioned writers to confuse the abstraction of a scholarly concept with the reality of phenomena and therefore making them introduce an additional intermediary instance that would link the level of elementary perceptions, or individual social actions, with the level of the integrated self or the social fact (law, religion, the state, etc.).

In the field of what is social, thus understood, a “divine dispatcher” is needed—a structural level or social law thanks to which the entire mental or social machine will work without flaw. According to Abramowski, this sociological inference results in an essentialist treatment of conceptual categories, mixing the question of existence with the question of action, the problem of social existence with the problem of establishing social organizations. Abramowski believed that this error stemmed from the grounding of the social sciences not in empirical research practices but in deductive methods of reasoning inherited from theological thought and philosophical idealism.

[S]ociology has been the true kingdom of hypotheses and systems ruling over facts, where everyone was free to develop their idealistic or materialistic doctrinal inclinations, and the origin of this is doubtless that nowhere has the influence of religious dogmas been so deeply entrenched as in questions concerning the human being.⁴¹

39 Z. Krawczyk, *Socjologia Edwarda Abramowskiego*, op. cit., pp. 186–187.

40 E. Abramowski, „Les bases psychologiques,” op. cit., p. 47.

41 E. Abramowski, “Socialism and the State,” in: this volume, p. 150.

Following the example of Fouillée and Jean-Jacques Gourd, a professor at the University of Geneva whose courses he attended and whose work *Le phénomène: esquisse de philosophie generale*, published in 1883, shaped his phenomenalist position, Abramowski identified idealism and materialism as two sides of the same philosophical metaphysics.⁴² In his opinion, the approach of looking for an extra-phenomenal substance in an ideal reality did not differ from the seemingly opposite yet actually very close materialistic doctrine that required the essence of being to be sought in elements of matter and man's relationship to them. Both positions constitute a "weak" version of metaphysics, which separates empirically knowable phenomenality from the sphere of being, to which we would only have access by means of speculative deductive techniques.

According to Abramowski, the task of the social sciences is to create a properly grounded metaphysics that will combine empiricism and idealism in a kind of "strong materialism" examining how phenomena, which are the product of the cognizing subject, become independent of that subject and gain a sovereign existence that allows them to exert influence on the individual. This was indicated, among others, by Abramowski's student, Konstanty Krzeczkowski, who noted the affinities between his mentor's social theory and the project of "experimental metaphysics," which he thought betrayed "a hidden ontology." "He [Abramowski] sees ontological elements in social phenomena. He expands his use of indeterminism."⁴³ Abramowski tried to show that the existence of a social phenomenon is only a set of ways of dealing with the world: a set which, in becoming a collective model of action, passes through the consciousness of wide social masses.

The phenomenalist critique of the metaphysics of concepts in the social sciences foreshadows the "experimental metaphysics" or "indeterministic ontology" of the project Abramowski outlined toward the end of his life, claiming that it would only enable true metaphysics (or "strong materialism") "on the condition that it retained the experimental basis from which it is derived, i.e., that it will be an experimental science." Thus understood, metaphysics would have to experiment with states of mind themselves in order to explore the deepest levels of consciousness—those that are experienced but least developed. And, following its example, social science would have to abandon all forms of "dogmatism" or "intellectualism" that would require it to see existence, in the essential sense, in terms of aggregate social relations.

42 A. Dziedzic, *Antropologia filozoficzna*, op. cit., p. 19.

43 K. Krzeczkowski, *Dzieje życia i twórczości Edwarda Abramowskiego*, Warszawa 1933, Wydawnictwo Spółdzielczego Instytutu Naukowego, p. 102.

Criticizing intellectualism in the social sciences allowed Abramowski to go further and to argue that this dogmatism was also characteristic of the socialist ideology of the time, which, after all, sprang from the same root as the social sciences. He believed that, as in the case of sociology, in which the notion of society was directly correlated with the notion of the state, in socialism as well the state had become the aim for any inference concerning the political revolution:

The influence of theology has reached even to the method followed by socialist politics. It has also been fostered by the naivety of rationalism, which, along with the tradition of the great French revolution, passed into socialist currents of thought, and which, while fully acquainted with the psycho-physiological sources of concepts about things and relations, attributed to them an ontological value—the value of something that really exists beyond human thought and, importantly, that rules and should rule the world of facts.⁴⁴

In *Socialism and the State* (*Socjalizm a państwo*), Abramowski sharply criticized contemporary socialist trends, which he considered to be part of the same intellectual landscape that was caused by social changes related to the bourgeois revolution in France and the development of the social sciences. Abramowski criticized both the revolutionary and the reformist side of the workers' movement that grew out of the Second International at the end of the nineteenth century. In the optics of end-of-the-century socialist politics—both on the reformist and revolutionary side—the state had risen to the rank of a metaphysical and political necessity as an instance constituting the ultimate expression of the human spirit and the overall form of society's organization. For Abramowski, however, socialist politics centered on the institutions of the state did not reflect the reality of the social masses but the ambitions of party ideologues who wanted power. He considered the idea of the necessity of the state for social life, and in this sense also for socialist politics, to be a different version of the dogma about the immutability of human nature, which resulted from the essentialist-theological view in European thought.

Abramowski did not consider violence and the dictatorship of the state to be the only way to a social revolution.⁴⁵ If social change begins with changes in the consciousness of individuals, these in turn require practice that engages them

44 E. Abramowski, "Socialism and the State," in: this volume, p. 150.

45 More on the subject in chapter III of this volume.

in a common activity—experimenting with self-help and self-government. Thus, Abramowski imagined the reconstruction of society “from the bottom up,” through the activity of the association movement, which would not need any external instances—the state or the market—in order to organize complex social relations.⁴⁶ In the emerging mass society, Abramowski saw a completely different tendency, which he called “stateless socialism,” a powerful current of grassroots association expressing a tendency that marks the human race not because of some specific properties of its nature, but because of the condition of humans in the material world.⁴⁷ Using the language proposed by David Graeber, we could speak of a kind of “baseline communism,” being the “foundation of all human sociability” that “makes society possible”⁴⁸ as such. Thus, Abramowski wanted to imagine the institutions of the masses as institutions of “pure socialization” corresponding to the increasingly diversified industrial society of the late nineteenth century.

This “[s]tateless socialism does not require any philosophical thesis as the starting point for its politics. [...] This is because politics itself specifies the future as a matter of contemporary life, as an everyday transformation of people and relations.”⁴⁹ Therefore, socialism, in Abramowski’s view, should be seen not as an idea or a utopia traversing history to be ultimately incorporated in the organization of the communist state, but as the social practice of testing new forms of community life. Stateless socialism should not be equated with this or that doctrine or grouping but with a self-existent current of human socialization, which is primal to all political institutions and works efficiently even after the collapse of the state.

Sociological Phenomenalism

a) *The Immanent Socialness of the Self*

As we have seen, Abramowski’s social philosophy displays many features that coincide with the Kantian theory of cognition, which conditions the existence of phenomena on the functioning of the cognitive apparatus of the human

46 E. Abramowski, “Socialism and the State,” in: this volume, pp. 162–163.

47 A similar view is found in: Ch. Gide, *Le coopératisme. Conférences de Propagande*, Paris 1900, Recueil Sirey, p. 53.

48 D. Graeber, *Debt: The First 5,000 Years*, New York 2011, Melville House, p. 96.

49 E. Abramowski, “Stateless Socialism,” *Praktyka teoretyczna* 2018 [1904], no. 1 (27), p. 35.

subject.⁵⁰ According to Abramowski, the existence of phenomena is provable only if, by means of deduction, we prove the existence of the subject cognizing those phenomena at the noumenal level.

Everything *that is*—not in a metaphysical but a positive sense, i.e., that *exists* as a thing that can enter into the scope of our experience, external or internal—is consequently merely an object of our thought, or could be. [...] The attribute of “existence” is therefore synonymous with the possibility of becoming an object of thought.⁵¹

According to Abramowski, a thing becomes a phenomenon when it comes into contact with consciousness, which “pre-presents” an object as a phenomenon, while imposing on it apperceptive categories constructed in an intersubjective cognitive process. The phenomenon is therefore the effect of the contact of the world with the thinking individual. But how does the creative fusion between the world and the “I” come about, if it is itself a “sufficient cause,” the irreducible center of cognition, a “subjective noumenon”?⁵² Does the human ego remain a homogeneous mental substance after contact with the things of the outside world? Or does it perhaps also undergo transformations depending on the substances it encounters?

In answering these questions, Abramowski adapted Kant’s epistemology to the vitalist solutions proposed by, for example, Henri Bergson or Alfred Fouillée. By combining Kantism, a philosophy of life, and the voluntarist motifs of Marx’s philosophy, Abramowski tried to paint a picture of individual consciousness as an active instance, subject to creative transformations of empirical data from the subject’s contact with reality and with the social instance, which itself undergoes transformations in contact with the material world (both in the economic sense and in the metaphysical sense—every substance that has a relationship with the self).

The individual element [...] has its *self-born vitality* with regard to the social facts with which it enters a single causal series, and it has that vitality because, apart from the link that connects it with the social fact of

50 A. Flis, “Edward Abramowski’s Social and Political Thought,” in: *Masters of Polish Sociology*, edited by P. Sztompka, Wrocław 1984, Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, pp. 32.

51 E. Abramowski, “Issues of Socialism,” in: this volume, p. 71.

52 E. Abramowski, „Zagadnienia socjalizmu,” op. cit., pp. 38–39.

which it results, and with the one for which it is the cause, it also has various connections with the whole of the human soul from which it has not separated itself. Thus even when its social conditions do not change, it can itself change under the influence of this combination of individual phenomena in which it plays a vital and organic part.⁵³

Just as Kant placed transcendental categories within the structure of the knowing subject, Abramowski sought final confirmation of the existence of the self in the social world. Moreover, for him, what is social will in a way be equated with the properties of the very self. As he wrote in an article devoted to the experience of beauty in art, which he considered to be one of the agnostic experiences reaching the deepest social layers of the soul: “the ‘socialness’ of a person is not external to him but in his own soul; [...] each individual, even when excluded from the human community, can find in himself the ‘social essence’ of his self.”⁵⁴ The idea was to combine the aspects of the individual and society in the social ontology: to link the world order of phenomena and noumena, ground metaphysics in human cognition,⁵⁵ and thus extend Bergson’s thesis about metaphysics as “an experience taken in total unity”⁵⁶ by adding a sociological aspect. According to Abramowski, the area linking transcendental categories with human cognition was the social domain. “Not apart from man [...] but in the real and living human being himself, in specific human brains, the whole of social life develops and does not go beyond.”⁵⁷ This in turn constituted the innermost part of the human ego—the essential “socialness” or the primary split within the cognizing subject: his “swing” toward the forces that haunt him. By denying “society” a reality independent of the human self, and by assigning a basic socialization (which he considered to be not so much an essential feature of the mind as a kind of structural relationship between the subject and the object), Abramowski formulated his own program of social philosophy, which, according to him, was an extension of the phenomenalist theses of *Theory of Mental Entities* (*Teorii jednostek psychicznych*). Thus, “the social *minimum* is found in the components of interaction, that is, in

53 E. Abramowski, “Individual Elements in Sociology,” in: this volume, p. 112.

54 Idem, “Co to jest sztuka? (Z powodu rozprawy L. Tołstoja: ‘Czto takoje iskusstwo?’),” Idem, *Pisma*, vol. 3, Warszawa 1927, Nakładem Związku Polskich Stowarzyszeń Spożyców, pp. 30–31.

55 S. Borzym, „Edward Abramowski—filozof epoki modernizmu,” in: E. Abramowski, *Metafizyka doświadczalna i inne pisma*, Warszawa 1980, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, p. XXIX.

56 Z. Krawczyk, *Socjologia Edwarda Abramowskiego*, op. cit., p. 171.

57 E. Abramowski, „Zagadnienia socjalizmu,” op. cit., p. 41.

the human soul, and that the latter cannot, therefore, be eliminated from the subject of sociological research.”⁵⁸ The concept of the self in Abramowski’s thought is the basis of his social theory: this is where the real *theatrum* of social processes takes place, and he treats it—the core of individuality—as the birth-place of what is social.

For Abramowski, consciousness is always a creative source of socialization, which is objectified through “apperception”—moments of mental processing of the content of the subconscious, as well as of content coming from outside and socializing entities that interact with the self.⁵⁹ The world of external things becomes social through the cognitive mechanism of the subject. The world of thought is socialized through detachment from it—objectification within the framework of a social institution, bringing to life a new social fact. “A need, embodied in a product, becomes independent of the producer and retains its *mental* value in spite of him, while the entire human community, with some one part of its soul, finds and cooperates with others in this object; its mental value becomes collective and continuous.”⁶⁰ Thus, the social phenomenon has two seemingly opposing sides: objective and factual at the same time, which, following Bergson, we could define as potential, as well as individual, subjective, and concrete, which would correspond to actuality. The first side refers to the abstract form of the phenomenon and therefore its objectification in supra-individual institutions and facts while the latter is the ever-happening reality of the human mind—practice and becoming, in which the individual subject meets the abstraction of the institution. According to Abramowski, the basic aporia of one-sided approaches to contemporary sociology is to be found here. He criticizes those theorists whose theories would lead to the essentialization of the social into some supra-individual being, an abstract figure which would live a life borrowed from all individuals taken together, like a Hobbesian Leviathan, and on the other hand, he does not identify himself with those who would reduce the phenomena of collective life to epiphenomenal representations of the self.

In describing the tension between intuitive forms of consciousness and the social mechanism of apperception by which the self is able to receive enormous amounts of data, selecting and categorizing them with the help of social scripts of cognition, Abramowski tries to reconcile the extreme sociology of Durkheim, for whom social phenomena constitute a reality fully independent of individuals, and the psychologism of Tarde, who in Abramowski’s

58 Idem, “Individual Elements in Sociology,” in: this volume, p. 87.

59 Idem, “Zagadnienia socjalizmu,” op. cit., p. 105.

60 Idem, “Individual Elements in Sociology,” in: this volume, p. 99.

interpretation reduces all objective phenomena to the desires and beliefs of a specific individual.⁶¹ As we know, Abramowski considered both trends to be simple versions of essentialism, which ignore the dialectical nature of social phenomena. According to him, the social domain does not constitute any particular collective reality; nor is it the image of an individual soul. It is identical with the soul in the most essential sense in which every social fact—both external to the subject, for example, law, institutions, cuisine, or gods, and internal, such as thoughts, images, and needs—passes through the perceptual mechanism of consciousness. “In the moral interior of the individual, a true social *microcosmos* lives in mental form, steeped in feelings and cenesthesia, and it is this which is the substratum and bearer of the external world of the collective organization, which subjugates the individual and controls him.”⁶² Physical phenomena and other phenomena of the external world related to the subjective living conditions of the subject are socialized through apperception, becoming “visible” to our psyche. On the other hand, thoughts, images and other mental phenomena become socialized in a reverse process, when they objectify themselves in social institutions and become somewhat independent of us. For instance, atheists do not attach importance to the phenomenon of divinity; but religion, as a social phenomenon, imposes its truths, rituals, and institutions on them with all its force.⁶³

b) *The Objective and Mental Nature of Social Phenomena*

Sociological phenomenalism does not try to separate the mental and social spheres—it sees them as two sides of the cognitive process. Abramowski’s sociology is in fact a kind of epistemology. Social phenomena are therefore dialectical in nature; as Abramowski stated, they have an “*objective and mental nature*”⁶⁴ and thus constitute the internalized objectivity of social and psychological institutions and facts—externalized properties of the self that are objectified in social reality, influencing it and changing the existing social divisions and the epistemological categories that are their expression. Hence, in this perspective, social change is a *de facto* transformation of the perception of the social subject, objectified in institutions. As Konstanty Krzeczkowski wrote, “The appearance of each new current of creative ideology proves that a

61 A fairly coarse interpretation. Abramowski did not understand how close he was himself to Tarde’s thought (Z. Krawczyk, *Socjologia Edwarda Abramowskiego*, op. cit., p. 211).

62 E. Abramowski, “Pierwiastki indywidualne w socjologii,” op. cit., p. 178.

63 Idem, “Issues of Socialism,” in: this volume, pp. 78–80.

64 Idem, “Individual Elements in Sociology,” in: this volume, p. 87.

certain transformation has begun to take place in individual elements, that a new conscience is being created.”⁶⁵

In Abramowski’s social thought, scientific inquiries complemented the political ideas he held. He tried to lay the foundations for sociology by reconciling the basic antinomies of the contemporary social sciences on the one hand, and on the other, by elaborating on Marxist theses concerning the transformation of social systems. In his theory of the duality of social facts, he managed to overcome the dichotomy of microprocesses and macrostructures, which is fundamental to sociology and dominated sociological discussions long afterwards.⁶⁶ He achieved this overcoming by perfecting the Marxist scheme of the dialectical construction of the social formation (a base and superstructure) through the introduction of an individual factor, which was familiar to most Marxist thinkers of his time.⁶⁷ In Abramowski’s view, a social phenomenon is an objectified part of the human self, which—to use post-Kantian categories—as “negative negativity” is the junction of what is social and what is mental: the two series in which social reality is intertwined. Oskar Lange, the famous Polish economist who is today classified in the heterodox current and who wrote one of the first works on Abramowski’s thought, called Abramowski’s social theory “psychologically deepened Marxism” for its Kantian starting point and break with the classical antinomies of Marxism.⁶⁸

Abramowski, due to his conviction about the objective and mental nature of social phenomena, was able to look in a completely different way both at the relationship between the individual and the social structure and—consequently—at the mechanism of social transformation, which, in his view, is deeply related to the cognitive condition of the subject. “Hence it follows that between any two series of social transformations that are causally related to each other there is always an individual fact resulting from the first series and being the cause of the second; therefore, the relation between the two is contained in the living and sentient link.”⁶⁹ According to Abramowski, a single

65 K. Krzeczowski, *Dzieje życia i twórczości Edwarda Abramowskiego*, op. cit., p. 101.

66 More about “agency-structure” debate in social sciences: R. Sibeon, “Agency, Structure, and Social Chance, as Cross-Disciplinary Concepts,” *Politics* 1999, 19 (3); R. Harré, „Philosophical Aspects of the Micro-macro Problem,” in: *Advances in Social Theory and Methodology: Towards an Integration of Micro- and Macro-Sociologies*, edited by K.C. Knorr-Cetina and A.V. Cicourel, London 1981, Routledge; C. Hay, „Structure and Agency,” in: *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, edited by D. Marsh and G. Stoker, London 1995, Macmillan.

67 Z. Krawczyk, *Socjologia Edwarda Abramowskiego*, op. cit., p. 219.

68 O. Lange, “Socjologia i idee społeczne Edwarda Abramowskiego,” in: *Idem, Wybór pism*, vol. 1: *Drogi do socjalizmu*, Warszawa 1990, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, p. 42.

69 E. Abramowski, “Individual Elements in Sociology,” in: this volume, p. 111.

human being, along with the ethical norms he follows, is also subject to socio-historical laws which are independent of him. The consciousness of *homo duplex*—the causative subject operating in conditions of external necessity—is neither a fully sovereign existence nor the figure of a homunculus, torn by superior social forces. As an “empirico-transcendental doublet,”⁷⁰ a mental and social *individuum* is rather a place for the transformation of the mental needs of an individual living and operating in given socio-historical conditions into new modes of collectively transforming the surrounding conditions. As Anna Dziedzic writes, “The subject of social phenomena was neither an isolated individual, nor a helpless observer of independent material processes. He was situated in the center of social phenomena and changes; his existence supported the phenomena; his actions could change them.”⁷¹ The social sciences’ typical breakdown of the opposing micro and macro spheres—subjective and objective, objective and mental—becomes in this light a purely theoretical issue, which does not occur in reality.

As a consistent social constructivist, Abramowski argues that the dilemma of agency or structure is solely the result of the methodological essentialism to which, oblivious of its theological roots, sociology adheres. Therefore, it is not laws that create people, but people, through their cognitive apparatus, who create new laws in the existing conditions of necessity. Modern sociology must exclude “absolutely all ‘gods’ from the realm of social life—both those called theological providence and those concealed beneath the scholarly term of a racial or social soul.”⁷²

A single cognitive act of the subject is the result of a confrontation between the socially grounded perceptual apparatus objectified in terms and ideas of culture, and the specific situation in which the subject finds himself—his condition in the experienced world. Cognition in the social sense is always a subversive process reformulating the very cognitive categories in force in a given community. This subversion is always an expression of the situation and aspirations of an individual who, in contact with social forces, creates new ways. Thus, apperception is a social process in which, paradoxically, a person’s individual freedom is realized.⁷³ “Apperception moralizes phenomena. Thus, it could be said that the ethical category is the most sensitive reagent by which the *socialness* of phenomena is known, and wherever it appears,

70 Concept taken from M. Foucault’s, *Order of Things. An Archaeology of Human Sciences*, London–New York 2007, Routledge, p. 347.

71 A. Dziedzic, *Antropologia filozoficzna Edwarda Abramowskiego*, op. cit., p. 51.

72 E. Abramowski, “Zagadnienia socjalizmu,” op. cit., p. 97.

73 Idem, “Issues of Socialism,” in: this volume, p. 83.

the objectification of a thinking being begins—the social world.”⁷⁴ Thus, Abramowski understands this freedom as a performative, creative element of human cognition, in which the subject, by socializing the phenomenon, transforms the existing conditions while simultaneously inventing new cognitive categories. For Abramowski, this implies an ethical change, which he expresses with the imperative “should be.”

Therefore, dividing social reality according to the micro-macro scale, or according to the Marxist division into what is economic (base) and what remains in the layer of cultural consciousness (superstructure), is an artificial and reductionist procedure. Social phenomena are therefore, by definition, experienced through the prism of the individual self—structural processes are always related to corresponding cognitive processes, so every social phenomenon is relational, not essential, in nature. The social phenomenon is neither one nor the other but the application of individual actions and collective conditions in the practice of the social subject. Thus, it should be assumed that:

[T]here is no causal series of phenomena of one category, of economic, political, or moral evolution, no speaking of more or less important series, of primary and secondary ranks [which would imply the existence of many levels of social reality—B.B.], if none of them could emerge on its own, being only one side of the whole of life, separated in our understanding.⁷⁵

The principle of the sociological method should thus be reformulated in the direction of looking for non-linear cause-and-effect justifications that would make the social sciences similar to the natural sciences, but with their own kind of “translation” of one series of phenomena into another—for example, the belief that vampires [*upiór*] are sucking the life fluids from people and animals into explanations of the economic and material situation of pastoral peoples for whom milk and cattle meat is the ultimate manifestation of prosperity.⁷⁶ The method should involve tracing the sequences of social activities in which a multiplicity of social factors merges to erupt in a new way of “thinking or doing.” “Consequently, we can translate the historical series of all kinds of social facts into any one of them. For religious, moral and political processes, we can always find an economic counterpart, and vice versa.”⁷⁷ Gabriel

74 Ibidem, p. 85.

75 Ibidem, p. 103.

76 An example from Łukasz Kozak’s book *Upiór. Historia naturalna*, Warszawa 2021, Fundacja Evviva L’arte.

77 E. Abramowski, “Zagadnienia socjalizmu,” op. cit., p. 142.

Tarde called these moments “logical duels”⁷⁸ as he believed that what is social, as a result of a series of imitative practices that sustain its existence, is transformed at the moment of a specific social interaction in which two visions of reality come into agonistic contact with each other—one conservative, imitative, and based on faith in the existing structures, and one based on invention, expressing new needs and filled with a desire that can only be fulfilled through new forms of life. In our example from research on the folk demonology of the Slavs, specterism disappears as a social phenomenon wherever collectivized or at least large-scale and technologically advanced agriculture appears.

Individual Sources of Social Revolutions

In *Individual Elements in Sociology* (*Pierwiastki indywidualne w socjologii*), Abramowski derived two basic methodological directives from the theorem about the social nature of the self. The first required social phenomena to be followed in their becoming while the second indicated the need to comprehend sets of phenomena as a whole, thus taking into account multiple changes of a social, economic, political, or moral nature. Social phenomena remain specific to the era in which they are born and at the same time constitute complex wholes, resulting from the series of cause-and-effect sequences that compose them. The sociology of becoming was supposed to right the previously off-kilter dialectics used by intellectuals and ideologues of socialist parties.

Therefore, when dealing with the present-day economic system, the intellectual, as the sole source of the birth of its antithesis, will consider the process of capital concentration, the association of production units, the cartelism of production, etc., according to the formula that the quantitative transformation of a phenomenon leads to its qualitative negation. On the other hand, real dialectics, which examines not only life processes, series of phenomena, but also individual links of phenomena themselves, dialectically, i.e., in their becoming—the only objective reality—[...] must completely break with all intellectualism, and instead of relying on definitions of phenomena—conceptual abstractions extracted from life—must take phenomena as they manifest themselves in their becoming; thus, not by substituting formal homogeneity in place of

78 B. Latour, “Tarde’s Idea of Quantification,” in: *The Social After Gabriel Tarde. Debates and Assessments*, edited by M. Candea, London–New York 2010, Routledge, p. 156.

actual facts but in regarding the diversity of life which evolution reveals to us in every seemingly simple fact as the only given reality.⁷⁹

Social changes are a composite of many factors that enter into mutual relations, and sociology should not consider the origins of changes by looking for a single cause, a basic or essential sphere of social reality. Every change in one of the spheres of social life (social, economic, or political ...) causes transformations in other spheres. Abramowski's consistent materialism thus broke with the orthodox identification of the base with factors of an economic (or existential) nature and rejected all theories ascribing a decisive meaning to one of the layers of social reality.

This has two basic implications. First, if the individual subject, through the process of apperception (the social conceptualization of data reaching the person from external factors), is one of the elements of the relation that creates the phenomenon, then individual consciousness, or as Abramowski usually called it, the "soul," "is always a living point of transformation,"⁸⁰ an instance that creates new forms of social phenomena and therefore new forms of "social beings"—organizations, institutions, laws, and so forth. Second, none of the instances entering into the relation is dominant; there are no special factors in the social process—all mono-causality disappears on the grounds of sociological sense. Although the decisive factor is an impulse from one of the spheres, it always happens in a socio-historical context, surrounded by a system of other factors. Abramowski proposes replacing the question of "cause" in sociology with the question of "interdependence."⁸¹ Thus, in one historical period or a given community, certain social facts, being in a way keystones within a network of many factors, become dominant, but without this network they are unable to act effectively.⁸² All instances entering into mutual relations leave their mark on the human mind, which in turn is not the subject's substantial identity but the sphere in which this contact takes place—the multidimensional self, which is a combination of forces.⁸³ The task of sociology is therefore to recognize the facts and processes that interact in series in order to study

79 E. Abramowski, "Zagadnienia socjalizmu," op. cit., p. 105.

80 Idem, „Les bases psychologiques,” op. cit., p. 385.

81 Ibidem, p. 384; Idem, "Pierwiastki indywidualne w socjologii," in: Idem, *Pisma*, vol. 2, Warszawa 1924, Nakładem Związku Polskich Stowarzyszeń Spożywców, p. 183.

82 Abramowski's concept of social change bears significant resemblance to contemporary actor-network theory.

83 E. Abramowski, "Experimental Metaphysics," in: this volume, p. 231.

those points that transform the existing social reality, provoking new identities and new forms of organization.

Abramowski's concept was aimed at all single-factor and static solutions in the social sciences and their implications for the workers' movement. On the one hand, Abramowski grew out of the socialist tradition, and on the other, he was quite an unambiguous critic of all the forms of determinism associated with interpretations of Marx's works within the socialist movement at the end of the nineteenth century. In accord with his assumption of multifactorial agency, Abramowski reinterpreted the classic Marxist dyad of the "base" and "superstructure" in an attempt to show that "individual elements" are a mediating element in the process of one's influencing the other. "The superstructure," he wrote, "begins with a change in the human soul, while the economic process ends with this change. Therefore the interdependence between one and the other, as manifested in the history of social transformations, is nothing more than the ordinary causation in the psychology of the individual."⁸⁴ Abramowski's social psychology was to abolish the classic antinomies of sociology: a problem known as the dispute between psychologism and sociologism, as well as Marxism—the question of the mutual relationship between the base factors (the matter of economic relations) and the superstructure (the influence that culture or the imaginary or ideological sphere has on the transformation of social formations). According to Abramowski, economic changes affect the "superstructure" but always through individual consciousness. We never experience social needs directly; they always express our individual condition, albeit within a social milieu.

[T]he embodiment of a need in an object, mental objectivity, requires something else in order to become a reality: it requires *the socialness of the producer himself*. [...] But because the producer lives among beings of the same species, [...] the creation has thereby become a collective expression, as if *an objective abstraction* of all of them. [...] the needs of many individuals are found in the same object, although each feels only for himself and in his own specific way.⁸⁵

The content and nature of human needs are therefore always economically and socially conditioned, but this does not exhaust their reality, which comes down to the deepest layers of the human self. Thus, a need depends on the

84 E. Abramowski, "Individual Elements in Sociology," in: this volume, p. 116.

85 Ibidem, p. 98.

materiality in which a person is entangled. It is a social necessity—a class, cultural, or political necessity in which the human subject is realized—a human subject who is simultaneously subject to it and creatively finds liberation from its bonds. This requires a specific psychological prism, through which Abramowski filters the influences of social factors in the mind of an individual: the same type of social structure, the same type of economic formation, in influencing various needs in the minds of numerous individuals, produces different forms of life and thinking—ideas which then acquire the shape of a “superstructure.” According to Abramowski, the division into base and superstructure is hence purely formal. In fact, there is only “the reality of the human soul”; and it is the inherent and dynamic core of social processes. All forms of superstructure, both cultural and ideological, reflect individual transformations of social needs and only as such affect the matter of social life.

Cultural and ideological content, however, never appears in its pure form in social practice—it is always mediated by the human self. Abramowski uses here the concept of “conscience,” which, in his opinion, should reflect the innermost, deepest part of the self, and at the same time show its ethical, and therefore causative, nature. Conscience is an instance of the self through which the ideas and rules of ethical life influence the external world: “individual equivalents” of social phenomena, which allow the individual to co-shape it—to cut out a sphere of freedom in the sea of necessity. All social transformations begin with an individual feeling and the imagining of a new reality; the change in the conscience of individuals is “contagious” because it is a psychological expression of the material situation in which a group of people find themselves.⁸⁶ Conscience is therefore a transformer⁸⁷ that connects the conditioned, external, and objective life of the social structure (and in this sense, static and phantasmic, existing through the “borrowed” being of structures), with what is free, internal, and subjective (the reality of the subject’s will in self-realization). Thus, conscience is also on the side of what is material in two senses: performative, because it produces specific effects in reality, and social (multifaceted), because it is, at the source, two rather than one, rather a non-aggregated multiplicity than a substantial being. Abramowski introduces to his conception of the self the dimension of irreducible political multiplicity, within which he manages to save an instance of subjective agency without becoming entangled in transcendent personal figures.

86 Ibidem, pp. 124–125.

87 Idem, “Metafizyka doświadczalna”, in: Idem, *Metafizyka doświadczalna i inne pisma*, Warszawa 1980, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, p. 577.

A person's "conscience" could be compared with a prism, from which a simple economic fact comes out split into its coordinates of other social categories; it is the living, feeling point of its transformation into a variety, into the totality of collective life, and it is so because here the individual elements of all social phenomena have accumulated and interconnected.⁸⁸

Thanks to the concept of conscience, Abramowski manages to combine "performative monism," that is, a belief in the agent role of the thinking subject, with the initial sociological pluralism of substances that enter into fusions initiating social transformations. For Abramowski, conscience is not the original "individuality" of a person but rather the initial multitude of possibilities, the mechanism for transforming the existing conceptual-thinking structures (which he considers to be the necessary starting point for all practice, but which need to be overcome) into new forms of creativity—the socio-material practice of people. Action is an objectification of the deepest "intuitive" layers of the human being—it is the moment when new forms of socialization and new institutions are born from the fusion of what is most individual and of material conditions of existence. Remaining in an indisputable marriage with the set of concepts of the philosophy of life or psychological voluntarism, the category of conscience is one of the key concepts that bind sociological phenomenalism with slightly later psychological research aimed at showing the active role, in perception, of intuitive processes remaining somewhat beyond the consciousness of the subject and belonging to the deepest layers of the self.

Toward a New Political Epistemology

In *Experimental Metaphysics* (*Metafizyka doświadczalna*), the last of his lectures in 1917, Abramowski stated that the part of consciousness that he called "conscience" allows us to have a "certain clairvoyance of the act," which is to say, the confrontation of our individual needs and possibilities with the external conditions of social phenomena: laws, structures, or gods. It is only in this confrontation or "resistance" that the true agency of the subject awakens, the true will, in which the individual and the social intertwine.

88 Idem, "Pierwiastki indywidualne w socjologii," op. cit., p. 186.

The will transforms the internal, individual world into the external, objective, and social world, which means that the will is the element that combines and identifies internal and external, individual and social phenomena, and is therefore an element of absolute being, the identity of differences, i.e., a substance of primary importance in human life. For without it, the transformation of an idea into an objective fact—my feeling into the feeling of others, my desire into its objective, social realization—could not occur.⁸⁹

Abramowski's social psychology is undoubtedly the result of the work of a sociologist who tries not to surrender to the superior role of concepts, to save agency for real people, to perceive social phenomena not as abstract monsters ruling them, but as products of human existence and work. The sociology of becoming requires an instance of will in order to understand social phenomena not as static beings (in the ontological sense) but as processes taking place before our eyes and dependent on individuals entangled in social relations—processes which in turn change the entities that create them. This kind of pragmatic view (in the Jamesian sense) aimed to save freedom and agency, which in the social sciences had ceded to impersonal phenomena—the products of sociologists and political ideologists themselves. Returning the category of individual consciousness to the social sciences and giving the activity of individuals an ethical and pragmatic dimension was intended to save sociology from falling into the indolence of a servant science, remaining at the service of the omnipotent state.

As Abramowski noticed, the relationship between modern social science and the development of state institutions results in the dogmatization of both: the rigid and objectified set of concepts of science inscribes all spontaneity of social life in prescriptive criteria and official categories, while the state supports academe by coercively legitimizing its form.⁹⁰ In trying to answer the “social question,” that is, the emergence of the masses in the public sphere and the need to create a new conceptual order that would reconcile both the multitude of interests of various individuals and social groups with an efficient government, and an awareness of class separateness with political representation, one field of science (sociology, as well as the practical field, socialism) opted for the use of the simplest ontological categories in the hope of introducing order in a rapidly changing and diverse world.⁹¹ “Society” was as much the

89 E. Abramowski, “Experimental Metaphysics,” in: this volume, p. 237.

90 J. Heilbron, *The Rise of Social Theory*, translated by S. Gogol, Minneapolis 1995, University of Minnesota Press, p. 29.

91 *Ibidem*, p. 172.

scholarly discovery of eighteenth-century moralists⁹² or nineteenth-century positivists as a tool for managing a revolting community: a conceptual device that aggregated the forces of a population into a coherent and productive system.⁹³ The “intellectualism” of the social sciences, which Abramowski fiercely tracked, was therefore not only a cognitive aberration or error resulting from the early development of the positive sciences but a political maneuver resulting from the historical configuration of social forces. As Abramowski perceived this process, the human need for categorization turned what existed into the dogma of eternity, subordinating processual life to unchanging judgment, and the collective to the state.

Dogmatism (both in its spiritualistic and materialistic form), which extends beyond the sphere of human thought, the world that exists with its laws of time, space, and causality, necessarily poses the problem of “the first cause and absolute laws” and spreads over humankind a metaphysical yoke supporting a whole hierarchy of deliberating or blind “gods,” personal or impersonal, ranging from the biblical Jehovah to the “spirit of race” and the “state reason” of the Hegelians.⁹⁴

In opposition to a state science based on the dogma of the immutability of human nature, an evolutionary vision of history, and the assumption of the indispensability of the state, Abramowski posited a “minor” science, remaining beyond academic theory. Sociological phenomenism is a form of transcendental critique of sociological categories which connects the world of great structural concepts—society, the state, the nation... and the daily, living practice of individuals—their desires, beliefs, and actions. Abramowski’s anti-metaphysical position “corresponds strictly to the historical task of socialism,” which takes on the task of leading politics beyond all transcendent figures, putting it in the hands of the masses, and organizing the social process without the help of top-down philosophical and political tools. If classical sociology responds to the state as a “politics of large numbers,”⁹⁵ sociological

92 J. Habermas, *Theorie und Praxis. Socialphilosophische Studien*, Frankfurt am Main 1978, Suhrkamp, pp. 291–294.

93 J. Donzelot, *The Promotion of the Social*, translated by G. Burchell, *Economy and Society* 1988, no. 7 (13), pp. 395–427; M. Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population. Lectures at the Collège de France 1977–1978*, translated by G. Burchell, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York 2007, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 333–361.

94 E. Abramowski, “Zagadnienia socjalizmu,” *op. cit.*, p. 172.

95 A. Desrosières, *The Politics of Large Number. A History of Statistical Reasoning*, translated by C. Naish, Cambridge, MA, and London 1998, Harvard University Press.

phenomenalism, in reducing the problem of the ontology of great social entities to the question of changing the social consciousness of individuals, is the intellectual base of stateless socialism, the ideology of pure socialization, which:

liberates man once and for all from the age-old bogeys of unsurpassed, heavenly despots, concealed beneath any kind of mask—materialistic fate or theological providence—and in reducing the entire overwhelming enormity of the universe and its laws to the principle of the phenomenon, as an attribute of the human brain, places the royal diadem of “divinity” on man’s hitherto humbled and enslaved forehead.⁹⁶

Only sociology in this sense has a chance to understand the actual functioning of the human collective, by replacing “social ontology” with a new political epistemology, the search for the laws governing society with a study of people’s practices and strategies in building a common world—the methods by which they aggregate all these “big animals”⁹⁷ populating the social world (the body politic, the society, and the collective)—and by seeking the first fruits of social phenomena in the cognitive process, in which the subject, when confronted with the world, constructs new conceptual forms in order to find a place for himself in this world and deal with the challenges it creates.

The social factor exists in the individual consciousness; it is the same consciousness. On the other hand, nations and classes, which by no means constitute any metaphysical entity that conditions social life—as its *prius κατ’ ἕξοκην*—are, on the contrary, themselves only the result of social life, a product of phenomenality, and like them, undergo changes and destruction. There may or may not be classes and organizations, depending on the phase history has entered. The social phenomenon precedes the emergence of these human groups and cannot therefore be conditioned by them.⁹⁸

In our opinion, Abramowski belongs to the group of forgotten classic thinkers of the “sociology of associations”⁹⁹ who, by getting rid of the essentialist

96 E. Abramowski, “Zagadnienia socjalizmu,” *op. cit.*, p. 172.

97 B. Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

98 E. Abramowski, “Issues of Socialism,” in: this volume, p. 85.

99 In addition to the above-mentioned Latour, Tarde, or Garfinkel, Marx could also be counted under certain conditions, while its philosophical roots can be found in Spinoza, Fourier, Bergson, James, and Dewey.

category of society, made it possible to reveal the multitude of various activities and social practices by which people establish new forms of institutions. As part of the apperceptive human consciousness, the social is always logically first, ahead of any historical forms that a collective of relational forces may take. Classical sociology, in delineating an inviolable area of the social, furrowed by indices and typologies, has tossed from its brackets many factors that function harmoniously within the community. As Bruno Latour wrote, “if there is a society, *then no politics is possible*.”¹⁰⁰ The sociology of the social, in removing from the domain of social facts the elements of individuality, specificity, and randomness, constructed a coherent and hermetical conceptual trap, recreating the same structures over and over again and reducing all processes of collective life to the line of the individual, society, and the state. The evolutionary image of social dynamics and the hierarchical, pyramidal structure of classical sociology created a time-space within which there was no room for any subversion, and the revolution was conceivable only as a direct consequence of the conditions of the system, or as an aberration that the system would sooner or later have to naturalize.¹⁰¹

The sociology of associations, by abandoning the essentialist, two-dimensional image of reality (the individual and society, micro and macro, agency and structure) typical of the classical sociology of the social, finally makes it possible to follow dynamically the transformations which the community itself undergoes. To refer again to Latour’s words:

I think it would be much safer to claim that action is possible only in a territory that has been opened up, flattened down, and cut down to size in a place where formats, structures, globalization, and totalities circulate inside tiny conduits, and where for each of their applications they need to rely on masses of hidden potentialities. If this is not possible, then there is no politics.¹⁰²

The task of sociology thus understood is to “bind the social anew,” but this does not mean taking the initiative away from social actors (from workers and women, as well as gods, nature, or objects) and putting all agency under the rule of scholars—Platonic philosophers. Rather, it is a sociology based on the experience of actors, on following their actions and being produced in

100 B. Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, op. cit., p. 250.

101 D. Williams, “A Society in Revolt or Under Analysis? Investigating the Dialogue Between 19th-Century Anarchists and Sociologists,” *Critical Sociology* 2013, vol. 40 (3), p. 473.

102 B. Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, op. cit., p. 252.

the course of those actions—a kind of participatory sociology, and therefore one that is at the same time an extension of the scope of beings operating in the world and an active participation in the transformation of some of them. Such a sociology would have the task of reweaving the field of socialization, not reducing it to any proper or “normal” form but co-creating new forms of living together, establishing new relationships, and new associations.¹⁰³ Thus, we can speak here of the specific “an-archic”¹⁰⁴ task of the social sciences, which would intertwine the cognitive objectivity of sociology with political action, taking the monopoly on social knowledge away from an academe that operates to create intellectual and political elites and thus returning social sciences to the self-evolving community.

Abramowski’s “sociological phenomenalism” was an attempt to create an “anarchist social science,” which would be based not on substantial assumptions about the nature of social actors (individual or collective) but on the study of the basic forms of community building, a sociology of “fraternity,” which would develop its concepts based on social experiments: establishing new communities, implementing bold social projects, and realizing new forms of self-government and participation. According to Abramowski, “social movement usually has an exact purpose which, from a contemporary scientific point of view, is an absurdity.” Therefore, it is not the social movement that should submit to the concepts of science, but sociology “must justify itself to the new fact of social life” by creating a “sociological laboratory, in the broadest meaning of this word.” Abramowski created his project of associative socialism as a “social science” in which the scientific and theoretical apparatus would harmonize with political imagination.

103 B. Blesznowski, „Experimental Utopia. Edward Abramowski’s ‘Applied Social Science,’” *Utopian Studies* 2022, forthcoming.

104 Abramowski is often considered an anarchist in the literal sense (R. Chwedoruk, *Ruchy i myśl polityczna syndykalizmu w Polsce*, Warszawa 2011, Elipsa, p. 83), but I would rather place him in the broader context of an-archism, which according to Foucault is the hallmark of all free thought which places at its starting point the non-obvious and unnecessary character of the historical forms of power (M. Foucault, *On the Government of Living. Lectures at the Collège de France 1979–1980*, translated by G. Burchell, Houndmills, Basingstoke–New York 2014, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 78–80).

Edward Abramowski's Writings



Issues of Socialism

I The Principle of Social Phenomenon

§ 1. Considered in relation to its object, socialism has a dual character: of *science and creation*, because it not only investigates and explains existing facts but also advances its own “should be”; it not only foresees the development of the future but also tries to create it, as a certain deliberately acting collective force. On the surface, this duality could appear contradictory and mutually exclusive. As a science, though, socialism must deal with the material available for our experience, with the phenomena of life, with the facts that are universally and without exception subject to the steadfast law of *causation*, and thus, every life fact, both individual and social—the rise of communism as well as the release of heat—must be considered to be the necessary, inevitable result of certain pre-existing facts, certain given conditions, against which any “should,” any purposeful effort of the human will, is just as superfluous and meaningless as it would be in application to any natural processes.

Having to do with life—as the object of study—we see nothing else in it but a continuous series of phenomena, developing in time and space relations, interconnected by inviolable ties of causality, determining each other qualitatively in their succession and coexistence. Hence, each individual phenomenon, considered as a link in this series, even if it still belongs entirely to the realm of the future, and only as the possibility of a distant fact imagined by us, has its own being, but it carries the indelible mark of something *conditioned*, and can be thought about only in this character. “Conditioned” means, that is, its existence does not begin independently and spontaneously with the appearance of a phenomenon in its revealed and individual character but already exists *in potentia* in the facts preceding that moment; it is *completely* determined by all its conditions, determined both in quality and in time, and therefore is *ineluctable*.

Future facts, those that are to occur and are foreseen, when they are examined scientifically, i.e., as the results of certain *data*, only differ from reality in that their individuality has not yet been manifested in a separate existence but rests concealed in its own conditions, identifying with them; nevertheless, it possesses a reality of being that is as determined and elemental, as indifferent to all impulses of human will, as the conditions themselves. Thus wherever the *conditioned* thing occurs (and from the viewpoint of science everything is conditioned), there is no room for an ethical “unconditionality,” for freedom opening the field for a deliberate, creative effort of will; there, it is only possible

to talk about *what is, was, or will be*, never about *what should be*, without losing the proper sense of this category. And the certainty of a given anticipated fact, the greater or lesser possibility of its appearance, depends only on the degree of our knowledge of the conditions of that fact, increasing as our knowledge approaches the totality of these conditions; and it does not in any way concern the very essence of things, the *objective* possibility of a fact independent of our cognition; for objectively every fact is either necessary or completely impossible.

And just as the scientific method, captured in the iron discipline of causation, excludes any creative factor, in the strict sense of the word—the factor of arbitrarily creating something that might be but also might not be—so *creation*, whether in ethics, the fine arts, or politics, goes against the scientific method, stands above experience and, looking beyond experience for its object, acts as if there were no causation at all.

My action, which is determined by conditions, ceases to be creation and is only a phenomenon of a special nature, harnessed in a causal series, and then loses its ethical significance, its dignity of duty; and its object, from the heights of the ideal, which is alien to all experience, descends into the position of ordinary *effect*, the result of an elemental and independent ineluctability. In the term “creation” there is an *implicite* notion of *freedom* [*dowolności*]. My action, instead of being a determined link in a great chain of phenomena, appears here as a spontaneous and decisive end cause, as an unqualified final “fiat,” which is necessary for the anticipated ideal to be realized. Without my creative effort, what could happen will not happen; and the creative effort only conditions itself; it may or may not be. This is the principle of freedom [*dowolności*].

Accordingly, the object of my creative endeavor—the *aim*, having its source in an unconditional act of will, liberated therefore from elemental causation, which no existing conditions ineluctably determine as such and which therefore could not appear as a result of a preceding series of phenomena—this object cannot be a phenomenon (since every phenomenon is subject to causality); it does not belong to the world encompassed by our experience but is an *ideal*, that is, it is a phenomenal possibility with which only an independent act of *conscious* will can enter into a causal relationship—one which, if it becomes real and enters the phenomenal world, does so only as a result of an *end cause*, as a freely achieved aim, and is never determined *ineluctably*, in an elementally developing series of phenomena.

§ 2. This principle of freedom and the “super-phenomenal” nature of an object appears most purely and clearly in artistic creation, that is, where the scientific method, based on causation, finds no place. We also find it, however, next to the scientific method, in ethics and socialism. Ethics, despite the

fact that it concerns the object of a strict science—the mental life of a human being—is above all the *creation* and normalizing of our inner life according to a certain criterion, a certain binding ideal.

In ethics, however, we recognize that there are no deeds without motives, and there are no motives without the mental processes that condition them, although we are clearly aware that in the spiritual life of a human, as in physical life, everything that is and had to be, everything is justified by its causes as a necessity, because both mental and physical phenomena, the only elements of all life, can develop only in the category of causation—yet we speak of good and evil, of what should be and what should not be in regard to a binding ideal. And despite all the psychological determinism, despite the steadfastness of those laws in which the causality of inner life occurs, we feel completely entitled to set a certain moral criterion for this life, a certain ideal, whether it be virtue for itself, a for of perfection, as in intuitive ethics, or whether it be personal or universal happiness, as in hedonistic or utilitarian ethics. *As an ideal*, its nature—whatever its conceptual content—remains always the same and is based on the fact *that it is completely liberated from all phenomenal causality*.

If, in considering my actions, I see that I am trying to be good to my friend *because* I love him, that will only be the psychological side of my conduct. My goodness *necessarily* results from a given feeling, and is just as justified in its existence as bad deeds with the feeling of hatred. It is or is not there, depending on the phenomena that determine it and which must be determined by others. There is no place here for any moral criterion; unchanging, inexorable causality both sanctifies everything that has just become a real fact; and everything that becomes real had to come to be, *only* by being possible. If, on the other hand, I provide a guideline for my conduct, i.e., when I consider it from an ethical standpoint, then, instead of confirming the mental states existing within me and predicting their results, I consider what *should* be according to a given moral criterion, regardless of whether the results foreseen by virtue of the existing characteristics of my character comply with the requirements of this criterion or not.

Therefore, a moral test can only retain its normative meaning for our life as long as it is not itself determined as a phenomenon. For, having entered into any causal series, it democratizes itself, loses all its special attributes immediately, and becomes equally indispensable to the whole of the series and as ineluctable as all its other links.

§ 3. In socialism, the creative element retains the same features that are contrary to the laws of phenomenality. If we consider the ideal of the future system—communism—from the standpoint of the scientific method, it will present itself to us as the predicted result of all social evolution to date. This

conclusion, like every fact, is framed in phenomenal causality and can only be either ineluctable or completely impossible. Thus, if the present stage of historical evolution determines the future, it determines it completely.

Capitalism carries within itself not only the germ of the economic factors of the future system (such as the enormous power of the productive forces, *social* work, great production organisms, the *planning* of production in cartels, the *impersonal* property of syndicates and joint-stock societies), but also prepares this generative force of the human consciousness, which is to bring forth previously dormant forms of new life. Eliminating small industry and small owners, it at once organizes a great army of the proletariat; by dragging man under the yoke of exploitation and destroying his family farm, it awakens in him at the same time new desires and aspirations, and pushes him toward new concepts and ideals; in this way, it prepares not only the building material but also the builder himself; that is, everything that is needed for the birth of the future. This is the principle of *scientific* socialism—evolutionary determinism. The ideal of the social future, considered here from the standpoint of phenomenal causation, ceases to be an ideal in the proper sense of the word and becomes a necessary result of historical development.

Nevertheless, socialism is not content with the *necessity* of this result, but riveted by its ideal—an ideal which is proper, pure, and untouched by causality, it *forms* as a political party. “The philosophers,” says Marx, “have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point is to *change* it.”¹ This creative

1 K. Marx, “Theses on Feuerbach,” [in: K. Marx, F. Engels, *Selected Works in Two Volumes*, vol. 1, London 1947, Lawrence & Wishart, p. 354]. Marx presents this relation of the *practical*—that is, creative—nature of socialism to the theoretical postulates as follows: “There is no need for any great penetration to see from the teaching of materialism on the original goodness and equal intellectual endowment of men, the omnipotence of experience, habit and education, and the influence of environment on man, the great significance of industry, the justification of enjoyment, etc., how necessarily materialism is connected with communism and socialism. If man draws all his knowledge, sensation, etc., from the world of the senses and the experience gained in it, then *what has to be done* is to arrange the empirical world in such a way that man experiences and becomes accustomed to what is truly human in it and that he becomes aware of himself as man. If correctly understood interest is the principle of all morality, man’s private interest *must be* made to coincide with the interest of humanity. If man is unfree in the materialistic sense, i.e., is free not through the negative power to avoid this or that, but through the positive power to assert his true individuality, crime must not be punished in the individual, but the anti-social sources of crime must be destroyed, and each man must be given social scope for the vital manifestation of his being. If man is shaped by environment, his environment *must be* made human. If man is social by nature, he will develop his true nature only in society, and the power of his nature must be measured not by the power of the separate individual but by the power of society.” See: Marx’s comments “on the French materialism of the Eighteenth century” [Abramowski’s own translation from

element is an outstanding feature of socialism, as opposed to other liberal social theories. Each of them draws a very narrow circle for human creativity, considering social relations as laws of nature, against which man can only take a *laissez-faire* position, acknowledge his helplessness, acquiesce with resignation, and remain silent.² Furthermore, no other party sets as its goal the creation of a new society, and at best, under the pressure of socialism, formulates certain demands for the future. Naturalism kills actual political action in them, reducing this action to counteracting the revolutionary ideas spreading to the masses. Socialism, on the other hand, considers itself to be the force that, though drawn from history, is to rule over history, and that, in spite of all that evolutionary determinism, will have the last word, deciding the further development of humanity.

The contradiction is clearly marked. History, the spontaneous development of social relations, determines the entire future; the consciousness of the proletariat, class struggle, ideological revolutionary trends and slogans; in short, the entire moral side of social life, as well as capital and great production, as well as laws and political regimes, appear on the basis of certain historical reasons and extend in an infinite series of phenomena which the appearance of these facts makes imperative. Socialism, however, as a political party, considers it necessary to *acquire* new forms of life, even though these forms determine themselves elementally; to achieve the ideal, socialism considers it necessary to carry out purposeful action, to make people aware, to organize, to struggle, in short to push forward the entire historical development and to do so with the strong conviction that without this purposeful, creative work the ideal will not be achieved, although it is *scientifically* determined as a *result*

the following passage: K. Marx, F. Engels, "The Holy Family, or Critique of Critical Criticism. Against Bruno Bauer and Company," in: K. Marx, F. Engels, *Selected Works*, vol. 4, Electronic Book 2010, Lawrence & Wishart, pp. 130–131].

- 2 As a result of a strange distortion of the substance of the word, liberalism, and the closely related political economy of the orthodox school, call themselves representatives of "individualism," even though they reduce the human being to the role of a passive witness of mechanically unfolding social processes, juxtaposing to the insignificance of his mind eternal and universal economic "ideas," natural forces in social garb, which look on the human being's utopias and reformist aspirations with the indifference of fatalism, and if temporarily violated, take revenge on him—by social stagnation or anarchy. "Individualism" is actually supposed to mean *egoism*, the human's survival instinct—the sole human element, according to political economy, out of whose combination mysterious "laws" arrange the harmony of social life. On the other hand, a socialist critique of political economy, in reducing "economic laws" to the value of *historical* categories, simultaneously transfers them to the purely human sphere, in the metaphysical "ideas" spontaneously governing social relations, and reveals the real human being.

of all evolution thus far, and as such must in any case necessarily take place. Therefore, the ideal remains free from phenomenal causation here as well; it preserves the purity of its nature, and only one act of conscious will—the act of *revolution*—can make it real. Due to the nature of the social ideal, the nature of a thing liberated from causation, socialism can impose obligations, transform the *phenomena* of collective consciousness into *ethical* categories, calling the proletariat to fulfill its historical duty, imposing on its followers a certain course of action to which they are obliged by the ideal they profess; in short, it can have its *obligatory norms* in politics and morality, which no phenomena, as essentially subordinate to and inseparable from causation, can ever possess.³

§ 4. The contradiction between these two methods—the scientific and creative—is very clear. The first is based on *causality*, on evolutionary determinism, and considers every historical fact, both economic and moral, conscious and unconscious, to be unavoidable, conditioned by a whole series of preceding phenomena; the second takes *freedom* [*dowolność*] as its basis, looks at historical facts as at such that may or may not come to be, depending on the action of the conscious human will, which only conditions itself. The former looks at the social future as a necessary *result* of all evolution to date, determined in phenomena and elementally born in the present; it looks at the second as an *ideal* liberated from all causality, not conditioned by any phenomena and which only an act of conscious will, a final cause, can determine. The former does not allow any ethical categories; it only speaks of what *is* or *is to come*, and is completely alien and inaccessible to all morality and political action, while the latter sets its binding norms and talks about what *should be*, both in terms of individual ethics and in politics. The former is the *evolutionary* side of socialism, based on the elemental causality of historical facts; the latter is its *revolutionary* side, based on conscious creation.

3 The *creative* nature of socialism is most hateful to both the scholar and the police world of the bourgeoisie. Evolution itself, on its way to collectivism, would be easily forgiven, but unfortunately “these speakers and writers,” as Garofalo says, are not just thinkers who believe that they have discovered a terrible new path marked out for humanity. If they say “we foresee by certain indications that in two or three centuries, or a thousand years, private property will vanish and capital will become the possession of all,” they may or may not be right, but no one who is not endowed with the gift of prophecy will be able to confirm it with certainty. Evolution is a completely innocent thing; no one would sacrifice his life or his peace for it, and only university professors would fight for it. “But it is worse”—this same criminologist continues—“because they (the socialists) do not want to wait for the spontaneous development of society in the economic direction they anticipate ... it is about the *artificial acceleration* of evolution, (!) in other words, about *the use of force* to transform society according to their desires.” (See: R. Garofalo, *La superstition socialiste*, translated by A. Dietrich, Paris 1895, Félix Alcan, pp. 29–31).

However, despite the contradiction of these two methods, they coexist in perfect harmony; they form such a unified synthesis of today's socialism that the absence of either would fundamentally alter its entire character. Without this scientific and creative, evolutionary and revolutionary duality, socialism would not be what it is today as an objective social doctrine independent of individual minds, embodied in history, in the lives of the masses. It would be either just a school of sociological science, whose life would be locked in the offices of scholars, or it would be a certain religion of the future, a utopian faith, whose "creation" would have no connection with the study of life phenomena. The synthesis of both methods, combining science and creation into one, gives socialism this specific character and allows it to take such an exclusive position in the history of the human mind that one and the same doctrine is simultaneously the object of scientific research and a call to battle.

In *utopian* socialism, only the creative method reigned. The utopians viewed the future system as a thing entirely dependent on the decision of the human will, enlightened by reason; the decision itself was for them unconnected with any historical conditions, with any social class, but could appear at any moment in history, by virtue of the very understanding of the truth, the attractive force of the ideal.

Today's scientific socialism arises from utopian socialism and applies evolutionary determinism to the problem of the future; consequently, it considers the ideal from a new point of view, as a result of the spontaneous development of social history, and associates it with the historical conditions of capitalism. But this evolution does not in any way diminish or weaken the creative nature of socialism; on the contrary, even having found its basis in the facts of history, in what is "weighed within" today's society, that nature has only been emphasized, passing from the domain of individual intentions to the will of the popular masses; and the purity of the ideal as such is in no way obscured by conferring the *resultant* nature on the object of socialism, as it may be concluded that *belief* in the realization of communism carries much the scientific certainty which a mere examination of the facts could give us. It reaches much deeper than history and its experience; it reaches into the human being itself, and there it intuitively learns the full force of an ideal that can even go contrary to facts—but this will be clear to us only in the following paragraphs. Communism as an *ideal* is a complete certainty: it is conditioned only by the conscious will of the proletariat, following its lodestar. As a historical *result*, however, it is only an *assumption*: historical processes would have to be known with mathematical accuracy, so that the predictions of the future thus achieved could have the degree of steadfastness required for the purposeful

action of socialism. The nature of the *ideal* therefore now speaks in socialism over the force of scientific proof; it occupies a dominant position in it.

§ 5. Moreover, the contradiction we perceive when considering these two faces of socialism—the scientific and creative—must therefore be only a seeming contradiction if they form such a uniform synthesis of the whole, and a complete resolution of it must rest in the methodological duality that characterizes today's socialism. The solution has usually been sought in violation of the purity of the evolutionary method; in order to justify the necessity of the existence of history-making *politics*, in the face of the spontaneity of social development, there has been a resort, for example, to a strange division of phenomena—those subject or not subject to evolutionary determinism: “material,” economic relations would belong solely to elemental development, to historical evolution, while the whole sphere of human consciousness, and especially the sphere of social concepts, of ideology, would constitute the field for proper creativity, and, as if being freed from historical determinism, would justify the existence of politics, and the necessity of propaganda. However, it is easy to see all the arbitrariness and shallowness of such a division, since every phenomenon, economic as well as moral, physical, and spiritual, can be taken as a subject of science, and then ideas of considering the phenomenon in the category of causality, looking for causes that determine its existence, and looking at it through the prism of the uninterrupted continuity of phenomena, forcefully come to mind on the basis of the certainty—which is *a priori* present in our consciousness—that everything without exception that occurs in the phenomenal world, comes from something and is the effect of other phenomena that determine it.

Ideology can therefore be equally considered as a historical product as well as economic relations, especially in that the research of social science shows its close dependence on economic phenomena, its deep, intimate connection with the development of the *productive* forces of society, its influence and interaction with the whole physical, material side of social life, which are so mingled with each other that it is impossible to trace the continuity of *purely economic* evolution, free from those ideological links that fall into the series of economic phenomena as causes or effects. Hence, there is no principle that would allow the artificially separated “ideology”—phenomena of the social consciousness—to be freed from the yoke of historical determinism and make of them a free and exclusive field for political creativity.

An equally awkward idea, which out of the desire to be freed from the methodical antinomy of socialism is encountered quite often, is the assertion that although deliberate political action cannot change anything in evolution, it nevertheless *accelerates* it; the future will come out of the present, with or

without our purposeful action; it will emerge as determined by historical development, of which we ourselves, with our ideal and creative work, are only one particular link; the creative role of socialism as a political party, the awareness of the proletariat, can only hasten this birth of the future, without adding anything new to its qualitative content. The communist system, if it is to be, *must* be, as determined by blind, inexorable, and unhesitating historical causality, and we can only *shorten* its spontaneous development through a conscious effort of our will, political action, and ideological propaganda. In this way, the contradiction is to be resolved by delimiting the domain of evolution and the field of creativity—between the qualitative and quantitative aspects of life. On the qualitative side, only evolution reigns; types of regimes, the content of history, is determined by a spontaneous process; on the quantitative side, understood as the *amount of time* needed for a given historical development, creativity reigns and only here does it have a free field. Time is taken here as a certain real abstraction, existing independently of phenomena and with which it is possible to operate, without touching its content, as something completely empty, devoid of all phenomena, hovering above life, and yet real.

The philosophical thoughtlessness of such a concept is striking. Time, which is only a form of our perception of phenomena, cannot exist as a certain reality independent of phenomena and devoid of any phenomenal content; the conceptual abstraction of “time” corresponds to nothing more than a certain *series* of phenomena, to successive changes. To *hasten* the emergence of a fact means only to exclude a certain series of phenomena that separates a given cause from the expected effect, that is, to break the series of causality, to destroy certain links. Creativity, acting on the length of *time* for something to come into being, would therefore act out of the ineluctability of things and on the evolutionarily determined, phenomenal *content* of life itself.⁴

4 Here is another method, which is quite popular, of solving this antinomy. Let us take as an example the reasoning of Mr. Plekhanov on the relation of the ideal and creativity to historical determinism: “With him (the reference is to Engels) there is also an ‘ideal.’ But his ideal is not detached from reality. His ideal is reality itself, *the reality of tomorrow*, the reality that will come not because Engels possesses this ideal, but because the nature of this reality is such that from it, according to its own internal laws, this reality of tomorrow that could be called Engels’s ideal must develop. Backward people may ask us, ‘If the whole thing rests only in the features of reality, what is Engels doing there? Why is he interfering with his ideals in an unalterable historical process?’ Plekhanov replies with the following explanation: ‘*From the objective angle*, Engels’s position is as follows: in the process of reality’s passing from one form to another, it embraced him as one of the indispensable tools of the transformation taking place. *From the subjective angle*—it turns out that for Engels this participation in the historical process is pleasant and that he considers it his duty, the great task of his life.’—But the process of *biological* development, as well as any other life process, also ‘embraces’ man

The contradiction, therefore, is not resolved and is impossible to resolve as long as we remain in the field of phenomena. This impossibility is sometimes the reason why minds too focused on the evolutionary side and unable to look deeper into socialism, beyond evolution, respond with a certain disregard of the activity of socialism, to its creative work, to the social obligations it imposes, regarding it all as at an innocent plaything in contrast to the mighty course of historical elementality.

§ 6. The solution to the contradictions should be sought elsewhere. Since the contradiction is between two mutually exclusive *methods*, which can only reign separately, in regard to their own object, the solution should be sought on grounds that are completely neutral to both, where neither yet extends its power, because as soon as we enter the realm of causation or creation we must submit ourselves unconditionally to the absolute dominion of one method or the other, and one or the other will have to be emphatically excluded; the ideal will admit no evolutionary movement—the evolution of no ideal.

The solution can only be found in this one point, which, while being inaccessible to both, nevertheless conditions and enables both. And this must be the fundamental point, the essential axis of socialism, which, while being neither the principle of evolution nor the principle of an ideal, can create out of two mutually exclusive methods such a uniform synthesis as living, present-day socialism, not confined by scientific theories but embracing these theories and life itself—a great class movement.

The point, therefore, where the contradiction under consideration disappears—where the methodological duality fuses in its uniform and

with a given phase of its evolution, and for me, for example, my *participation* in this elemental movement may be very pleasant, thanks to which, instead of remaining an *amphioxus* progenitor, I have a human organism; however, despite all the 'pleasure' in perceiving the fact that I am a link in the great evolution of biological phenomena, neither I nor anyone would have thought of interfering in this evolution with my ideals, and my *participation*, which has already taken place as a necessary fact, without asking if it is my will, makes a *duty* of my life. Plekhanov completes his explanations with the sentence, which is perfectly correct, that "the laws of social development cannot be realized without the mediation of men, like the laws of nature without the mediation of matter. But these same people, by no means stand *above* or *next* to social processes, but with all their ideology and feelings are themselves only a necessary, evolutionarily determined product of these processes. So why exactly does Engels interfere here with his ideals? Will the process which he also created himself not be able to do without his deliberate efforts? The question of 'backward peoples' remains unanswered"—translation from Polish (See: J. Plekhanov's Notes to Engels's brochure "On Feuerbach," Note 9, pp. 102–103, Russian edition 1892). Original edition: [„Primechaniya Plekhanova k knige F. Englesa 'Ludwig Feuerbach ...'"], in: G. Plekhanov, *Izbrannyye filosofskie proizvedeniya*, vol. 1, Moscow 1956, Gospolitizdat, p. 490.

common source—*must be that thing which by necessarily conditioning the phenomenon, is not itself a phenomenon*, and which therefore *implicitly* contains in itself both an evolutionary principle and a creative principle. What it is is indicated by the very nature of those objects in which the coexistence of both methods appears. This coexistence is possible only where it is not a matter only of the phenomena themselves but also of a thinking subject. The creative method, which is characterized by freedom and an ethical category expressed in the formula “should be,” finds no place, for example, in the natural sciences: it is completely alien to their spirit. Claims that oxygen *should* combine with hydrogen, or that heat *should* transform into mechanical work, make no sense. The mere perception that it “combines” or “transforms” exhausts the entire content of a given object. There is no place here for either ethics or freedom, which is completely eliminated by the determinism of causality, occurring in fixed and unchanging laws. We find the same in mental phenomena when we consider them in unconscious processes that take place without the participation of our apperception, of a conscious effort of the will, and images associated with a place evoke each other; the general term “dog” includes the concepts of all concrete “dogs” but not the idea that something *should* be evoked or included; a morality of impression, *requiring* such an excitement to correspond to such an impression would be as comic and unfounded as the morality of chemical compounds.

Hence, all phenomena, both physical and psychological, turn out to be completely immune to the creative method, and cannot be bent into ethical freedom when considered in relation to themselves, in their spontaneous actions with one another; the realm of pure phenomena is under the exclusive reign of causation. On the other hand, both physical and mental phenomena can perfectly enter the form of ethical freedom when they are considered in relation to the subject, to the thinking being: heat *should* be transformed into mechanical work for the sake of humankind’s production goals; goods, the products of labor, *should* correspond to human needs; thinking *should* be logical; good feelings *should* rule deeds. Here, then, the creative method has its fully legitimate application; it is even required by our cognitive critique, although both in productive work, in the deeds of our will, and in our thinking, we find only physical or mental phenomena, as constituting the entire *content* of given facts; the succession of these phenomena, however, is considered here in relation to our conscious will, in relation to the human as a thinking being, and therefore despite its purely phenomenal content, this content is entirely accessible to the creative method, to the category of purposefulness and duty, without ceasing to be, as phenomenal, subject to the principle of causation, the scientific method. Thus, the coexistence of both methods is possible only

where a human appears *as a thinking being*, where the series of phenomena are considered in relation to the *subject*. What justifies this? What mysterious point exists in a human that not only allows the coexistence of two mutually exclusive methods but even requires that coexistence and that, without disturbing phenomenal determinism in any way, yet sets binding norms for it and points to the heights of the ideal?

§ 7. To understand this, we must turn to the pure theory of cognition and in the very *principle of the phenomenon* seek an explanation of the mystery. A phenomenon is everything with which we can enter into any relationship; everything that is or that might be available to our external or internal experience—that appears as a *given* in regard to us. Since what exists *positively* for us is only that which falls in some way within the scope of our experience, in our life, as real or possible, physical or spiritual things, therefore, every existence having a positive value—the only kind about which we can say anything—is a phenomenon.

Objects of the external world, facts of life, as well as all mental states, the real present, as well as potentiality, in a word, the entire content of the soul and space, are phenomenal. But if, independently of all metaphysical schools, and regardless of whether the meaning we give to the content of our experience is that of apparent reality or the thing itself, we wish to reduce all this diversity of the content of our experience—the entire content of life in general—to one abstraction, to embrace all existences available to our experience by one feature common to all of them without exception, then we see that the only feature that encompasses everything, the highest and ultimate abstraction that cannot be raised to a higher degree of generalization, is only that they—all existences—are the *object of our thought*. Everything *that is*—not in a metaphysical but a positive sense, i.e., that *exists* as a thing that can enter into the scope of our experience, external or internal—is consequently merely an object of our thought, or could be. Something that could not be perceived by us under any conditions, either in its living present or in its consequences, or as an external object, or as our image, concept, or feeling, that, in a word, could in no form constitute an object of our thought, even if it existed in itself, in the inaccessible realm of mysteries, would not exist at all for us; it would have no positive value; it would be absolutely *nothing* in the whole range of our lives. When a fact occurs and draws us into a relationship of mutual influence, it does so because we perceived it as a present reality, or perceived it in its effects, or as a predicted possibility.

When it rains, for example, that is a real fact of the present if we perceive the rain as it falls; however, it is also a real fact when no one perceives it, because it reveals itself as an *extant* fact in its consequences; but even then, even when

it is not perceived by us while it is falling, or in its effects, it may nevertheless be a fact, as a mere possibility that comes to mind for any reason, as a general fact which may or may not exist at a given time. So only the very form of our perception changes; perception, however, the emergence of thought, always remains an inseparable criterion for the existence of a fact.

We can perfectly suppose the existence of many unnoticed things, which are today hidden from us, or even hidden forever, an infinite world of *possibilities*, a world of unknown relations of action, unseen figures, never experienced states of feeling; but the mere *supposition* of these possible things gives them a certain positive value of being as something *imagined* and perceived, and therefore as an object of our thought—only that the object here is of a purely mental nature. Similarly, the most real facts, those that are least subject to judgment and supposition, such as *pain*, for example, derive all their power of existence from their position as objects of thought; pain that was somehow not perceived, that could not be located anywhere, or even generally thought to *be*, would not exist at all as a mental phenomenon, as our feeling; the sunlight would vanish completely, disappear into the negative realm of unknowable being, if it could not be perceived as real, imagined as a phenomenon that had been or was to be, or inferred as a necessary or possible cause or effect of perceived facts, i.e., if it did not become in some form the offspring of our thoughts.

The attribute of “existence” is therefore synonymous with the possibility of becoming an object of thought. Something *is* positive—as a fact of life in general; that is, it is the possibility of thought. These two concepts are completely compatible with each other, completely substituting for each other, containing an identical content. If we premise that there is metaphysical existence, things in themselves that exist independently of our thoughts (like matter or Platonic ideas), then we can say that between us and all existence that is beyond us there is always thought—the only bridge that connects us with a thing in itself, and hence all existence can only reveal itself *as such* when it becomes the object of thought, i.e., in the possibility of thought lies its positive value, the value of a fact that can enter our experience, become a moment of life, a part of our world.

The possibility of thought is therefore the *principle of the phenomenon*. This principle does not prejudge any metaphysical theory and retains its universal relevance to both materialism and idealism; it is only an experience expressed *in abstracto*, an inherent feature of all concrete facts without exception. Even supposing that chemical atoms are the basis of all things, the attribute of the possibility of thought always remains the necessary condition for the group,

the connection, the synthesis of these atoms to become a positive existence, an existence entering the scope of our experience.

However, this is only one side of the principle, explicitly expressed, which necessarily includes the other, the unexpressed side, just as the direction “to the right” is possible only in view of its opposite, the direction to the left. The principle of a phenomenon as an object of thought contains the implicit notion of a thinking subject. The object of thought is impossible without its opposite, the thinking subject, just as the thinking subject without an object of thought—if we stay in the sphere of positive existences, the existences entering our experience, in life in general, without touching on the mysterious land of “thoughts in themselves,” ideas beyond our extant consciousness—is a concept that cannot be thought, that is devoid of any content.⁵ Thus, given the positive value of a phenomenon, as something *perceived*, its negative value must occur—*that which perceives*. In view of its objective nature, as a thing that imposes itself elementally, there is its subjective character—the negation of every thing—which necessarily conditions objectivity.

Hence, each phenomenon has, as it were, two faces: the objective and subjective. Only the former, as an object of thought, is knowable; the latter, as *conditioning* the object of thought, cannot be that thing itself—it is unknowable. Solely the former engages the entire apparatus of thought; it needs proving, justification; the latter, as inaccessible to cognition, negates all logic, is free from all binding laws of cognized objectivity; it does not know the forms of cognition for itself, because it knows itself; it does not need a justification, because it justifies itself. It is as if an eye “which, seeing everything, cannot see itself”; the light which, because it sheds light on everything, need not enlighten itself. Therefore, all the laws and forms in which the whole world and life are presented to us, and their basic categories—time, space, and causality, to which everything is subject, creating a strict logical whole—constitute the exclusive property of the positive side of the phenomenon, the phenomenon

5 “Outside of its relation to the subject, the object ceases to be an object, and if it is deprived of this relation or made abstract, then at the same time all objective existence is destroyed” (A. Schopenhauer, *De la Quadruple racine du principe de la raison suffisante. Dissertation philosophique, suivie d'une histoire de la doctrine de l'idéal et du réel*, translated by J.-A. Cantacuzéne, Paris 1882, Librairie Germer Baillière, p. 46 [translation from the Polish—translators note; English edition: “Realism overlooks the fact that the object no longer remains object apart from its reference to the subject, and that, if one takes this away or abstracts from it, all objective existence is also immediately nullified.” A. Schopenhauer, *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason and Other Writings*, translated and edited by D. E. Cartwright, E. E. Erdmann, Ch. Janaway, Cambridge 2012, Cambridge University Press, p. 37]).

as an object of thought, and for the other side, the negative side, they are completely alien. It—as the conditioning object—must be a complete negation of all its attributes. It is the negative face of the phenomenon; it is the *thinking subject* that opposes proper phenomena—things and mental states, objects in general—that is, to speak more simply, it is what each of us perceives in himself as his own “self,” which is the best known and surest reality to everyone.⁶

§ 8. Our intuition is fully compatible with the negative nature of the subject. My “self” rests on nothing, has no justification, no criterion of certainty, it is a *sufficient cause for itself*, its only justification. For everything, I need a certain logical test, a certain rule that keeps me from mistakes; everything can be doubtful and deceptive in the face of a thousand different errors and deviations that lurk constantly in our thoughts and senses, confusing the correctness of cognition; for me only one “self” is elevated above all doubts, a certainty that despises evidence, so that the question to be tested—how do I know it is my “self”?—seems to us completely pointless and unnecessary.

My “self” is completely unknowable, I cannot develop it into any definition, invent any attribute for it, or say anything except *that it is me*; and yet nothing is clearer to me than my “self,” nothing more direct and free from all error, nothing more real. It is inaccessible to definition because nothing is more certain than it, and therefore nothing can be used to define it. *It is opposed to all phenomena*: I am not any external object that I see at any given moment, because I see it as an object; I am not my own organism, because I perceive and examine this organism as an object; I am not an image, nor a feeling, nor a concept, filling my consciousness at a given moment, because I perceive them as my mental states, although in my consciousness there is nothing else but a series of these states, developing in an uninterrupted course; I am not pain, nor pleasure, nor desire, because I feel this pain, desire, and pleasure; I accompany everything, but I am nothing but that “self,” which for me does not need any explanations, because beyond all definitions it is most known and clear to me. By opposing all phenomena, it is thus *imperceptible* to thoughts, constantly slipping out of

6 “An abstraction could be made,” says Schopenhauer, “of all *special* cognition, and in this manner the statement ‘I know,’ which is the ultimate abstraction we are capable of, could be attained, but this statement is equivalent in meaning to the following—‘objects exist for me’—and this latter is identical with that other—‘I am a subject’—which does not contain in itself anything other than the simple ‘I’” (ibidem, p. 217 [translation from the Polish—translator’s note; English edition: “Of course, one can abstract from any particular cognition and so arrive at the proposition ‘I cognize,’ which for us is the ultimate possible abstraction, but identical with the proposition ‘for me, there are objects’ and this is identical with ‘I am subject,’ which contains nothing more than merely ‘I.’” A. Schopenhauer, *On the Fourfold Root*, op. cit., p. 134]).

all its forms, not letting it be trapped in any concept. When I think of *it*, it is no longer the “self” proper that is the object of my thought but only a certain philosophical *concept*; the proper “self,” whenever we want to grasp it with our thoughts, immediately moves to the negative pole of the phenomenon, takes the active side and perceives this conceptual illusion, just as the eye can only see its reflected image, never itself.

While accompanied by continuous changes, my “self” retains *its unchanging continuity* because, as a negation of all qualities, it cannot undergo any changes; as a negation of everything, it always remains the same phenomenal *nothingness*. From the beginning to the end of life everything changes: character, concepts, impressions, the surrounding world, the organism, strength, will; from childhood to death I go through a whole range of personalities, which are physically and spiritually different; nevertheless, I am always myself; under the mask of the greatest life changes, the continuity of my “self” remains intact; it connects all the most contradictory personalities, thanks to which, in the child and the old man, in health and sickness, in rich, youthful sensitivity and subsequent blunting, I always find only myself; in the most extreme life contradictions—spiritual and physical—I always feel my identity, my own “self.”

§ 9. This negative side of consciousness—my “self”—the thinking subject of the human being, is therefore something which, while *necessarily conditioning every phenomenon, is not a phenomenon itself*. Therefore, in it lies the solution to this methodological contradiction that occurs wherever a human appears *as a thinking being*. Causality and arbitrariness are fully compatible here, they even require each other, as if parts of a uniform synthesis.⁷ Causality—as a form of our cognition—is the exclusive attribute of the phenomenon proper,

7 “Natural necessity,” says Kant, “is inherent in any combination of causes and effects in the sensory world, but freedom must be accorded to that cause that is not in itself a phenomenon (even if it served as the conditioning basis of the phenomenon). Therefore, necessity (literally nature) and freedom can be regarded without contradiction as attributes of the same object, depending on how it is viewed—as a phenomenon or as a thing in itself” (I. Kant, *Prolégomènes à toute métaphysique future qui pourra se présenter comme science*, translated by J. Tissot, Paris 1865, Librairie Philosophique de Ladrange, §53 [translation from the Polish—translator’s note; English edition: “[N]atural necessity will indeed attach to every connection of cause and effect in the sensible world, and yet that cause which is itself not an appearance (though it underlies appearance) will still be entitled to freedom, and therefore nature and freedom will be attributable without contradiction to the very same thing, but in different respects, in the one case as appearance, in the other as a thing in itself.” I. Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics That Will Be Able to Come Forward as Science with Selections from the Critique of Pure Reason*, translated and edited by G. Hatfield, Cambridge 2004, Cambridge University Press, p. 96]).

the phenomenon as the object of thought; it cannot, however, concern its negative, unknowable side—a thinking subject which, as a negation of all attributes, all forms of our intuition, is also a negation of causality, a field unavailable to it.

A phenomenon, therefore, due to the other phenomena that precede or follow it, must always be an effect or a cause and therefore subordinate to strict determinism, while a subject, which cannot know any bonds of causality, must appear as absolute freedom and therefore not as an ineluctable result but as an end or ideal that may or may not come to be. The relation of the phenomenon to the subject becomes the relation of purposeful freedom that we call an act of conscious will. It cannot be excluded from causality because it is impossible to comprehend a thinking subject without an object of thought.

The principle of a phenomenon, being also the principle of a thinking being, requires both determinism and freedom. Around the *positive* pole of the phenomenon—there where the whole physical and spiritual world extends—determinism and elemental causality prevail: an atmosphere completely inaccessible to any ethical norms, in which the words “bad” and “good” become empty sounds, and everything is also justified, as necessary, inexorable, and blind. Around the *negative* pole of the phenomenon, where there is only one human “self,” unknowable because it knows everything, a negation of the world, there is freedom, final causes, and ideals; the simple links of causal series, facts, take on an ethical character here and are subject to binding norms.

And although these two domains are so fundamentally contradictory, they condition each other and constitute a single whole that cannot be torn apart. The positive pole is impossible without the negative, as is the reverse; both constitute the sole *principle of the phenomenon*, which is also the principle of the thinking subject. Thus, the methodological contradiction is completely resolved. By adopting this principle, we stand in a purely *human* position, taking as our starting point the first, most immediate data: the human as a thinking being. Considering phenomena as objects of our thought, necessarily conditioned by their negation—the thinking subject, the human “self”—we also tacitly affirm that beyond us, in the supposed land of supra-human existences, there is only a great *philosophical* vacuum with which neither science nor creativity can have anything in common.

§ 10. The same starting point, the same basic assumption: *a human being, considered as a thinking being*, must be located at the heart of socialism, must be its first principle, if we see in the human being such a natural and necessary coexistence of the two contradictory methods—the scientific and the creative—that the removal of either fundamentally transforms the human’s character. Indeed, even if this principle were not clearly formulated anywhere

in socialist theory, living socialism—which already exists beyond the theoreticians' thought, as a fact of social struggle, as the psychology of great human masses—inclines us to imagine that principle and constantly places it before the eyes of the scholar, as socialism's essential, basic nucleus. Let us try to look at the human being from a different point of view, forgetting about his essential attribute of "thinking being," and we will see how all socialism's practical postulates, all its revolutionary slogans, will fall away and how the whole spirit of propaganda and purposeful struggle for the future will disappear from it, leaving scant degenerate remnants of some "social Darwinism," fit only for busying professorial brains. Until now, this principle—the human as a thinking being—has presented itself to us as the sole ineluctable point, the one where the *methodological* contradiction of socialism is resolved, and which we must therefore necessarily conjecture exists at socialism's heart. Let us now try to bring it completely into the open.

[...]

II The Sociological Issues

§12. Regardless of what metaphysical origin we attribute to social phenomena, with what abstraction, spiritual or material, we stamp their essence, we must first of all and without reservation grant that they have the quality that they exist for our experience, that they fall within the scope of our observation as certain positive values, as facts with which our thought can operate. This is the most immediate—and simultaneously most common and general—feature of their *mental manifestation*, common to all phenomena, equivalent to all existence.

Before we can say anything about its properties and content, a social phenomenon is above all a *phenomenon*, that is, a subject of our thought, something that is imposed on our perception, which as a certain *given*, the generator of our thought, stands before us in the form of various facts and enters the sphere of our life. This is the first definition of social phenomena: a definition from which neither they nor anything in the world can be freed other than with the loss of all positive value, with a complete shift to the supernatural, unknowable realm of negation. Behind the subject of our thought, however, lie only either physical things or mental states. Let us go through the whole range of our experience, all that is real or possible, and we find nothing that cannot be included in one or the other category. Between these two domains—one of which, under the exclusive reign of time, transforms everything into an internal state of our consciousness, and the other, while cultivating time and space,

reduces everything to motion and matter—our entire intuition, the entire content of the world with which we deal, is completely divided and exhausted. There is no fact, no moment of our life, that does not possess either a mental or a physical form, that cannot be perceived as a dimensional body, spatial movement, or as our idea, concept, or feeling. When dealing with something of the most metaphysical kind, with such “substances” as spirit, matter, or force, we can never liberate them from these two single forms—the mental and the physical, into which our intuition alternately disposes, places, and classifies everything it can possess, so that a third category—of phenomena that are neither mental, physical, a state of our consciousness, nor any motion of matter—is as unimaginable as a fourth dimension or time stopped in its course.

Therefore, we must assume in advance, without referring to individual experiences and further analysis, that social phenomena, by the very fact that they are phenomena that fall within the scope of our perception and life, must be subject to these two basic forms of our intuition: they must be divided between them completely, without creating any third thing that would be categorically distinct from them. Moreover, experience, the observation of specific details, is in complete agreement with this deductive argument. Let us look at one or another social phenomenon: it will be either only a thing of a physical nature—land, goods, physical work—or concepts and feelings appearing in the form of laws, customs, and collective aspirations.

In the whole field of social life, we will find nothing that is *social* without being at the same time either material or spiritual. What is “social” never has a special form in our intuition; it does not oppose spatial things and states of consciousness but finds itself in them, coexists with their forms, and only in these forms does it appear to us. A commodity, which is a social phenomenon par excellence, is at the same time an ordinary material object that can be perfectly examined from the standpoint of physics, mechanics, or chemistry, and beyond the bounds of this intuitive form it cannot be considered—it is not available to our experience. In the same way, all ideas governing the life of the human community, despite their special social nature, have no other form of existence than a mental one—states of our consciousness—and even though they are the subject of a separate, sociological science, they can nevertheless be subject to mental analysis on a par with the phenomena of the individual life of consciousness. Ideas about God, political freedom, private property, and so forth, which are thoroughly imbued with the social character and collective life of a people, cannot be narrowed to the individual consciousness of a human being, and yet their entire social essence is manifested nowhere else than in thousands of mental states dispersed in individual human brains, and we would seek a pure and separate manifestation of that essence in vain.

§ 13. If, however, all social phenomena divide completely between the two basic and only categories of our intuition, leaving nothing that is not either physical or mental, then all of them have their own special attribute that distinguishes them from one and the other, so that intuitively we already perceive the identification of social phenomena with physical and mental ones.

Physical phenomena only become social when we *spiritualize* them, when they become carriers of work or human needs, when, without losing their material, physical nature, they are also symbols of the intelligence of thought. Any object or gift of nature can be considered as a physical phenomenon only until it is raised to the dignity of a *product* of purposeful human work, or becomes a *use-value*, that is, the embodiment of certain human desires: then it is socialized. Gold, considered as a thing, a metal, a grouping of molecules with certain chemical properties, has no social nature; it acquires that nature along with the character of the symbol of work and human needs, becoming the equivalent of goods, which crystallize in themselves the conscious efforts of our creativity. Hence the historical variability of its fate: devoid of any influence on collective life in the former clan communes [*komunach rodowych*] of barbarian tribes, with a very narrow sphere of action on the basis of the natural economy of feudalism, it became an omnipotent life force in capitalist society in crossing the hearth sphere of the producer, into the scope of his personal needs, when human labor transformed gold into the embodiment of its abstract character, into a symbol of all the possible needs and creative efforts of a human being. Thus to the degree its mental character is enriched—from having the value of a particular use to having a general-use value, to an abstract exchange value, to having the meaning of the universal equivalent of exchange, in which all concrete individual needs, present and future, real and possible, are found—to this degree the social character of gold also becomes more powerful, transforming from an ordinary material thing into some almost mystical entity, into a deity that rules the world of human souls, and which then exists and operates even when it is absent as a metal, by the sheer force of the secret transmission of its power to all types of bills of exchange, banknotes, and shares.

Similarly, we find a mental character in a whole range of physical phenomena *as the necessary and only condition for their socialization*. Not solely material objects but also forces of nature, which can always be reduced to the movement of matter particles and thus appear to our consciousness in a purely objective [*rzeczowym*] character—those forces that are most alien to us and devoid of all “humanity,” such as gravity, chemical affinity, heat, and electricity—nevertheless become social phenomena when they are *deliberately* applied to human needs, when, entrapped in manufacturing technology, they represent a symbol, spellbound in matter, of the intelligence of past and

living generations. In a word, a physical phenomenon becomes social when it becomes spiritualized: when, without ceasing to be a *thing* (*rzecz*)—that is, something external and spatial, in opposition to our consciousness—it also acquires a *mental* nature.

§ 14. On the other hand, a mental phenomenon becomes social again when, without ceasing to be the inner state of our consciousness and perceived as such, it takes on an *objective* character, becomes independent of the direct action of our will and imposes itself on us from the outside, as if it were a certain *thing*. Let us take any mental state—an idea, feeling, or desire, elevated to the dignity of a social phenomenon. How does it differ from the individual state of my consciousness and how do I recognize its social character?

In its content, in its constituent elements, in reacting to the outside, in the associations that group around it, we will find no difference; both times a given mental state is subject to the same mental analysis, the same description; for both, the same course and diagnosis can always be drawn. The psychology of my hunger in its basic, permanent features is at the same time a psychology of hunger in general, social hunger, repeated many times in various human brains. The same concepts, the interests that focus on property, marriage, and family in the soul of an individual, find their faithful expression in *the laws* that regulate property, family and marital relations, so that, psychologically justifying any existing law, we simply analyze the appropriate sides of the soul of a given type of man. When promoting a certain idea socially on the basis of a given social feeling, we turn to individual psychology for guidelines, and we also find socially associated concepts that we can instill in individuals on the basis of a given emotional state. The idea of communism and freedom, linked to the life interests of individuals, is at the same time associated with the economic interests of the entire class as a social phenomenon. The individual differences with which every mental phenomenon—in contrast to its *permanent* social character—is always permeated do not in any way weaken the assertion that *the socialization* of the spiritual state should not be sought in different psychological content. For I can perfectly adapt my mind to a given social concept, to this constant pattern that is found in a legal formulation, program slogans, or the principles of religion, and nevertheless I will always be able to distinguish the same concept as being mine individually and as social, even if these two manifestations in their content and form are completely compatible with each other.

As *individual*, it is subject to the action of my inner will; it is transformable by my reasoning; it weakens or becomes stronger under the influence of the feelings that animate me; moreover, even its existence, the strength and significance it exerts on the course of life, are completely dependent on the

whole mental systemization that constitutes my soul, my intelligence, my way of thinking and feeling, my individual inclinations, on the resources and the quality of the knowledge I have; every moral concept as a mental phenomenon is subject to such changeability in the soul of every person and acquires and loses its life force, fades or becomes stronger, changes its emotional content and color, depending on what company of other concepts and feelings it finds in our consciousness. In a word, *it constantly deals with the whole of our soul*, with its most intimate moods, and only then can we perceive its influence on the course of our life, when it is adapted to other elements of our soul, united with our knowledge and feeling, when we admit to ourselves its value.

As *social*, on the other hand, it makes a mockery of our reasoning and feelings, and opposes our desires and denials with the indifference of *things* [*rzeczy*]. Despite my atheism and philosophical freedom and even though for my convictions and feelings, for my internal motives, the concepts of God, lawful love, and state power have lost all value and as a *psychological* phenomenon cannot play any role in my life, yet—as a social phenomenon—in laws, in institutions, and in public opinion, they do not cease to exert their objective [*przedmiotowego*] pressure on me, to impose themselves on my consciousness with the brutality of things, of external objects, and they do so all the more strongly the more I negate them as a psychological phenomenon, as my own concept. It is like the darkness of the night or the space that separates us from our goal, which hears our curses with indifference, and the more it opposes our will, the more that will desires to annihilate it.

This *objective* [*rzeczowy*] nature of socialized mental phenomena becomes apparent when we compare the different evolutionary stages of the same phenomenon. As long as an idea remains an individual property of human consciousness, an ordinary mental state, as long as it is subject to all the actions of our will, it is changeable, easily disappearing, because it draws the sap of its vital force from our feelings and thoughts, is constantly forced to adapt to them, to refer to our permission, our approval, as the only basis of its being; any turn in our way of thinking can completely demolish or degenerate it. It is then of a thoroughly subjective nature, constantly hanging on the umbilical cord of our inner will.

However, to the degree it is formulated into words and reaches a greater number of brains, it socializes and takes on a more and more objective [*rzeczowy*] nature—it becomes more and more independent of those mental weaves among which it lives in individual consciousnesses, and from continual changeability it moves into a stable form; the umbilical cord of the individual will, which has so far supplied it with its only breath of being, breaks and the idea begins the independent life of a social phenomenon, cleansed of

the changeability of its private existences, fixed, certain, crystallized into some battle slogan, law, custom, political party, or institution. The less socialized it is, the less objective pressure it exerts on individuals, the more it cares for their considerations, for adapting to their inner life, to the content of their soul; at this stage today are aesthetic ideas, which of all the socialized mental phenomena most weakly display their objective nature as things that involuntarily impose themselves in accord with the degree of their socialization, because they do not find places for themselves either in public opinion, or in the codes of laws, or in mass currents. The original Christianity of the apostles was at this stage, as well as any initial revolutionary idea until it was organized into a church or party and encompassed great masses of the people; simple mental phenomena and socialized phenomena are not yet clearly distinguished; the individuality of believers is still of great importance to the life of the idea. In the case of the greatest degree of socialization, the objective nature of an idea is so powerful that it can oppress with elemental force individuals who do not recognize it in their conscience; it can oppose the individual freedom of human beings, as if it were a second nature—a *moral one*—surrounding him on all sides with a fatal pressure of resistance. This is the case, for example, with certain ethical ideas, especially those relating to property, family, and sex relations, which have managed to become social in many different forms: in religion, in legal codes, in mores, and in scientific doctrines. Here it is extremely easy to see that the social nature of a given concept is its substantive, objectively imposing character, its existence independent of the subjective granting of a *raison d'être*, of adapting to our feelings, needs, and thoughts. Without this objective indicator, any spiritual state, even the most closely connected with social life, will have the character of an ordinary mental phenomenon, a state of our consciousness, to which we can ascribe only a social origin and nothing more.

§ 15. Therefore, a special attribute of social phenomena—which, without separating them from physical and mental ones into a third category, is distinguishable from them—is like a synthesis of both these characters: the physical ones *become spiritualized*; they become social, while the mental ones *become objectivized*; both become *mental things*. There is nothing artificial about this combination; it does not appear as a result of mental processing but is imposed by our intuition. If in everyday life, without the help of scientific analysis, we can perfectly distinguish a “commodity” from ordinary physical things—money from metal, my concept from law, or my feeling from religious duty—it is only because, in the first case, inanimate things speak to us through the language of human *needs*, and in the other case, the states of consciousness perceived within ourselves press us from the outside, oppose us as independent of

us, *before we pay attention to these differences*. For this double nature of social phenomena is imparted to human minds in a completely intuitive way, even when we are not at all aware of it; just as intuitively, without the help of any reasoning, we feel the spatial nature of physical phenomena. It is the only clue that is given to us by the very nature of social phenomena, regardless of our way of judging and our professed scientific theories, and by which we always recognize them as *social*.

[...]

§ 19. If a social phenomenon is at the same time a synthesis of individual consciousnesses and excludes from itself any consciousness foreign to ours, it is only because this “social consciousness” is nothing but our own individual consciousness, because my “I” and the “I” of every human is one and the same in essence. Therefore, human consciousnesses, not being separate, closed wholes in regard to each other, can neither add to each other, nor combine with each other. The synthesis of individual phenomena, in creating a new—social—phenomenon, can nevertheless not create a new *consciousness*, because this, being the same in all individuals—a negation of phenomena—is not subject to any synthesis, nor to any relations and changes at all. Therefore, a social phenomenon, being a synthesis of individual, mental phenomena, exists only in the individual human consciousness. Therefore too, without ceasing to be *social*, that is, an objectification of the consciousness of other people, it is also an objectification of our own and thus perfectly accessible and familiar to us. It is the object in which the consciousnesses of various individuals reveal their *identity*, in which the thinking “I” of each person *finds itself*. This is the most important attribute of a social phenomenon. Everywhere else, in the objective world, we feel a certain alienation, which is impossible to penetrate and explore, a barrage of inaccessible “things in themselves”; here the “thing in itself” hidden in the object is our own “I” and this is why we can enter into such an intimate relationship with a social phenomenon and feel at home in the entire field of social life, while the dark essence of physical phenomena, of the surrounding world of nature, always remains mysterious and totally alien to our feeling, regardless of the complete accuracy with which we may come to know this world.

Thus, what we find at the bottom of every social phenomenon is the human, *thinking being*, this one reality of metaphysical nature which, while not being a phenomenon, is yet the most accessible—the closest to our feeling.

[...]

§ 22. This social nature of apperception, revealing to us the essential *identity* of human, thinking subjects, also explains to us why, in social life, the individual seems to completely disappear, to descend to a subordinate role

at “the point of intersection of various social circles” in Simmel’s⁸ phrase, to the minimal importance of changing links in the chain of associations and historical processes. For what constitutes the link, the basis of these circles of association—classes, nations, societies—the commonality of the links that compose them, is the same that constitutes my thinking “I,” the apperception without which the objectification and fusion of individual mental states into a collective interest, goal, or concept, that is, into what constitutes the “soul” of a given association, cannot take place.

The human being, therefore, in revealing his essential *identity* with other people in a social group, releases himself as if—in this social objectification—from the bonds of his apparent individual separateness, without ceasing, however, to be himself, without losing his proper “I,” because this social group, which has absorbed an individual into itself, without constituting anything separate and superior to the essence of the individual human being, arises precisely because this thinking being, the “I” of every human, by way of apperception, and on the basis of common interests, thoughts, and desires, has found itself in other human brains. In all social life this *unity of subjects*, the unity of a thinking being which is only seemingly differentiated in phenomena and broken down into individuals, turns out to be the most perfect; it turns out to be the same in the contemporary life of people linked in various groups, where the individual descends almost to the meaning of a mathematical point, and in the life of successive generations, in the course of historical periods. While individuals die and change, unable to grant or transmit to anyone their illusory “individuality” contained in feelings, the thinking “I” of individuals, objectified in social phenomena, in technical inventions, in laws, in collective ideas, continues to develop, as the immortal essence of humanity, so that the evolution of the whole social culture does not repeat itself with each new generation, does not break its age-old thread, but remains uniform and continuous. The objectified intelligence of dead geniuses, of past generations, lives and develops further, although in the subjects themselves, where it crystallized through the action of their creative will; it could not derive life; it finds itself only in the consciousness of new people.⁹ “Deduction begins in the head of one individual and ends in the head of another. We set out the premises from which our

8 * Georg Simmel (1858 –1918) was a German sociologist, philosopher and theoretician of culture.

9 Any of our machines, says Lazarus, if found by savages, might remain utterly useless to them, just as any of their monuments we find might remain completely incomprehensible to us. The ified mind lives in things only because it lives in consciousnesses.

sons draw the conclusions."¹⁰ Thought and reasoning transcend the individual; needs and ideas developed in one generation become action, revolution in the next. History knows no leaps, just as nature knows no vacuum and creation out of nothing; here it is hindered by the unity of matter and energy, which is manifested only in an infinite variety of shapes; there, the unity of a thinking being, hidden in the diversified mass of brains.

Turning a blind eye to the truth that only *apperception* socializes phenomena, and that its *social* nature is at the same time the revelation of the identity of human, thinking subjects, has led sociologists of all schools and shades to the wrong path of social metaphysics and forced them to create a mystical concept of "social consciousness," as syntheses of our own, different nature, in order to introduce national and class "spirits" onto the stage of history as the fundamental basis for explaining life and social phenomena, and thus has led them, like Lazarus,¹¹ to a theory with the practical result that the spirit of the nation is differentiated into class spirits, which at the same time form one harmonious synthesis, or by entering into too great contradiction with each other, bring down the whole. In this way, social philosophy leads itself into a vicious circle, because, taking "synthetic consciousness" as the basis and source of the social phenomena of the collective, the spirits of classes and nations at the same time impose on themselves the unsolvable questions of how these communities could arise without social phenomena and how the souls of human individuals, being a social product, synthesize themselves into what is to be the primary source and basis of social life; for all community requires already existing social factors in order to arise, if we do not suppose that Providence creates it; therefore, it cannot explain the existence of social phenomena; and the elements of this community—individual souls—cannot be its products at the same time.

These difficulties disappear when we take as a premise that the basis that determines social phenomena is our own thinking "I," identical in all, and that therefore no higher consciousness is created out of our syntheses, because the synthesis here is completely equal to the elements. The social factor exists in the individual consciousness; it is the same consciousness. On the other hand,

10 C. Bouglé, *Les sciences sociales en Allemagne: les méthodes actuelles*, Paris 1896, Félix Alcan, p. 104.

11 * Moritz Lazarus (1924–1903) was a German-Jewish philosopher and psychologist, applying the laws of the psychology of the individual to the nation and to mankind he established a new branch of research, which he termed *Völkerpsychologie* (national psychology). This discipline was a protest against the so-called scientific standpoint of natural philosophers and the individualism of the positivists.

nations and classes, which by no means constitute any metaphysical entity that conditions social life—as its *prius κατ' ἐξοχήν*—are, on the contrary, themselves only the result of social life, a product of phenomenality, and like them, undergo changes and destruction. There may or may not be classes and organizations, depending on the phase history has entered. The social phenomenon precedes the emergence of these human groups and cannot therefore be conditioned by them. Each community, each social link—interest, idea—requires the acceptance of the already existing social foundation, as well as the search for its phenomenal source, its determining cause; only one apperception, a thinking subject, in opposition to all phenomena, does not allow its cause to be sought, and suffices for itself as *a social substance*.

§ 23. This fundamental property of social phenomena—that they objectify in themselves the thinking *essence* of the human being—is at the same time the reason why the ethical category can be universally applied to them, expressed in the form of a “should be.” It can even be said that wherever the ethical category can be used, we are dealing with social phenomena or phenomena that can be socialized. This results, as we have seen, from the fact that only in the thinking essence of a human being is the contradiction of determinism and arbitrariness resolved (see § 9). The ethical category applies to mental life only where apperception is active; for dreams, associations, and instincts, we do not know the binding norms; instead, they exist for concepts, judgments, and reasoning; they do not apply to impulsive activities but only to deliberate ones. Similarly, physical processes, which by themselves are completely foreign to the ethical category, are nevertheless subject to it when they are coupled with human thought and adapted to purposeful work. In a word, whenever a thing is permeated with apperception—by the action of the conscious human will—the field is opened for ethical norms, for freedom, and the ideal.

Apperception *moralizes* phenomena. Thus, it could be said that the ethical category is the most sensitive reagent by which the *socialness* of phenomenon is known, and wherever it appears, the objectification of the thinking being begins—the social world. The application of the creative-scientific method to this world thus imposes itself by itself; for wherever a human being finds himself, next to causality there is always purposefulness, duty, the ideal—the area of *freedom* [*dowolności*] belonging to the subject. Having arrived at these results by pure deduction, however, we also see that this close connection of the ethical category with a social phenomenon is an intuitive knowledge; we know it regardless of any theory, and it is so rooted in our intuition that even when we are believers in complete mechanical fatalism in social life, we cannot, however, free ourselves from applying the ethical category to this life, in

trying to apply to every area of its phenomena the criterion of “what should be.” Analysis, in line with common intuition, requires us to assume all the more the truth of the principle of a social phenomenon as *an objectification of the thinking essence of a human being*.

Individual Elements in Sociology

I

§ 1. In my previous sociological works¹ I tried to define the general principles of cognition on which *sociological phenomenism* could be based, that is, a theory which reduces the phenomena of collective life to the facts of individual consciousness, as the only concrete things in this life, and with their help to explain the factual and independent nature of social forms. Contrary to other theories, for which the social phenomenon is the result of the synthesis of individual consciousnesses—something “new,” which arises only in the sphere of their interaction—it suggests as a rule that the social *minimum* is found in the components of interaction, that is, in the human soul, and that the latter cannot, therefore, be eliminated from the subject of sociological research. However, the real value of this thesis, and its methodological significance, will be apparent only when it is used in research on social *causation*, in demonstrating the role played by individual elements in the processes of collective life and whether this role really corresponds to the theoretical-cognitive principle of phenomenism.

Phenomenism starts with the definition that the characteristic sign of a social phenomenon, which distinguishes it from all others, is its *objective and mental* nature [natura rzeczowo-psychiczna]. If we subtract the objective character from thought on any social fact, then only a subjective mental phenomenon remains, for instance, if a law or moral idea, having lost its connection with the human community, ceased to exert its social pressure on me, it would become my own concept or interest, subject only to the motives of my inner life, and could only be assessed as subjective states of my soul; similarly, a commodity is reduced to a certain need of mine for consumption from the moment it loses its objective value as a collective utility. If, on the other hand, we subtract from a social phenomenon its mental character, then there remain either material things, the objects of research in the natural sciences, or the formal aspect of an organization, institutions *in abstracto*, that is, a detached concept, which cannot be found in any fact of life and which is therefore a purely metaphysical value.

¹ *Les bases psychologiques de la sociologie*, Paris 1897, Giard et Brière; *Le materialisme historique et le principe du phénomène social*, Giard et Brière. The former, with minor changes, was also published in *Ateneum* in 1896.

On the other hand, all the properties of a social phenomenon, by which it reveals itself in various concrete facts, are found in the coexistence of these two characters. On the *objective* side, it is conditioned by the interaction of individual consciousnesses and presents itself as an abstraction, summarizing in itself and embracing in a permanent form the variability of individual mental states, as a species type in which the individual needs, feelings, and concepts of various individuals reconcile and find themselves. On the *mental* side, it is conditioned by individual consciousness and, as an expression of purely subjective states, penetrates to the depths of a person's soul: it is his own need, feeling, and concept. The former is connected with the existence of a human group, a certain organization of individuals, and the objective pressure, the independence of life, which opposes the social phenomenon to the mental one. On the other hand, the latter corresponds to that property of the social phenomenon that it is bonded most closely to the life of the individual and cannot make the slightest movement, the slightest elemental change, without something in the human soul moving along with it. In connection with this duality, therefore, a two-fold rule can be advanced: first, that where there is a social fact, there is also a human group, the organization of interaction; and second, that where there is a social fact, there is also its *individual equivalent* in the individual's soul.

The question then arises, which by its nature belongs to the theory of knowledge, of where the essential condition of the "socialness" of a fact should be sought? Does it appear only in the interaction of individual consciousnesses, as a *synthetic* phenomenon, or is it, on the contrary, in the components of interaction, as an essential element of individual consciousness that conditions all interaction? The first answer prevails in contemporary sociology, and hence its general tendency to remove the real human being from the subject of its research and practical postulates. "Proper sociology," says Simmel, "deals only with the study of what is specifically social, that is, with the study of the form and forms of association as such, abstracting those interests and individual objects that are realized in and through it. The method consists in abstracting the form of association from the specific states, interests, and feelings that are its content. Although the cooperation, communication, and opposition of people always appear in the form of a certain concrete content, it is impossible to establish social science in the strict sense of the word other than by abstracting the form from its content."² A similar definition of the method, as with Durkheim's notion of the "extra-unitary objectivity of the

2 * The quotation could not be located. From the Polish—translators note.

social fact," and as with theories of the social organism, is only a logical conclusion from the understanding of the "socialness" of a fact *as being the result of interaction*: something absolutely new which appears only in the synthesis of individual consciousnesses. Hence, in the movement of social phenomena, in their causal connection, only abstractions of human similarities around which communities organize themselves can be identified, while individual and specific elements are by their nature excluded from the realm of synthetic facts.

Sociological phenomenalism must take a very different position. Since, according to its epistemological principles, phenomena are not allowed to exist ontologically, the fact that a social phenomenon is distinguished from mental states as a *synthesis* of individual consciousnesses becomes a contradiction: the phenomenon is determined by the interaction of consciousnesses, although nothing other than individual consciousness can be a sufficient principle of its existence. The solution to this contradiction should be sought in the dual nature of our consciousness, which is apperceptive and intuitive—to the first is ascribed the ability *to socialize* a mental fact, that is, to transform it into a mental *thing* that can exist independently of a subjective state. Each state of feeling, in transforming under the influence of apperception into a specific object of thought, thus becomes a possible seed of "socialness," in striving to reveal itself in something external; the repetition of aspirations, for any organic or life reasons, is maintained subjectively as *a need*, and objectively as a social fact. The coexistence of the objective and mental sides in a social phenomenon repeats the same thing that happens in every moment of the soul, where intuition and apperception interact. In intuition, a person *feels* something in his own specific, individual way, and in apperception, he defines this feeling into a certain object of thought that can be called by name and is accessible to logic and purposeful action. Due to the very fact of this definition, this work of the intellect, which is common to all people and operates in the same categories, my individual state of feeling becomes available to others and may turn into a point of interaction of various consciousnesses—into social objectivity. In this way, from the subjective moments of the soul, different grades and kinds of socialness arise: they are objectified as words and products of labor, and to a higher degree as laws, beliefs, and institutions; the first appearance of the social world is speech and productive purpose; its further development—social organization and various forms of cooperation. If, therefore, interaction appears, it results from the fact that each of its components contains the social element, the apperceptive side of the human soul, which cannot be separated

from individual states of intuition, and constitutes with them an inseparable whole of specific mental facts, the direct objects of our internal experience.³

§ 2. From such a presentation of the issue it would appear that the change taking place in the factual side of social phenomena must also concern the individual components concealed in it; like the *socialness* of a fact, it is not limited to the community, to the formal expression of interaction, but must penetrate to the very beginnings of the community, touching upon what is concrete in the process of interacting, that is, the soul of the individual. This assumption holds true in generally known facts about the moral influence that is exerted on a person by every change in his social environment. No social process, developing in its objective terms, does not in some way touch upon the individual soul and express itself with something new there. If we see, for example, how the features of hospitality and neglect of the utilitarian side of life, which characterize primitive tribes living in hunting and agricultural communes, are transformed under the influence of individual ownership—arising either from the spontaneous development of culture or as a result of contact with European civilization—into greed and stinginess, such as are found today in East African blacks, whom Burton⁴ says will not provide even a drink of water without a fee and intemperately lament the loss of every rag, or if we encounter facts such as that, under the influence of a change in ownership relations favoring the advantageous accumulation of movable wealth, the old funeral custom of destroying objects on the deceased's grave in order to serve him in another world is replaced by purely formalistic pretenses, and the objects are carefully preserved by the heirs (as e.g., among the Kafirs)—which proves that the original religious concepts have lost their vitality and their control over human acts—then we must admit that there is a certain relationship of dependence between moral features, individual nature, and the social process that determines the relations of production, ownership, and the political governance of the human group.

But the question is what value do these individual changes have in *social causation*? It might be supposed—and such a view is widespread in sociology—that individual changes are only a passive reflection in human brains of objective, essentially active processes, that they play no other role than that of the “epiphenomenon” of consciousness, which by itself cannot

3 To avoid repetition, I refer readers who wish to learn more about the theory of sociological phenomenalism to the works mentioned above.

4 Richard Francis Burton (1821–1890) was a British writer, scholar, soldier, and explorer of Asia, Africa, and the Americas. He described the customs of the Kafirs in his book *First Footsteps in East Africa* (1856).

influence the course of events and is merely designed to observe—with fear, suffering, or joy—the spontaneous capers of its social conditions. However, the theory of an “epiphenomenon” cannot find in the sociological domain even the justifications it has in biology. For there, the natural environment is involved, which is essentially the opposite of consciousness, as material phenomena that are incommensurate with it; it can therefore be assumed, with some semblance of logic, that in the material processes of this environment, understood as an organism in relation to the surrounding universe, everything would have happened in the same way even if consciousness were completely removed. Le Dantec expresses the theory of the “epiphenomenon” most clearly by comparing the relation of consciousness to matter with the relation which could exist between any clockwork mechanism and an associated recording apparatus. It is impossible, he says, that under the given conditions the functioning of the machine should not be recorded in the cinematograph; there is the necessary coordinate here; but can we therefore argue that the writing apparatus affects the functioning of the machine? We can stop it or disconnect it, yet the movement of the machine will not change. Now imagine that there is consciousness instead of the cinematograph, then the functioning machine will know at all times what it is doing, but everything will go on in it as if it did not know anything; the outside observer will not even see that the machine is feeling; this is the “epiphenomenon” of functioning.⁵

However, the relation of consciousness with the social environment, *which is of a mental nature*, is different. Here, every “objectivity” takes root in the brains of individuals and, regardless of any metaphysical efforts that might be made, could not be separated from them as a self-existing abstraction. We cannot present to ourselves a “commodity” that is not an individual object of use for anyone, or a law or institution that is not also a specific interest in the life of these or those people and having its place in their concepts and feelings. The most basic functions of interaction—production and consumption—*really* exist only as a producer and a consumer, and despite the fact that in the social world they are distinguished into separate economic categories, there is no doubt that in their specific, human elements, they form a coherent whole with everything that can be found in a person’s soul. For we do not meet such people who are only producers or consumers, or only members of a certain association or institution; what emanates from a person *in interaction*, as objectively independent social facts of a certain specific and homogeneous mental

5 F. Le Dantec, *Le déterminisme biologique et la personnalité consciente: esquisse d'une théorie chimique des épiphénomènes*, Paris 1897, F. Alcan, pp. 32–33.

content, definable in terms of various categories, does not have either a fixed distinctness or an independent existence on the part of individual reality.

The human world changes depending on the angle from which we view it; in the social world, there are only different human "personalities," corresponding to strictly delimited institutions—manufacturing, religious, political, and so forth—but on the reverse side, in the individual world, where real people live instead of the mannequins of statistics, all these divisions disappear and the various "personalities" merge with each other in the moral interior of the same being; the producer is also an adherent of a certain church, a member of a political association, the father of a family, and so forth, that is, these different sides of life and soul have here one very important point of contact, namely, *a common feeling*, the same organic substratum. Therefore, the urge, the desire, the need, the motor of feelings and ideas that appears, let us say, in the church believer, will also touch and move the producer, the member of a political association, the father of a family, or vice versa.

It is precisely this individual coherence, on the one hand, and the coherence between a mental fact and social objectivity, on the other, that cause the elemental processes of social life—which are seemingly far removed from "subjective" states, as are, for instance, economic facts—to have to constantly reckon with what occurs under their influence in the human soul, that is, in the *individual* soul, because there is no other. Take, for example, a fact such as the construction of a railway linking a certain industrial site with a remote agricultural province; this fact (let us call it *a*) may become the cause of the intensification of the industry of this place, with its usual manifestations: the technical improvement of enterprises, a reduction in the price of products, and a concentration of capital due to the displacement of backward forms of production; this will be followed by a relative reduction in the number of workers and a reduction in wages, due to the excess labor in the marketplace, and the introduction of the labor force of women and children into those enterprises where technical improvement allows it. However, this whole group of facts (*b*) can only appear then as a result of the railway (*a*), if between *a* and *b* the phenomenon appears of the opening of a new market in the agricultural country in question, which is the only fact that can causally link fact *a* with the group of facts *b*; for if the railway does not open a new market for a given industrial center, then it will not cause the intensification of this industry, nor will it cause the series of social changes that necessarily result from this fact. What is the creation of a new market? On the stock exchange, it has a purely objective nature, but in fact it is nothing else than an increase and change in the standard of living of the inhabitants of a given country, a quantitative and qualitative increase in *the needs* of the population, a whole quantity of various

small social changes that arise as a result of the easier sale of local produce and the easier acquisition of outside goods. There is no doubt that this is a mental phenomenon and that it can be observed in every separate home and family as subjective changes in the needs, preferences, habits, and concepts that have occurred in a person's soul and have been reflected in his daily habits, and the sum total of these small subjective changes that arise from the merger of agricultural producers with an industrial center becomes a new *economic fact* when viewed from the angle of the movement of goods and as *the expansion of the market* for certain products causes a corresponding series of social changes.

The major importance of colonial politics for the interests of capitalist production, the spread of civilization and Christianity in barbarian countries, is quite sufficient proof of how much economic processes depend on those moral facts that in any way affect human customs and needs. More than once a Christian missionary has unknowingly rendered more service to merchant firms than the most skilled commercial agent, and all his work to establish sexual morality among savages and root a civilized feeling of "shame" in their souls perhaps most benefits the manufacturers of Lancaster cloth and other calico makers.

The same influence of the "mental" fact on the objective side of social processes is found in the sphere of production, in such causal connections that occur between the introduction of a machine in one branch of industry and the obstruction of machine development in others, or in the increased supply of labor for women and children, which usually appears in connection with a technical revolution. The introduction of the machine is accompanied by the ousting of a number of workers from the industry. Therefore, there is an excess of specialized labor which is hence unable to perform better paid jobs in other branches of production; this excess most often goes into non-machine, non-permanent, seasonal, public works enterprises and is also absorbed in part as retail and domestic servants. The cheapness of this displaced labor is maintained largely due to the laborer's failure to adapt to the new conditions but at the same time makes machine improvements superfluous for the production that has absorbed such labor. The change that has taken place in the worker's life, the reduced wages, the instability of work, and the poorer wage conditions, cannot completely remove the habit of a certain standard of living from his home; and in order to maintain the previous family budget, it turns out that his wife and children have to work for money. In this way, the factors that for capitalist production open the labor market to women and children concern the individual life change that takes place in the working-class family, and it would suffice to introduce to the minds of these people the "psychology" of the

Chinese, who satisfies almost all his needs with a handful of rice,⁶ or to realize the austerity dreams of petty-bourgeois ideologues, and then the worker's home would resist the decaying influences of machine production and women's labor would withdraw from the market, despite the adaptation of manufacturing technology to its properties.

A long series can be found of similar experiments unknowingly made by the history of social movements themselves, showing how a change in the mental link transforms the lines of causality in objective relations. Every capitalist enterprise, for example, without trying, nevertheless cultivates within itself the solidarity of the workers; the concentration of a certain group of people under the oppression of the same organization and the same living conditions is quite enough to bind the interests of an individual with the interests of the whole group and make the "utopia" of altruism into something very real. However, this purely moral fact of "solidarity," in producing awareness, becomes a highly *economic* fact, because, appearing in the form of class struggle, as the organized resistance of the workers, it sometimes directs the objective conditions of social life, by production, the market, and the stock exchange. It can become the cause of the use of improved machines in those industries where the profits of the capitalists have been stifled by the excessively high wages of the workers, and where there is therefore an interest in reducing their numbers and replacing them with cheaper labor. It can also affect the geographical distribution of industry, and awaken in it decentralist strivings, as we can see in the examples of America and England, where there is a tendency to establish spinning and weaving factories in villages in order to deal with a population of workers who are not organized.⁷

The normal development of economic processes may be changed or interrupted by the appearance of the class struggle in its path. Any expansion of the machine industry always leads, with fatal necessity, to an excess of labor and a reduction in wages, which results in a significant narrowing of the market and in a crisis phenomenon, due to the fact that the category of producers, in the nature of things, is identical with the category of consumers. If, therefore, the large machinery enterprises ruin the small independent producers and increase the spare army of workers, while lowering wages to the level of

6 * A stereotype that persists in the Polish language to this day. It is surprising that Abramowski, like other Polish writers and scholars of his time, used this harmful term, because in his time, Poland, which was divided between three partitioning states, was a very poor country with a huge problem of malnutrition among the peasants and proletariat.

7 See: J.A. Hobson, *The Evolution of Modern Capitalism: A Study of Machine Production*, New York 1902, The Walter Scott Publishing Co., Chap. XIII, § 8.

the wages of women and unskilled workers, they thereby reduce the purchasing power of the population in the market and lead to stagnation with all its consequences. Now, if one of the links in this causal series—the decline in wages—is stalled by the resistance of a workers' organization, if class struggle prevents excess labor by winning a shorter working day, and by forcing the state to undertake public works to legally limit the exploitation of women and children, then the normal development of the economic process, according to the "objective" rules, will be interrupted, and the narrowing market may fail to the point where universal stagnation is manifested. With the normal development of the process, the excess labor in the market keeps wages at the level of necessary subsistence; consequently, the drop in the prices of food commodities, which heralds the impending crisis, instead of causing a temporary recovery in the market and an increase in the living standards of the working population, causes the wage to fall, adapting it to the new subsistence level, and thus paralyzing the market's tendency to expand; in this way, a fall in prices is incapable of stopping the crisis. If, on the other hand, the factor of *class consciousness* restrains the fall in wages, then the fall in market prices will revive demand and hence the entire industrial movement. Keeping wages higher during this period of falling prices will create the habit of a higher standard of living which, in the case of another rise in food prices, will strive for a rise in wages. There is also no doubt that farm organizations in the United States of America inhibit to a large extent the process of expropriation of small agricultural producers—which does not mean, however, that they can return society to the former type of production, because they themselves can only resist large capital to the extent they introduce a new type of *cooperative* production to agriculture.

That process is also spontaneously normal that draws women's labor to machine production and thus leads to the general decline in wages in this industry, the removal of male workers from it and their transfer to other, unstable or less well-paid jobs—all of which has an impact on the budget of the working family. The facts show, however, that this inferiority of women's wages, which is usually regarded as a phenomenon of a spontaneous nature, is entirely dependent on the class organization of women workers, because where women are massively members of trade unions, for example, in the Lancashire weaving industry, their weekly wages are almost the same as those of men.⁸ With the removal of the cheapness of women's work, the whole range of its economic and social results is also interrupted.

⁸ Ibidem, Chap. XII, § 2.

§ 3. The entry of individual mental elements into the causality of social processes turns out to be the real “philosopher’s stone” of sociology if we pay attention to their universality, their autogenous vitality, and their susceptibility to the deliberate influence of ideas. Although the factors of the stock exchange and of manufacturing capital only take into account abstract consumption and labor as it appears in commodities produced in a certain unit of time, it is clear that in the nature of things there is no abstract consumption but only individual consumption, nor is there a workforce that functions separately from the living person. Therefore, if any industry factors undergo some change, this change must necessarily have an impact not only on the objective side of commodities or the movement of stock exchange shares but also on that which is an element of the social life of commodities and stocks, that is, consumers and producers, taken *in concreto*, where consumption and production remain in the closest, living, and inseparable connection with desires, set of concepts [*pojęciowości*], feelings—in a word, with the whole individual soul. Let us assume that there is some socially insignificant change in the technique of a certain enterprise, for example, the replacement of a dye obtained from madder roots with alizarin, obtained from coal tar, in the production of cotton goods; surely such a fact, if it were kept in laboratories, would not cause any moral change, as it would be a completely indifferent matter for human souls; but when transferred into the social world and drawn into commodity production, it causes the collapse of many agricultural and factory enterprises that supplied cotton weaving with that madder dye, replaces them with a more concentrated enterprise, and consequently changes wage relations in the districts affected by this change. A commodity whose utility is eliminated by a new technical invention not only withdraws from social circulation but also entails the bankruptcy of related small enterprises and a narrowing of the local market for wage-earners. Both must affect very deeply and realistically those people whose living conditions were closely related to this branch of industry.

It would seem that the moral and customary changes that take place in certain groups of people under the influence of similar facts are a completely indifferent matter to history—that they are too individual, too closed within the private boundaries of the home, to be revealed in something social. But such a supposition turns out to be completely wrong if instead of a single technical invention we consider the entire technical development of a certain industry, or a manufacturing technique in general. For in the effects of this development we find almost all the phenomena that have changed the moral form of the social world in today’s period of history: the ideology of the dispossessed, workers’ organizations, the loosening of family ties, and so forth. The production of these phenomena, which today take on ever more diverse

forms of social currents and have a powerful impact both on economic relations and on politics and legislation, could not have happened except through the small individual changes, private upheavals, and revolutions occurring in human brains. It is impossible to imagine today's emancipatory currents with the simultaneous *individual* existence of the morality of the former patriarchal family, nor today's class struggle, with all its political aspirations, developing despite the fact that the worker retained the psychology of the old craftsman, working independently. Whenever a new current of a moral nature appears in social life, then it must also be assumed that there have been some *individual* changes from which this current emerged and from which it draws its vitality.

§ 4. The relationship of mutual interaction between social processes and the individual element of human souls, as an essential characteristic of collective life, will become more visible to us if we look at it from the angle of the genesis of a social fact and examine the gradual development of "objectivity" by which the originally individual fact emerges and is opposed to the human individual as a social phenomenon. In its seed, every social phenomenon is nothing but an individual human *need*, and this seed, passing through various developmental forms, never gets lost as long as the given phenomenon exists socially; it is for the social phenomenon the same vital center as the nucleus is for the protoplasmic cell. A need, on the other hand, has no value other than a concrete one, that is, conditioned by the feeling of an individual.

Every mental moment, which necessarily combines in itself a triple nature—imaginary, emotional, and impulsive—if it tends to repeat itself throughout life, becomes *predictable*, and in this process it becomes a "need," positive or negative; the moments that are repeated most consistently, such as all those related to the functions of eating, reproducing, and sleeping, are the most accessible to the prediction process, and therefore they are first realized as needs. Predicting, which has the property of recreating a moment in certain groups of memories, develops its thought element, associates it with other images, and subjects it to the work of reasoning, which allows a *deliberate* search for the predicted to occur. In this way, a predicted feeling, a desire, having been formed in reasoning into a specific need, contained in certain fixed conditions, and having absorbed in itself the purposefulness of action, can easily externalize itself—in a certain behavior, in an expressed thought, or in a deliberately created object. It is the phase of *the separation from a person of a certain part of his soul*, the most primal and most essential in the embryology of a social phenomenon. The need for food, for example, which, as a mental fact, lives in the human soul and is bound with strong ties to the whole of his being by a great multitude of feelings, memories, and thoughts, in taking the form of some product, separates itself from this living weave and begins

an *objective* existence: in bread, in flour, in grain, the producer finds the same need that moved his heart, thought, and muscles—in what was a reality for him, felt subjectively, but he finds it outside himself, in a changed form—an object—as a result of his own deliberate work. Nevertheless, the total value of this object comes down to his subjective need, which has established itself and seemingly crystallized itself in the object. In its subjective existence it was changeable and subject to the influence of various other moments of the soul; it increased, decreased, or disappeared, depending on the various moments of life through which the individual was passing; it was removed by pain, satiation, or the intrusion into the soul of another need; it was expanded by health, movement, and cheerfulness; it changed in its qualitative and quantitative manifestations. In a word, all movements of a person's total soul were reflected onto it; like any other mental moment, it was dependent on all the inspirations of life, on all the emotional currents that ran through the homogeneous organism of the individual. Objectified in a product, thanks to the purposeful work that took place under its impulse, it never ceases to be a need, because at any moment it finds or can find its subjective equivalent. It differs, however, in that it is a *need-thing*, established and isolated from the influences of the rest of the human soul—a need whose natural subjective link with the individual whole has been broken; bread, for example, retains the value of its purpose, regardless of the conditions through which its producer passes.

We stand here on the threshold where the individual fact ends and the social one begins. The detachment of a part of an individual's soul, the embodiment of a need in an object, mental objectivity, requires something else in order to become a reality: it requires *the socialness of the producer himself*. It is obvious that if he alone could see the "soul" of an object he created—if he lived, for example, in the vicinity of creatures of a completely different species—then this object would only come alive when it came into contact with himself; it would still be firmly attached to its individual umbilical cord, and its value, as a certain need, would undergo various subjective fluctuations, would increase, decrease, or disappear depending on what mental-physical states animated its producer, the only being that could "spiritualize" it. But because the producer lives among beings of the same species, the purposefulness of his work, by means of which he objectified his need, has become a language understandable to the entire human community, and has found in other souls an individual substratum of a similar need; the creation has thereby become a collective expression, as if an *objective abstraction* of all of them; the externalized particle of one individual soul also becomes the externalization of that particle of the souls of others; the needs of many individuals are found in the same object, although each feels only for himself and in his own specific way. Different

individual souls came into contact with each other and found each other in *the thing* that arose through the inspiration of purposeful work, through the inspiration of the intelligence common to all of them.

This is the secret of the transformation of a subjective fact into a *mental thing*, the detachment of *objective* particles of the individual soul. A need, embodied in a product, becomes independent of the producer and retains its *mental* value in spite of him, while the entire human community, with some one part of its soul, finds and cooperates with others in this object; its mental value becomes collective and continuous. This could be compared to those fantastical “doppelgangers” which emanate from a person in order to lead a life somewhere independent of him. Only here the “doppelganger” has a face and a *partial* nature which it has taken not from one but from the whole community of individuals; what emanates from a person is not his entire individuality but only a part of it, and this part, the objectified need, begins to exist independently of him, acquires the *spontaneous* [*żywiłowej*] force of life, because in other souls it finds its mental character, its subjective source. It is a *social* phenomenon: a defective, monstrous, partial “doppelganger” of a human being, which has separated itself from him and walks around the world on its own.

In its spontaneous [*żywiłowym*] life it presents itself as an abstraction, whose specifics are individual needs; an object of social utility, for example, bread, is an object of use not only for me but for all other people; its purposefulness encompasses all individual instances of a certain need that can occur in the human world, and this gives its utility a spontaneous [*żywiłowy*] character in relation to my need; after all, none of this usefulness will be lost because I personally, at a given time, do not feel a need for it. It is easy to see, however, that despite the elemental [*żywiłowego*] nature of a social phenomenon, it lives only the life of those individual needs that it has focused on itself: individual needs always exist in a cohesive and inseparable connection with the whole of a person, with all the movements of his soul. An abstraction, although it has an independent existence, does not cease, like any other, to derive its vital sap from individual particulars. For if these particulars, the particles of individual souls—subjective needs—began to die out under the influence of any other factors of life, then to the extent this extinction encompassed ever larger groups of people, the social life of the abstraction (a certain product, law, or idea) would narrow and weaken more and more, disappearing completely as soon as it no longer found its individual equivalents in any human group.

Some social phenomena, especially legislative institutions—due to the fact that their elemental life has become firmly established in various human

relations—survive the death of their individual particulars, that is, subjective needs, by the mere routine and power of the organization they have created; this existence, however, can only possess temporal force; it is based on superficial social factors, and in various symptoms, in requiring the artificial care of consciousness and organized strength, it betrays internal troubles and a lack of essential vitality. Sometimes as well, under these remainders of social forms from which individual sources have already turned away, the pulsating life of new needs can be perceived, vehemently demanding their socialization. By examining the objective disappearance of a social phenomenon, which is manifested in the narrowing scope of its influence on human life, there can always be found the parallel disappearance of those individual needs from which it drew its strength; they either completely disappear as a category of needs, as a result of changed living conditions, changed set of concepts [*pojęciowości*] or fashions and tastes, or they merely find a new form of satisfying and a new socialization.

Examples of the first type of disappearance of a social phenomenon are such facts as the slow death of the law and customs of clan communism [*komunizmu rodowego*] as a result of new economic conditions suppressing a person's vital need for commonality; the disappearance of various religious rites and so-called "superstitions" which, due to a person's changed set of concepts [*pojęciowości*], no longer find their life value in his brain; or the retreat of a certain fashion or aesthetic taste from the market as a result of new tastes replacing old ones in the buyer's soul. Social phenomena that are thus severed from their subjective sources fall into the relic state of certain legal or ritual formulas that are no longer understood or felt in society and often play the role of symbols of completely false content; for a historian, they have the value of signs that clearly testify to some frozen phase of human life, and with their help he can sometimes discover what the soul of past generations was.

A few examples will sufficiently explain this interesting model of the disappearance of a social phenomenon when it transforms into a fact of a ritual nature as a result of the extinction of individual elements of a certain life institution, and in this form of "obsolescence" it may survive long periods of history to which it could not adapt with its original content. We have here, as it were, a sociological experiment, showing what a social phenomenon turns into when its mental side is removed and its objective-formal side strives to survive. The customary institution of clan communism was closely related to the needs of an individual's life in the period of primitive culture. In view of the predominance of hunting as a means of obtaining food, and the initial skills of cultivation, which did not allow for the long-term use of the same land, joint control of the tribe's territory was in the interest of each of the members;

the productive inefficiency of the individual and his weakness in the struggle for existence made clan solidarity [*solidarności rodowej*] a personal need. Obviously, this need had to diminish as the original manufacturing technique improved; wherever hunting gives way to more perfect farming and the raising of livestock, we see a more or less developed economic individualism, which is also expressed in corresponding living habits.

Institutions disappear with their individual elements. Sometimes, however, they are followed by a certain ritual and the associated element of religious duty, which, however, has already lost its social and life significance. In ancient Greece and Rome, *common*, pritanic and curial *feasts* were kept as a religious custom even when the *gentes* system was in complete disintegration, when individual property had complete freedom, and political society, laws, institutions, and offices were liberated from the old religious and clan ties [*więzów religijno-rodowych*]. However, in the times of the old commonality of life, when the property of the family was inviolable and could not be subject to any family divisions, they probably constituted a daily custom, arising automatically from the communism of work and property, and having the character of a moral obligation through being closely related to the existential basis of the society of that time. This custom, in a degenerate form, outlives a given system, and being deprived of its essential meaning as a natural expression of a real community of life, retains only a religious and formal character. It still existed in the time of Xenophon, limited to certain days of the year, as a religious celebration of mystical significance on whose performance depended the prosperity and salvation of the country: the participants, chosen by lots, sat at a table with wreaths on their heads and in white robes; withdrawing from the fulfillment of this obligation entailed a penalty established by law. That this rite was a relic of the old clan communism is confirmed by the fact that only descendants of the clans [*rodów*], the patricians, could take part in it, that participation in the feasts was strictly limited to the *curia*, and that the original political state, the successor of the former clan commune had the right—as, for instance, in Crete and Ethiopia (according to Herodotus' testimony)—to institute tithes of the harvest, cattle, and so on, to provide these feasts with the necessary items. The religious ceremonies of soothsaying and prayers, held during popular legislative assemblies, the election of a new consul, tribunes, and so forth, were another relic of these same clan institutions [*instytucji rodowych*] in the society of Greece and Rome.

In an era when plebeians were not yet part of political society, which was only a federation of *gentes*, *curia*, and tribes, these ceremonies were important, because power, like all customary legislation, was closely related to the ancestral religion [*religią rodową*] whose sources were in the indestructible

common life of the *gentes*; the people's assemblies did not freely enact matters but rather their decisions strictly followed what the soothsayers and sacrifices of the priest-chiefs revealed to be the will of the clan gods [*bogów rodowych*], that is, the ancestors. Such a settlement of affairs was in the interest of the commune; the initiative of the individual and his talents were of little value, and behavior resulting from reasoned motives alone could easily lead to changes that were hostile to the community system; hence the only factor of governing was tradition, which was associated with ancestor worship and was most effectively able to counteract any individualistic differentiation in the tribe; submission to it was, therefore, in the personal interest of fellow tribe members, an interest that always takes the form of a moral duty and is socialized in the original institution of *clan authority* [*władzy rodowej*]; in all their decrees, the leader or council of elders of the communist tribe [*plemienia komunistycznego*] refers first of all to custom, and motives of reason and utilitarian aims appear only in second place. If, therefore, it was a matter of things unforeseen by custom, or about the election of a leader, administrators, and officials of the clan society [*społeczeństwa rodowego*], then, in keeping with the same interest of tradition, other means were resorted to in order to find out what the will of the ancestors was, and—in keeping with a belief in the active involvement of the dead in matters of life—omens and lottery results were considered to be natural manifestations of this will. Later, however, in the individual-state society, at a time when a democracy of the plebs had destroyed all institutions of the clan system [*ustroju rodowego*], this religious element in politics, along with the disappearance of the interest of commonality and tradition, lost its guiding importance: power is sanctioned only through an election by the people; legislation is based on a plebiscite. Nevertheless, the rituals of the original institution survive: religious rituals are maintained by means of which officials are elected or resolutions of the assembly are confirmed, but they are without any influence on the actual course of the case, an additional formality whose meaning is not even understood.

Another example of the survival of clan institutions in a purely formal rite is found in a fact to which Spencer refers in his *Sociology*: "On selling his cultivated plot of land, a Khond," he says, "having invoked the village deity to bear witness to the sale, 'then delivers a handful of soil to the purchaser.'"⁹ The origin of this formality will become clear when we realize that in the original communes,

9 H. Spencer, *Instytucje obrzędowe, stanowiące część IV "Zasad socjologii,"* translated by J. Potocki, Warszawa 1890, Wydawnictwo „Głosu,” p. 51 [H. Spencer, *Ceremonial Institutions, being a part IV of the "Principles of Sociology,"* London–Edinburgh 1879, Williams and Norgate, p. 52].

only those who belonged by birth to the family or had been accepted to it were able to make use of the clan land [*ziemi rodowej*] as co-proprietor; and such acceptance (as happened, for example, with the tribes of Greece and Rome, when adopting a son, when marrying a woman from another clan [*rodu*], or when accepting a client) was primarily based on the initiation of a new member into the cult of clan ancestors [*przodków rodowych*] and requiring him to assume the obligations of economic community defined by the customary rules; a person who did not participate in religion and clan work [*religii i pracy rodowej*] could under no circumstances use the land that the clan held indivisibly; selling, pledging, and leasing were completely unknown. With the disintegration of the commune, the formal side of this customary institution joins, in a degenerated form of a rite, with the new institution of individual possession of the land, and the accompanying sale of that land; the practice of the Khonds seems to be a mere pretense, in abbreviated form, that the buyer is adopted by the clan [*ród*] and enters its community.

The custom of gladiator fights during funeral ceremonies among the Romans can be counted in the same category of "relics" of the formal side of an institution. In many of the wild tribes of Australia, Polynesia, Bengal, and so forth, there is to this day a "law of retaliation," a customary institution requiring clan or close relatives [*rodowcom lub bliższym krewnym*] to avenge the death of a killed person either on the murderer, or on any of his family members. This was a universal initial form of later court justice and criminal law, since traces of it can be encountered almost everywhere and were still immensely vital in the feudal era of civilized peoples. The law of retaliation was the necessary product of clan solidarity, and since primitive society did not yet have differentiated bureaucratic and state organs, its penal institution had to retain its natural form of individual revenge. This institution, due to the special notion of savages, extended also to cases of ordinary death, because a primitive human does not believe that death can come by a natural path and always looks at it as a malicious work of the enemy, of the sorcerers of the neighboring horde, or perhaps of its ancestral phantoms [*upiorów rodowych*]. Thus, he tries to find out by means of various omens which clan [*ród*] is the perpetrator of a given death, and then the law of retaliation, which is a moral obligation for him, must find its application. Hence, as long as there was clan solidarity and *stateless* justice, the death of a clan member [*rodowca*] entailed the compulsory killing of someone among the enemy tribes; on the other hand, the disappearance of this institution, with the general decomposition of the old clan set of concepts [*pojęciowości rodowej*], reduced it to a formal side, appearing in the

shape of a funeral rite.¹⁰ In all these cases, we see a social institution gaining ground as a result of the extinction, under the influence of changed living conditions, of its individual elements.

A fact that could be used as an example of the second type of disappearance of a social phenomenon, when the same individual need finds a different form of socialization, is the disappearance of the social utility of a certain product (e.g., the tallow candle) due to the given human need that supplied this utility having found a more perfect expression (e.g., the kerosene or stearin candle), and with the disappearance of social utility, the product also loses its independent vitality, withdraws from the market and from production, and at best may one day revive in the meager community of antique lovers and take on a new value as an archaeological artefact—as actually happens with many social relics—as objects of use, that is, products. But even in this case, its renewed vitality is determined by the emergence in a certain group of human beings of a new category of mental and aesthetic needs, through which it has once again established a connection with the souls of individuals and thus has become a social phenomenon again, deriving from its dead form of a material thing. Hence, the monuments of antiquity, which have been long withdrawn from social use, may nevertheless have high monetary prices and their own separate commercial market, which proves the resurrection of the element of socialized need in them and the self-reproductive vitality connected with it.

Generally, therefore, with any disappearance of a social phenomenon, the same two essential components of it, which we have already come to know by a different route, become apparent in an almost empirical way. We see that either its *mental* side disappears, that is, the equivalents of individual needs and human beliefs related to it, and then its objective nature, the side of interaction between individuals, becomes a purely formal rituality, without any significant impact on human life, or is reduced to ordinary material objects, without any social vitality, or the *objective* side, that is, the side of interaction, changes, subtracts the element of need from the old form of socialization, attracts it to itself, and thus reduces the social phenomenon (e.g., a product) to

10 Letourneau recalls that in some tribes in the east and south of Australia, the law of *vendetta*, which, moreover, has retained all its vitality in cases of homicide, in cases of natural death is sometimes replaced by a funeral rite that imitates a fight (Ch. Letourneau, *L'évolution de la morale: leçons professées pendant l'hiver de 1885–1886*, Paris 1887, Adrien Delahaye et Émile Lecrosnier, p. 172). This would indicate that in its application to a certain category of events, even a partial disappearance of an institution, which is dependent on the weakening of the respective beliefs, leaves behind a remnant of its formal character.

the meaning of a dead thing. However, if such outworn phenomena are found in the form of artefacts of antiquity and manage to combine with a new category of human needs, then they are reborn, albeit in a different nature, which manifests itself, for example, in market prices or in a guiding influence on fashion and artistic creativity. In seeking comparisons that would better visualize our thought, we could say that individual need, the fact of a certain subjective feeling, is for a social phenomenon the same focus of life and a regulator as the nucleus is for a protoplasm. Let us separate the part of a protoplasm without a nucleus from a living specimen of the protozoan type (as did, e.g., Le Dantec with *Gromia*, or Hofer with *Amoeba proteus* and *Rhizopoda lobis*), and we will see that the part of the protoplasm without a nucleus disorganizes after a time—a different length of time in different species—as a result of a lack of assimilation; it degenerates and dies, while the part of the protoplasm in which the nucleus remains is completely reborn and slowly acquires the normal form of the whole individual. The nucleus is therefore a condition for the life of the protoplasm as an individual. “Individual need” plays a similar role in regard to a social phenomenon.

Let us make the hypothetical experiment (which can be found in history) of the transfer of a social institution to a country where it does not find its individual equivalents, for example, the book market to Bushman society, or the anti-begging law to the indigenous tribes [*tubylczych plemion*] of the Marquesas Islands, where, according to the testimony of travelers, every passerby has the right to go into any hut, take food from the present bowl, and leave without thanks. This would correspond to the part of the protoplasm *lacking a nucleus*. What happens then? Here a given product or law, which displayed for some time a certain vitality acquired in the activities of its agents or officials, cannot find its social value either in the market or in the social relations of the new country; it becomes a dead object or a functionless organization. It degenerates and dies out, although objectively and formally it has remained the same phenomenon that lives and develops in the Parisian markets or on the streets of London. The only difference is that, when transferred to new countries, the phenomenon has been detached from its vital source of individual needs, deprived of its *mental* core, whereas when it is in the human environment proper to it, it delves with thousands of roots into the brains and hearts of various individuals and draws from there constantly renewing elements of life. Real examples of such an artificial maintenance of institutions, imposed against the individual needs of the population, can most easily be found in the colonies of European countries, for as long as the influence of civilization and capitalism does not accelerate the process of decomposing the original customs of the indigenous tribes and thereby producing elements adapted to

the imposed institutions. The resistance of clan traditions [*tradycji rodowych*], however, is sometimes enormous, and new concepts penetrate with difficulty to barbarian minds. Private property institutions have, for example, found little use in the rural East Indies; although English legislation provides for all kinds of economic freedom, land is rarely sold. Campbell¹¹ says that there are villages in the province of Madras that for half a century have only seemingly submitted to English taxation based on individual wealth and in fact pay the tax collectively and then divide it among the inhabitants according to their customs.

Suppose, on the other hand, that a certain social phenomenon, which is in its own environment of needs, is blocked in its development by various external factors, as was the case, for example, with capitalist enterprise during the reign of feudal political and legal orders, then we see that it has sufficient strength to develop into a complete system of social organization, counteracting even the forms that bind it—just as the part of the protoplasm *with the nucleus* is capable of self-development into a complete individual. In such cases, both “special rights” and the entire educational and propagating system, which tries to suppress the socialization of new individual elements, usually turns out to be ineffective.

§ 5. Taking “a product” as an example, we will most easily be able to examine the further development of the objectivity of a social phenomenon in relation to its individual life-giving element. The first abstraction in the genesis of a social phenomenon consists, as we have seen, in social utility, which abstracts the variety of subjective perception of a certain need, expressing it in one *purpose* of the product, which is for all the same; this is where the life independence of a phenomenon arises, its objective and mental character, which is spontaneous [*żywiotowy*] in relation to the individual. We encounter this initial phase of the phenomenon, in which its elementality [*żywiotowość*] is still somehow potential, not manifested in its own movements, in such facts as, for example, the products of the natural economy, when the weaver, let us say, produces linen for his own use only. But the social phenomenon does not remain at this level of abstraction, since the element of spontaneity it contains tends to manifest itself constantly. A product, because it has its objective mental value, independent of the producer, as the objectification of a certain need of the entire human community, can enter into an exchange relationship with other products. The psychology of the exchanging individuals plays a subordinate

11 Quoted in: Ch. Letourneau, *L'évolution de la propriété*, Paris 1889, Lecrosnier et Babé, p. 297.

role here, as it only affirms the fact that these are two social utilities that are being exchanged with each other. However, since two different utilities cannot be compared with each other and can only be reduced to a need *in general*—to an abstract need that cannot be realistically assessed—the exchange activity must show the reverse side of social utility, that is, its coordinate of purposeful work by means of which all objectified needs, in spite of their qualitative diversity, can be compared with each other. In this way, the product turns into a more abstract and at the same time more spontaneous phenomenon, into *a commodity*; the labor factor—which in a product made for his own consumption still retained its individual character as the actual efforts of the producer and was valued by him from this subjective standpoint—cannot maintain the same living form in an exchange activity where it appears objectively as a measure of various utilities, detached from the subjectivism of its producers; here it acquires an abstract nature, detached from the sentient human substratum. All the individual attributes of labor, the degree of effort, their quality, what they were subjectively to the producer, are of no concern to the exchange activity; in an exchange, the given object does not appear as a product of the work that actually created it but as a product of the “socially necessary,” that is, the easiest that exists in a given society; for if there are producers who use twice as much labor for the production of a certain object, then my commodity, although it is the result of twice as much effort, will nevertheless be judged in the exchange activity according to the smallest norm, as representative not of my productive talent, but of the one that has developed furthest in a given society. Therefore, moving from the type of weaver who produces for his own use, to the type of weaver who produces independently but for sale, we have an intensification of the abstract and spontaneous nature in a social phenomenon and, at the same time, a change in its relation to the individuality of the producer.

The detachment of *a need* from a human being (as social utility) entails the detachment of the reverse side of this need, that is, purposeful work, in the exchange activity, as a result of which the product receives a new factor of spontaneous [*żywiolowy*] independence and a new abstract feature. In an exchange, the product behaves as the embodiment not of some individual work, but of the work that is socially necessary for its production, and therefore also as a representative of the productive talent of *society*. Nevertheless, the link between the product and individual work is not broken, because for every producer only the relation that arises between his *actual* labor and his labor *assessed in the market* will have life significance, since what he will receive in exchange for his product depends on this relation.

If the market price of labor decreases, as is always the case when the market expands and thus takes into account more perfect technical talents, then the real labor of the producer will become less and less profitable in life; the conditions of individual life will therefore change depending on the changes in the detached work, that is, the one that occurs in the market assessment. The emergence of, for example, a carding machine or a mechanical weaving workshop, will force a weaver who produces by hand to sell his goods at lower prices, corresponding to the smaller amount of labor that weaving now represents on the market, thanks to new inventions and the new standard that they have introduced in socially necessary labour. If, assumingly, work did not take an abstract form in an exchange activity—if, that is, the product were judged according to the individual, non-social abilities of the producer—then the extent of its influence on a person's living conditions would be smaller; the benefit of the weaver would depend only on the degree of social utility of his commodity, which would determine whether he would find buyers or not, and evaluation of the commodity would always be equally matched to his actual work and would be free from the influence of the expansion of the market and the development of social technology. In a closed rural market, the valuation of a weaving commodity comes closest to the actual work of the individual producer, since all the other weavers of this small industrial society use the same tools, technique, and material; only individual differences in health and innate physical strength will be unvalued; at the same time, we also see that the closed rural market affects the individual's life less than the world market; toward the former he is more independent in life, and therefore *morally* as well. Thus, it could be formulated as a sociological law that *the intensification of the "socialness" of a product, as a result of the labor factor breaking away from the human being, narrows the relationship between the product and human individuality.*

So far, in the analyzed genesis of the objectivity of a social phenomenon, we have assumed that all stages of production have their individual link—in the brain and in the organism of one producer. But consider a more differentiated type, when the weaver receives the raw material from merchants; then one phase of production, the production of the material, goes out of his individual control; wool, which previously depended only on the conditions of nature and his own economic abilities, now becomes a commodity, regardless of its weaving transformation, and therefore a social factor, the receipt of which depends in large part on conditions unknown to the weaver: on production in another province or another country, on transportation techniques, on mercantile profits, and so forth. This new social factor (material as a commodity) now conditions the individual production process; the weaver's acquisition of

the commodity depends on the sale of his own products, that is, on the social valuation of his work. In this case, then, the producer is even more involved in social objectivity, and the product is more independent from him, more social and spontaneous [*żywiotowy*].

The subsequent phase of the loosening of the manufacturing process, when the weaver receives materials and tools from merchants, becoming a wage laborer in a simple manufacturing shop or home workshop, highlights the above sociological law even more. The manufacturing process is still under control of the worker's own intelligence, as hand tools and nonspecialized work have survived, but the size and quality of production, which in the case of an independent craftsman were closely dependent on his life interests, now separate from the interests of the manufacturer, because they are determined by another factor, by capital, according to social conditions of demand, competition, and techniques. In addition, the work of the producer, once he becomes a wage laborer, is abstracted even more in the form of a *wage*, because its valuation is not only influenced by *the socially necessary* labour (which, because it determines the price of a product, must also affect the wage, which is contained in its price, as a component of it), but also by the rate of excess value, and the labor market, and various political and civilizational factors that may determine the amount of earnings. Thus, compared with the former independent production, the work of the producer now absorbs into itself a far greater quantity of social elements, reinforcing its objective character in regard to the individual. Nevertheless, or rather as a consequence, the individual-social link between an individual's life and the social phenomenon becomes even tighter. For the producer's labor, which is detached in the form of wages, is closely bound up with all his needs, as the only economic equivalent of life in general, whereby the smallest conditions of his life are now exposed to all those social influences that are concealed beneath the phenomenon of *wages*.

The product becomes even more separated from the human being when machines and a division of labor are introduced. In this case, purposefulness, the intelligence of production, becomes distinct from the brain of the producer; it becomes the property of an automaton that lives socially. The product is then—not only in its market assessment but also in its origin—a product of social and objective intelligence, conceived and begotten independently of the brain of this or that human being; individual differences of talents and strength among workers cease to influence it, and its self-born, spontaneous life reaches its greatest fullness. Work is abstracted even more, because the factor of the individual's productive aptitude, which previously influenced wages, now loses its relevance to production. It is easy to see, however, that this factor of individual ability, which pertained to the product before the introduction

of the machine and was thus one of the components of the wage, was the last dam which separated the individual's life from the influences of the social world; there was still some oasis in the life of the worker that was not reached by the storms of the social elements, as long as his natural aptitude secured him a certain amount of income and a certain demand for his work. With the passing of this factor of ability to the social field, with its transformation into the objective intelligence of machines, another window opens through which the currents of collective life flow into the individual territory; any change in the production technique, deriving from various social circles, under the influence of the development of science, politics, the transformation of the food market, and the interests of capitalists, can be strongly felt in the living conditions of the individual: the amount of wages and the length of the working day changes, the demand for labor switches from one branch of industry to another, wage competition increases, and the worker's home is transformed by the introduction of women's and children's labor into production.

Thus, in examining the evolutionary path followed by a "product," we find that with the development of the objectivity of a social phenomenon, the knot that fuses it with life, and hence with the soul of the individual, becomes even more narrow and branched; the individual, mental element from which a social phenomenon arises and from which it derives its vitality is retained at all levels of objective development, and every twitch in the spontaneous life of a social phenomenon expresses itself in something *new* in the human soul, although no purposeful consciousness attended to the novelty.

ii

§ 6. [...] let us now turn to another feature of the individual elements. We have seen that any social process by its very nature must also include individual, psychological links; there cannot be one that does not touch upon the human soul and bring about a certain change in it. This could be called *the individual revolutionariness of the social fact*. On the other hand, the individual psychic element, created under the action of a social process, also influences the social phenomenon; the individual element not only results from these processes but is also something shaping and active which demands its expression in the social world and marks its existence there with a certain change. This second, opposite aspect of the individual-social relationship can be called *the social revolutionariness of the individual fact*. We have also seen that the development of social reality [*rzeczowość społeczna*], toward which history progresses, not only does not loosen the knot between the individual's life and the social world

but, on the contrary, tightens it more and more, thereby magnifying this dual revolutionariness: the transformative interaction of the individual and social spheres. Hence it follows that between any two series of social transformations that are causally related to each other there is always an individual fact resulting from the first series and being the cause of the second; therefore, the relation between the two is contained in the living and sentient link.

The clearest example of this connection is found in crises and in the normalization of the capital-labor ratio. In the first case, we have the following series of social facts: the expansion of enterprise along with the improvement of manufacturing techniques, which drives small producers from the market, while within enterprises the share of variable capital is reduced and the cheaper labor of women and children is introduced; the direct result is a lowering of *the living standard* of the working class and petty-bourgeois families, a fact that undeniably pertains to individual life and is expressed in it by a change in habits, needs, and health. At the same time, however, this individual fact is reflected on the stock exchange as a certain narrowing of the market, which to a large extent determines the appearance of stagnation in industry, with all its consequences. The role and significance of a given commodity on the market, with all its production apparatus, changes only as a result of the fact that *the private* interests of John, Paul, and Peter, multiplied any number of times, force them to renounce a certain need, or to replace a certain habit in life with another.

In the second case, the expansion of an enterprise also involves the association of workers under the same conditions of exploitation, which results in *the solidarity* of the exploited—an essentially individual psychological fact that can only be found in the way of thinking, feeling, and acting of each individual who is part of the group manifesting solidarity, and the consequence of such solidarity developing through mental processes of growing awareness is the introduction of norms, with the help of class organizations and their political achievements: wages, the working day, and the share of women's and children's labor. This introduction of norms strongly influences capitalist production and political and national relations. Thus in both cases we see that *two separate groups of social facts are linked in a relationship of causality by means of an individual fact*.

But the individual fact, although included in the causal series of social processes, nevertheless retains its exclusive position there, and it differs fundamentally from any other link in these series in that it is a sentient and living link. While the social phenomenon is a particle of the soul detached from the organic whole of the human being and possessing its factual existence, the individual phenomenon is woven with thousands of threads into this organic

whole and exposed to all the shocks that affect it. There can be no change in the conditions of our lives that does not, to a greater or lesser degree, affect our thoughts and feelings, or awaken certain desires, endeavors, ideas, memories, and predictions; our reasoning, visceral sensitivity and visionary dreaming grasp it; it enters our brain and body.

Consequently, an individual fact, as a link in a causal series, behaves differently from a social fact. A social phenomenon changes only insofar as it is influenced by another social phenomenon. The price of a certain commodity cannot change by itself. For any change to take place, it must be influenced either by a change in production technique or market demand, or by a certain state protectionism, or by a cartel monopoly or a cornering of the market, and if nothing changes in the social phenomena existing outside it and connected with it by any thread of causality, then the price (or any other social fact) remains stationary: it cannot change itself in its smallest degree as long as it is only a social fact.

The individual element behaves quite differently. It has its *self-born vitality* with regard to the social facts with which it enters a single causal series, and it has that vitality because, apart from the link that connects it with the social fact of which it results, and with the one for which it is the cause, it also has various connections with the whole of the human soul from which it has not separated itself. Thus even when its social conditions do not change, it can itself change under the influence of this combination of individual phenomena in which it plays a vital and organic part. For example, the narrowing of a person's standard of living, resulting from certain economic processes, is not the only phenomenon that is socially expressed as a narrowing of the market; in the mind of an individual, especially when a degree of *abject poverty* has been reached, a certain set of concepts [*pojęciowość*] is developed; many ideas that have lived there so far are rejected and new ideological and emotional foci are created which are sometimes expressed as political movements and sometimes take the form of literary, religious, or moral currents, but which always invade the social world in one way or another. The economic process, in narrowing people's standard of living, did not at all bring elements of political democratism or divergence from the Church into social life, and yet it can be seen in history that poverty sometimes brings these forth, because they are the products of a spontaneous transformation of an individual fact in the human soul. The fact never gives back to society only what it took from social processes but transforms itself in its individual environment. Its action as a cause—in regard to social life—has more than what was in it as a result of this life. The economic process, in giving birth to an individual phenomenon, can never be sure what it gives to the social world—namely what new beings will

be spawned from this magic crucible of the human soul, into which it throws its product with inexorable necessity.

§ 7. This self-born vitality of the individual elements makes social life not only highly complex, but more importantly *susceptible to the purposeful action* of creative consciousness. If the individual result (a) of a certain social process is that A becomes the cause that is necessary for the emergence of social process B, and is itself, as a psychological fact, capable of being transformed in its individual environment (of the human soul), then it is clear that a given idea of creative purposefulness which enters this environment can influence, develop, and transform it, and thus also influence this social process, B, which depends on it (i.e., according to the mental fact of a.). Suppose that process A is a market struggle between large agricultural production and small owners, and its individual result is the deterioration of a farmer's living conditions or his transformation into a proletarian; as a result, among a given class of the agricultural population, various moral aspirations and conceptual trends emerge—those which may arise in the human soul under the influence of a more difficult struggle for existence and a changed position in life. The social results of this new class psychology will vary, depending on what kind of propaganda will influence the peasant minds affected by the change in living conditions: what consciously working ideology will combine with this bitterness and those hopes that have emerged under the influence of a destructive economic process. If, for example, as in the United States of America, farmers' production organizations are propagandized, then the constant outcome in class psychology will be a certain resistance to large capital on the market, partial obstruction of the process of expropriating small producers, and political pressure on the state to declare a legislative war on cartels and other monopolies. If, on the other hand, the influence of conservative or social-democratic propaganda is at work, then the social results of the same class psychology will be quite different; in one case they may be manifested in a strengthening of the position of the clergy or, as with the law of "*heimstätte*," in another as strengthening proletarian politics and putting pressure on the state to protect the rights of hired labor. The variety of social outcomes obviously comes from the circumstance that a given fact of individual life (expropriation) is transformed differently in the human soul, depending on what ideology affects it.

The difficulty of the question concerning how the causality of social facts can be altered by the deliberate action of the ideology of a certain group of human minds seems, therefore, to be eliminated by our formation of the question. It is obvious that the influence of a "purposeful ideology" would be impossible if the causality of social life did not contain individual links and if its material processes did not include living human beings capable of absorbing this

ideology and transforming it into new forces. On the other hand, it would be superfluous and sterile *if the link of individual causation only gave back to social life what it received from social processes*, that is, if it did not have its self-born vitality, its ability to transform itself in an introspective environment. Hence, sociologists who do not see individual elements in social objectivity or who do not understand their essential significance proceed quite logically if they deny that any creative ideology can have meaning and influence the development of the causality of social life. The contradiction of this assertion with our intuition, which makes us relate to social processes completely differently than to natural ones, and the assertion's contradiction by the facts of history, proves though that social "causality" is not as they imagine. It properly appears as the interference of two series of causality (*przyczynowości*), of different categories, one of which pertains to social phenomena and the other to individual phenomena. For example, in order to become the cause of other economic facts (such as a narrowing of the market) or their specific political and moral symptoms, a group of economic facts (the lowering of wages, expropriation) must first be expressed as a certain change in individual life, and since the emerging phenomenon concerns needs that are in a living relationship with the whole of the human soul, in this area it must necessarily take its own environment into account; that is, it must be subject to a new instance of psycho-individual causality.

Thus before it becomes, as a result of one social process, the cause of another, it undergoes a series of transformations peculiar to its sphere of life, and this series is different depending on what ideas and emotional tensions are present in the environment being transformed, that is, in the soul of the individual. It is obvious, therefore, that if a certain creative ideology somehow gets into a mind and encounters this element of social origin there, it will be able to influence it in the same way as any other psychic element: in influencing a person privately—his way of thinking and acting, his desires and feelings—it also molds, according to its conventions, that factor of his soul that arose from the social world and that arose toward this world as the cause of his new processes.

In this way, a certain arbitrariness creeps into the causality of social facts, resulting from the fact that this causality is interrupted at certain points in its development in descending to the individual realm, or rather, it is transformed only into the causality of another category of phenomena; in these breaks belonging to the psychology of the individual, factors that were not present in social processes appear, such as, for instance, the "ideals" of life, patterns born in individual feelings, drawn from memories and predictions: what "should be" in opposition to what is or is to be. With regard to sociological causality, which for the sake of social effect requires a search for a social cause, these individual

links, in being subject to the influence of factors which by nature are alien to social reality [*rzeczowości społecznej*], could therefore acquire a character of *arbitrariness*, because they introduce into collective life phenomena that could not be justified uniquely by social processes and that, considered solely from the standpoint of these processes, could equally be either good or not good. Considering the example above, the economic expropriation process is by no means a condition of the emergence of such political symptoms as the farmers' unions or the Knights of Labor in America, or social democracy and the Catholic-Social party in Germany, because something else determines them, namely, what kind of "creative ideology" takes over the minds affected by this process? What conditions, in themselves, are irrelevant to the question we are dissecting? The point is only that the creative idea—which is born unhampered in our minds, feeds on our feelings, and remains under the regulation of our internal will, which weakens or intensifies, depending on whether we give it our moral sanction or not—finds links in the processes of social life through which it can enter and once there exert a formative influence on this life. The point is that the moral shaping of the human being under the influence of a certain ideal is by no means a matter of indifference for the transformation of the social world but, on the contrary, may determine these transformations as an essential factor.

[...]

§ 9. Accordingly, since each institution has its individual equivalent, and therefore its synthetic whole, that is, a social system of a given type has its representation in the human soul, which is also the only vital element in this system. In the moral interior of the individual, a true social *microcosmos* lives in mental form, steeped in feelings and cenesthesia,¹² and it is this which is the substratum and bearer of the external world of the collective organization, which subjugates the individual and controls him. Moreover, it is quite easy to perceive this microcosmos in the human being because it constantly manifests itself in every functioning of any institution, that is, when this institution, law, or dogma enters into a real relationship with an individual life. Property law or criminal law, in acting by means of its police and judicial organization with regard to an inheritance, a theft, a loan, etc., not only shows its social life but also its individual equivalents; it brings to light the souls of those people in whose interests it acts—their firmly entrenched concepts of ownership, or concepts of the justice system, coupled with a multitude of needs and feelings.

12 *Cenesthesia (Greek: *koinós*—„common,” *aísthēsis*—„feeling,” „perception”), „general feeling,” a sense of a whole body.

Whoever turns to the court to recover his debt from a debtor, or places a thief in the hands of the police, or calls on the authorities to punish a crime, undeniably acts for individual reasons, under the influence of what lives in his heart and brain, thus proving that the institutions and laws he uses have a personal life value for him—that they correspond to his needs and essential concepts, even though at other times he may have denied it as a matter of theory. *The life of an institution is also the psychology of the group of people that make use of it.*

Taking all this into account, the question of the interdependence between economic processes and their “superstructure,” that is, their legislation, politics, and social ideology, can be explained very simply. The economic process directly concerns the individual’s life needs; it touches the deepest foundation of the human soul, as it changes the conditions of everyday existence. It is not surprising then that combined with life needs, a human being’s conceptualization [*pojęciowość*]*—*where the equivalents of institutions exist—also changes. The “superstructure” begins with a change in the human soul, while the economic process ends with this change. Therefore the interdependence between one and the other, as manifested in the history of social transformations, is nothing more than the ordinary causation in the psychology of the individual of the relationship that exists between what has changed in his soul due to new economic conditions and all the rest of his conceptualizations and emotions, coupled with the interests of life.

The peasant-owner, for example, transformed into a hired laborer, enters a new social environment which he did not know before. His personal life now begins to come into direct contact with factors and matters from which it was previously isolated in his time of economic independence. He must take an interest in the labor market, factory legislation, the stagnation or recovery of industry—in a word, in a whole host of facts which somehow affect hiring conditions and wages; in the past, these were matters unknown to him, matters of indifference, about which at best he had learned in theory and sometimes considered. Now, though, they come right into his home as vividly experienced parts of life, as burdens or relief.

Under this influence, the social institutions, laws, and moral ideas regulating the life of an individual also appear to him from a different side. He can no longer judge property in the same way, for it bares its terrible teeth of exploitation at him, nor can he keep in his heart his old reverence for the ideal of work, savings, and self-help, since these virtues made a firm break in his life with prosperity and freedom, and as a hired laborer they have become for him personally disastrous and even pointless. In this way, the mental equivalents of the various institutions that previously lived in his soul as essential needs, as concepts recognized by conscience, by the sense of life, now fade

away or turn into their opposite with the advent of new economic conditions. We know, however, that with the disappearance of individual equivalents, the entire objective vitality of social phenomena also weakens. They must then, in order to preserve themselves, require an increasing share of the artificial help of state forces, and finally, cut off from individual sources, they turn and die, or, adapting to new equivalents, are transformed into new institutions and a new ideology.

Moreover, the very principle of a social phenomenon, of its essence, shows us which sphere of the human soul is the scene of this psychological process associating economic facts with all other categories of social life by a relation of interdependence. A social phenomenon, as we know, is *an objectified need*; it is an objective fact that finds its psychological value every time it comes into contact with a person in his individual need. The objectivity of the phenomenon comes from the fact that the need, as an object of purposeful action, expressed through the work of the intellect common to all people, leaves the closed sphere of subjectivism and becomes capable of penetrating the souls of other individuals and finding what is most similar to itself in different ones. Therefore, need, which is an individual and concrete fact of a purely subjective value irreducible to anything else, is to be found in every social phenomenon as its essential nucleus, concealed in all kinds of objective forms. The objective development taking place under the influence of ever greater abstraction—that is, the detachment of the need from the living whole of the human being—intensifies the opposition of the individual and social fact, and masks this individual nucleus but cannot lose it; on the contrary, its vitality increases with the development of its objectivity. Obviously, what moves in the human soul under the influence of social processes is *the sphere of needs*.

In psychological terms, this sphere differs essentially from the two extreme poles of human nature: from thoughts and pre-thought emotions, from the realm of pure intellectual processes and from the realm of nameless feeling—the world of cenesthesia and memory; it occupies a privileged position as the creator of life; it is a place in the soul *where emotions are formed into systems of concepts, into purposeful drivers of behavior*. The emotion that enters here loses its namelessness, its impulsive blindness, and surrenders to intellectualism; predicted in various forms of concrete facts, it develops around itself numerous systematizations of concepts, which may, like others, be abstracted into general ideas, and along with the concepts into which it enters and becomes perpetuated, also adopts their logic. Conversely, the concepts are also transformed into a new psychological category as soon as they enter this sphere, revealing features that they did not have in the purely intellectual domain. Above all, in always being *general* as elements of pure thought, they take the

form of the most concrete facts and are broken down into those individual real components existing *in rerum natura*¹³ which provided them with the living content of the generalization. At the same time, in being narrowed to what could only be a particular individual event in their specificity, they acquire something on the order of a cenesthetic body and blood, imbibed with my feeling, associated with my pleasure and pain, and distinguished as my own. While keeping their purely intellectual side, which is common to me and others, they acquire another vital aspect in my organism, in my emotional depths. Consequently, in addition to the logical element that allows us to discuss causal relations, similarities, and differences—to say what a given fact is or will be—they also acquire the element of *purposefulness*, of what should be; and this element, being of a practical nature, forces the conceptualization that entered the sphere of needs to express itself through *behavior*, and therefore to play a creative role in life, whereas the intellectual role is satisfied with explanation and understanding.

An idea, entering the sphere of needs and acquiring there new, specific properties, also retains the character it has in the purely intellectual sphere; that is, it leads a double life in both these spheres. This can be verified using any example. The idea of the morality of “monogamy,” let us say, is one of those that penetrate the ground of human needs and put down strong roots there; from having a general, intellectual character, developed by social institutions, it very easily becomes individual and concrete, clothed in the body of my own life affair. Nevertheless, it retains its intellectual talents; it may be an object of abstract thinking, in which the intelligences of different individuals participate, reaching the same conclusions; it may also, as a neutral general concept, undergo reasoning that will transform it into the opposite thesis, for example, into the idea of “free love.” In a word, taken as an object of thought, it can be treated in a strict, scientific manner, allowing all possible assumptions and conclusions, with all freedom of reasoning. At the same time, I can see that in my needs, in conscience, the old idea of “monogamy” lives on unchanged by the reasoning which only affected and took hold of its intellectual double, and although in dealing with its general mental form I readily accepted all the judgments and conclusions that the abstraction processes suggested to me, nevertheless here, in the sphere of needs, the idea behaved reluctantly and reasoning was strongly hampered by bonds of pain and pleasure, so that as a result it remained unchanged in relation to the concrete facts of life. I act and feel life events in accord with the old idea, even when, in dealing with it as an

13 **In rerum natura* (Latin)—in the reality of nature.

object of theoretical thought, I arrive at its negation. This is the split between practice and intelligence, between conscience and thought, arising precisely from the fact that the same idea can lead a double life—in the realm of the intellect and in the realm of needs, and be both abstract and individual. While the former sought mostly definitions and causation, the latter remained with its practical norm; while the former lived in the species and developed freely, this one remained exclusively mine, aesthetically concrete, and therefore not amenable to reasoning.

The sphere of needs can hence be defined as set of concepts fused with emotions into a single psychological whole to which reasoning tries to adapt but without being a condition for its existence; the ideas that make up this conceptuality differ from their intellectual forms in that they are not only reasoned but also felt; not only can they be developed mentally, but they are also expressed in human *behavior*, and they are not only logical but also purposefully creative, of practical meaning in relation to the course of life. This sphere is shaped mainly by the contact of the individual with the human environment and corresponds to what is commonly known as “conscience.”

Conscience, in the common understanding, is contrasted with the human mind as a set of concepts which the individual *feels* deeply and which, above all, has a life value for him; the most organic needs, such as nutrition and reproduction, enter this concept in the form of their ideological emergence—as work, property, marriage, etc., though no theory that explains the nature of labor, property, or marriage can belong to its sphere but pertains exclusively to the intellect. The religious character usually adopted by the conceptuality contained in the conscience comes precisely from the fact that, being devoid of rationalism and not relying on rational proofs, it is at the same time a guide for human behavior and forces reason to adapt to these guidelines.

Returning now to the problem of the *interdependence* of various social categories, it will be easy for us to understand its psychological secret. The economic fact touches the sphere of human needs, and at the same time the whole ideology which developed from these needs as human conscience; all the components of this conscience are brought together by the bond of the same individuality. They are all practical, purposeful, and creative, and seek to express themselves in conduct; all also, as vital and conceptually structured needs, are individual equivalents of various institutions, laws, and moral dogmas which in the environment surrounding the individual constitute one system, the objective social world. A human conscience is the subjective essence of this world. Thus if any of the constituent parts of the sphere of the soul change under the influence of a given economic process, then, since they all adhere to one bond of individuality and by nature must adapt to the practice

of life, they will all be affected by this change. With the appearance of a novel element of economic origin, they will also weaken, disappear, and be transformed into other things—those “equivalents” of social phenomena which have accumulated there in the form of various needs, subjectively connected with each other. Thus, the totality of human conscience will change depending on the development of the new economic process and, along with it, the individual sources of the existing institutions will dry up and equivalents of those not yet existing will be created. Institutions of extinct individual equivalents will have to move off the historical stage due to their lack of essential vitality; the new equivalents, on the other hand, after undergoing different degrees of socialization, will finally be expressed in an objective new organization.

The tragedy of the death of a system that has outlived its time, and the birth of a new social world, is therefore a tragedy of individual psychology, which takes place in subjective secrecy, off the historical stage, and what it sends into history and what creates history are the ready results of its accomplished acts. It begins with the circumstance that the economic fact, resulting from various social processes, is realized individually; that is, given its nature it penetrates into the sphere of human needs as a new component. Having entered these depths of the human soul, it must be transformed into various ideological and legal “superstructures,” because in these it touches upon elements that belong to different social categories and affect different parts of life. The human “conscience” could be compared to a prism from which a simple economic fact emerges, split into its coordinates of other social categories; it is the living, feeling point of its transformation into variety, into the whole of collective life, and it happens thus because here the individual elements of all social phenomena have accumulated and interconnected.

§ 10. This explains why economic influences cannot reach the realm of human rationalism and place their mark on critical philosophy and the sciences. Although the changed social environment may provide scholarship with new material or show facts from a side that was previously invisible, the cognitive method itself—the principles guiding the search—do not change as a result. Mathematics and natural science remain completely outside of historical evolution and show no inclination to submit to historical types of societies; on the other hand, all ideologies that are linked to the needs of life, which, apart from the purely mental domain, also belong to the human conscience, such as politics, morality, and religion, are subject to economic transformations because in their individual equivalents they are exposed to their direct action. Conversely, too, the influences of rationalism, the factors of pure reasoning, must remain barren and clumsy in the face of an ideology inherent in human consciences, until they are helped by changes in life. The convincingly

intellectual operation of any reforming idea, unless it penetrates into the human conscience and finds its natural allies in needs, has no social effect. This is evidenced by, for example, those failed collective communes in which attempts were made at various times to organize "individualists" imbued with the spirit of ownership and competition.

In addition, it is clear that if the economic fact affects the various ideological categories of society through the human conscience, then these categories must be *class-based*, because the sphere of individual needs—what is formed in the individual's conscience—cannot be the same for all people in a differentiated society. One and the same economic fact will be different for the worker and for the capitalist; it will change the living conditions of each of them in a different direction, and consequently awaken moral elements that tend to different manifestations in politics and ideology. If these symptoms arose independently of economic processes, or if their individual seeds were to be found in the cognitive intellectuality of the human being, then they would be *classless*, just like philosophy and science. However, coming from the sphere of the soul that is in direct contact with the changes of life and that accepts all its influences and interacts with it, these symptoms must appear with the soul's individual stamp of class and be as class-differentiated as the life of the individual in relation to his human environment.

In fact, the ideology that arises under the influence of economic change is always *individual* because this change is expressed not in some general abstract life but in the specific life of this or that individual. Therefore those concepts that it touches in the human conscience must also concern certain concrete, personal matters, and seek their application in them. In being socialized through the close similarity of the living conditions of various individuals and groups into one common ideological expression, they do not lose their individual stamp, because the whole value of this collective expression consists solely in the fact that in it each individual can find the practical question of his own life. The same "individuality" that distinguishes the merchant from the farmer and the hired laborer from the capitalist as individual people must also be found in the manifestations of their collective life, as *classness*. While *similar* elements may occur in the needs of individuals occupying different life positions, the class character disappears in the social manifestations of these needs, and it appears as soon as society enters the stage of greater differentiation: for example, the institution of marriage was the most classless in the middle ages, when in the natural economic conditions there was little differentiation, and with the emergence of the factory proletariat it took on a certain tinge of class, because in such living conditions it loses its former meaning and

is now being more and more often negated, as if it sought to become solely the privilege of the possessing classes.

It can therefore be argued that if “class” appears in some social fact this is an infallible sign that the fact belongs individually to the conscience and not to human intellectualism—that it comes from that sphere of the soul where needs, living emotionally, are shaped into ideology. The influences of rationalism must therefore remain powerless against such a fact, and in order for any element of novelty to enter it and transform it, it must find some life gate and penetrate first into the conscience of the human being and become his personal need. A phenomenon marked by such ancestry cannot possess rationalist constancy; despite the fact that in becoming socialized into institutions and laws it tries to assume this character, it always finds a group of minds to support it with dogmatic reasoning and try to maintain it as an absolute certainty. However, with every major historical shock this rationalism reveals its deep dependence on the living stem of human needs, completely neglecting intellectual logic, and even in the realm of pure thought it is incapable of surviving the changes that have occurred there. The entire philosophy of feudal laws did not withstand the pressure of capital; similarly, theories of political economy are undergoing a period of development and transformation which is dependent on social processes, and they increasingly contradict each other as new factors of life appear on the historical scene.

Considering from this standpoint the individual interdependence of the transformation of various social facts, it is also easy to understand that this interdependence will be the closer—that is, the transformation of politics and ideology depending on economic processes will be the greater—the more developed is the objectivity of social phenomena; that is, the more distanced they are from their human stem as living abstractions. It follows from the above law that the increased socialization of a phenomenon tightens the relationship between it and the individuality of a person. (see: § 5) The economic process, whose objective nature, detached from the human individual, increases as we move away from the natural economy toward a commodity economy—from the self-made producer to the mercenary, from the craftsman producing for the local market to the worker in a machine factory with worldwide supply. With each such intensification of its objective-social nature, the individual human life is brought more strongly under its power, and thus it can also have a stronger influence on all the equivalents of ideology and social policy, laws, and institutions that reside in the individual's soul. Hence, we see that in petty-bourgeois societies, in the classes of small owners and independent craftsmen, ideology is more conservative and less prone to the expression of various disturbances of the economic world than in the working class. Individual

factors in the production process still exist in the former: his labor free from overvaluation and machine automatism and thus partially protects the life of the producer from social influences, while allowing his ideology to retain a certain independence from them. The proletariat has no such protections; all factors of life here are exposed to the action of the social environment; work is abstracted from the human being not only in the commodity, but also in wages and the productive intelligence of machines. Therefore, as a class, the proletariat is the point in the human community where transformations take place most rapidly and with the greatest force, and where the correlation between ideology and economic development is the closest; thanks to this, it is possible to guess which social world economic development is progressing towards.

A sociologist who studies the guidelines for the transformation of collective life at a certain time should therefore look to the point of society where economic processes are most free from individual factors and at the same time most closely associated with the life of an individual, being as they are most controlling of it with their influences, for at this point the interdependence of the various social facts is the closest, and therefore the ideology that develops in it is most truthful.

iii

§ 11. Considering *the interdependence* of various social categories from an individual standpoint, therefore, leads us to a new statement: *that the generator of the social world is the human conscience*—the emotional and practical set of concepts living in personal needs. Everything that enters here and becomes consolidated must sooner or later become a social fact, and if it meets obstacles in its socialization, then a historical conflict between new trends and existing institutions arises. It is obvious that if a certain change in conscience were limited to a single individual or to a small group of exceptional individuals, it would not be capable of socialization and would constitute only a conflict, a clash between individuals and the world around them. However, since such a change always takes place under the influence of a new development in living conditions, it cannot therefore be exceptional but on the contrary it must embrace ever larger groups of people, who everywhere follow the path of this development. The fact that “collectivity” determines the socialization of the change that has occurred in a person’s conscience in no way devalues the above statement, because however great and decisive this collectivity might be, its entire value in social transformations is not based on what results from it as a collective but only in what is inherent in its real components, that is,

in the change of individual conscience. The phenomena of crowd psychology, the features of organizing into sects, associations, or parties, are all secondary symptoms, the essential substratum of which must be a human being as a concrete individual. Let us imagine, however, that in crowd psychology or in an organization there are features that are not present in the conscience of individuals. The question is whether these traits will be capable of transforming the social environment or whether a new human world will actually be born from them. According to my assertion, they will not be capable of doing so as a result of pure intellectual processes or the stimulation that appears in special circumstances; they will not be able to even if they encompass the largest human communities.

In advancing the thesis that the human conscience is the generator of the social world, we mean that *what is essential in social transformations is only what is individual in communities*; whatever the theories and slogans of a given sect or political party in its programs and catechisms may be, however far its official ideology may reach, it will in fact and in history remain only what the consciences of its constituent parts are; in its transformative social role, it will always reduce itself to what is *individually* professed in the community it embraces, to what is professed as a personal need, as a practical question of life; all the rest will remain in the sphere of intellectualism and will be to history only a "*utopia*" which could not be realized. Moreover, it should be noted that any change of conscience is contagious in nature; that is, it cannot be confined to a single individual but must always develop in a collective, because the causes of such a change are always inherent in the conditions of life, which cannot concern only one person or a family, since life itself is always a collective. The change of individual conscience, as a direct psychological expression of these conditions, is therefore the most primal bond of all collectivity. Moreover, every idea residing in the human conscience is inherently practical and creative with regard to life, and thus it can never remain strictly individual in the same way as moods, dreams, or hopes are; it gives rise to concrete facts concerning the needs of other people and as a result connects the spheres of life of different individuals.

The thesis thus presented would suggest that a new social world is being prepared in the human conscience—that a visible and determining historical change is preceded by a transformation of the individual conscience, which is revealed by a new custom, a new way of thinking and acting. Let us see to what extent history justifies this conclusion. In every social transformation, covering the full development period, that is, between the old and the new type of system, three phases can be distinguished, but they cannot be separated in time because each of them, having reached a certain degree of development,

necessarily requires the coexistence of the others. *The first is an economic transformation that can be distinguished conceptually from other phenomena, as a change in people's relation to the product of labor. The elements of novelty it introduces are technical and cultural elements resulting from almost all the social processes that occurred in the preceding period; they are expressed directly in changes in the conditions of production, in a new relationship that is structured between the individual's productive ability and his standard of living. In the society of classical antiquity, which was based on slavery, a symptom of changes of this nature was the "colonate," a prototype of the tenant farm which became the substratum for the development of feudalism. In feudal society, the same revolutionary economic role was played first, from the twelfth century onwards, by the development of the commodity economy, and then by the emergence of capital and the proletariat, large farms producing for export, and handicrafts based on cooperation and the division of labor. Finally, in today's society, which has developed on the basis of individual property and market competition (economic factors that come into contradiction with the extant organization and legislation), it is played by the "social" nature of production and exchange, the accumulation of productive forces, the overwhelming abilities of private capital, and the striving for deliberate market regulation to drive out blind competition. Any such economic factor, insofar as it antagonizes the existing organization of society, must be regarded as an element of novelty whose natural aspiration will be to seek forms of life adapted to itself. This antagonism and this adaptive tendency are found only *logically* in the concept of a given economic fact. However, if we want to verify them in historical reality, we have to go beyond the economic definition of a fact and move to the domain of moral phenomena, expressed as the antagonisms and aspirations of social *classes*. For example, we can say that a commodity, by its very nature, needs a free market and all the political, state, legal, and moral factors that condition this freedom, because the very concept of a "commodity" includes the notion of a "market," and the distinction between a producer and consumers. Yet it is clear that in order for this logic of the commodity to express itself through the facts of social history, it must cease to be an economic category and take on specific human characteristics; that is, it must express itself as the interests of a certain class for whom the social rights that obstruct the freedom of the market will be a disadvantage and those that secure it will be a vital need. The economic factor, in its role of transforming society, is therefore limited only to the fact that it changes the needs and simultaneously the ideas and feelings of the human being into whose life environment it enters. Here, however, *the objective* process of transformation ends and *the individual**

process begins; an action concerning the conditions of production and consumption carries over into the moral interior of the individual.

[...]

§ 14. Similarly, we also see the emergence of a new ideology, of a practical-life nature, in the period preceding the capitalist organization of society; this is *bourgeois liberalism*, which, long before the abolition of feudal legislation, germinated and spread in human minds. In cities, first of all, under the influence of the development of the commodity economy, life elements accumulated which were in contradiction with feudal institutions. The “communal” movement, in trying to expand the bourgeoisie in general and consolidate through legislation the personal liberties of merchants, was the first expression of this change, which eliminated the need for feudal patronage and the concepts associated with it. The same economic process of the disappearance of the natural economy under the influence of the exchange movement also changed the attitude of the rural working classes to the institutions of patronage. Then, there appeared such facts as serf labor on manor farms, which expanded at the expense of tenant plots and communal lands, as well as monetization and the increase in rents and other feudal duties—facts that fundamentally transformed the former position of the subject. Those movements of collective ideology known to history as the Renaissance, humanism, peasant wars, and the Reformation were born from the antagonism of the individual peasant and burger to feudal institutions and clearly indicated that a deep change of a moral nature had occurred in the former society and that the negation of feudalism had taken root in minds, even though feudalism persisted still in the society’s institutions and laws. Indeed, tendencies were manifested toward transforming society in the direction of complete political and administrative centralization, with the separation of power from landed property. A mind of a new type appeared and tried to free itself in the field of arts and sciences from the dominance of the Church; an ideology of political equality emerged and was especially promoted by Münzer’s¹⁴ adherents. The moral elements of the institutions that would develop in capitalist society appeared. It should also be noted that, starting from the fourteenth century, under the influence of the forced expropriation of tenant farmers on the one hand and the gradual reduction of handicrafts in craft guilds on the other, a new human element

14 * Thomas Münzer or Müntzer (1489/1490–1525), German preacher and theologian of the early Reformation whose opposition to both Martin Luther and the Roman Catholic Church led to his open defiance of late-feudal authority in central Germany. He became a leader of the German peasant and plebeian uprising of 1525 commonly known as the German Peasants’ War.

was developing—the proletariat, which was morally completely unsuited to a society based on institutions of patronage. It will thus be easy to understand how many anti-feudal elements must have accumulated in the moral atmosphere breathed by the society of the transition period. Feudalism, even before it fell under the blows of the legislative revolution, was dying a slow death in the minds of the bourgeoisie and peasants, who had been drawn into the commodity economy or disinherited. It died in customs, beliefs, morals, and concepts, revealing its *individual disintegration* in the collective manifestations of new ideologies and new class struggles.

It can therefore be assumed that before each change in the organization of social life, not only its theoretical patterns and economic foundations appear but also *its prior adaptation to human needs*, which are individually molded into a self-suiting practical life ideality, a life meaning, and thus stand closest to so-called morality. This adaptation of needs to the as yet nonexistent social system is what we call *the historical transformation of conscience*: a collective life always takes the form of self-conscious moral propaganda, and producing its ethical dogmatism and rationalism penetrates into the human being's customary and intellectual processes and tries to master him completely and take under its control everything that is possible in his soul. Of necessity, this transformation of conscience, in extending to larger and larger human communities, must acquire ever higher degrees of socialization and finally be expressed in changes in the social organization, because the very fact of the birth of a new need, a new human attitude toward certain life phenomena, must encounter some institution or social belief that contradicts it and whose social vitality it (this new need) will take, forcing it to give way to forms of coexistence better adapted to it. In the creation of these new forms of social organization, however, nothing else will emerge but what was in their individual and conscious prototype. Today's free private property, for example, with the uniform state administration that extends over it and the protection of the police, is in terms of socialization the same as it was as an individual need of a merchant in feudal times—except that at that time it did not have its confirmation in the social organization and had constantly to grapple with hostile institutions as the interest of individuals or classes.

§ 15. The last phase, therefore, the *legislative and political* transformation, is only the formal side of an upheaval that has already occurred. It establishes social facts and legally organizes what has happened in the depths of life—in human consciences. When the waves of individual transformations rise to so high, then they seek various expression in the psychology of the masses and in programs of collective action. They begin official history and, in deciding what is to be or not in the human world, deal the last blow to outlived forms, the

former social idols which still persist by the force automatically acquired and accumulated from dead material. Only then does *a new system* appear, *that is, a socially organized new human conscience*. If the previous phase is mature, then the political change must happen; it occurs spontaneously under the pressure of revolutionary individual elements, and an unforeseen moment in history emerges from it. Neither the time nor the form of its course is anyone's deliberate decision. The moral revolution determines everything; when it has been accomplished, the political upheaval will find its own forms, time, and strength automatically, because it is only an expression of *what has already happened*.

Therefore, political transformation never faithfully follows the patterns set for it by the ideology of the most far-reaching minds, because its social results must always stop at the level at which there has been a moral upheaval, made in essence in accordance with human needs, and despite all efforts on the part of the minds or party who direct it and are involved in the process of transformation they cannot go any further. Everything that failed to penetrate into the life sphere of needs, and which appeared only under the influence of the psychology of the masses, as a new result of collectivity, but which is absent in the souls of the individuals who make up this collective, or which appeared under the influence of certain leading minds, will all disappear after a revolution or remain a theoretical utopia which it was not possible to incorporate into social life. This was the nature, for example, of the communist teachings of certain Church fathers, given the forming feudal world, or of Babeuf's¹⁵ conspiracy, and the slogans of equality and fraternity that the people of Paris proclaimed during the revolution of 1789, given that only capitalist society emerged from this revolution.¹⁶

15 *François-Noël Babeuf, also known as Gracchus Babeuf (1760–1797), was an early political journalist and agitator in Revolutionary France whose tactical strategies provided a model for left-wing movements of the 19th century and who was called Gracchus for the resemblance of his proposed agrarian reforms to those of the 2nd-century BC Roman statesman of that name.

16 An idea similar to the “theory of needs” developed here is clearly outlined in some passages of Kazimierz Krauz's dissertation entitled *Socjologiczne prawo retrospekcji* (Warszawa, 1898, Gebethner i Wolff). For example, on page 10 he says that “What does the phenomenon known as the rise and fall of a particular historical epoch, a certain social system, involve? Well, a certain number of needs that are not being satisfied appear. The old system gives way to the new only when these needs intensify to such a degree that they render this change essential. The force of these needs has brought them into the foreground of social life; because it was specifically their satisfaction that was the ‘social issue’, accordingly the social change occurs in the direction thus indicated by them, and the entire superstructure of legal and political institutions, etc., is cast according to the forms of satisfying these needs. They are the ‘spirit of the laws’” [*Marxism and Sociology*.

§ 16. It remains for us to discuss the sociological significance of the factor of *creative consciousness*, which appears in the form of deliberate action in every revolutionary period. It follows from its very nature that it must be closely related to the phase of the conscience's transformation, to a moral revolution, and that only in this does it find its justification and a fertile ground for its action. This is obvious because having conceptually excluded this phase from the overall process of society's transformation, only the objective side of economic facts and of various legal, political, and moral institutions remains, with which the factor of deliberate action, which seeks individual minds and is only available to them, cannot enter into any direct relationship. The only opening through which it can enter the process of social transformation as a new shaping force is where this process narrows to a single individual link: where there is a focal point of the transformation of economic facts into a new social world, that is, a human conscience. Being individual and psychological, it is at the same time *self-knowing* and therefore accessible to creativity; in following in itself the germination of new social life, it simultaneously forms certain ideals of what is to come and is capable of transforming the results of living conditions, which it perceives in itself, into purposeful and ethical norms that define what should be. When it comes into contact with this focal point, creativity directly concerns what the new social world is made of, but at the same time becomes dependent on the economic process which is transformed there. It can neither create anything by itself, nor go against that process, and for this reason, despite even its intellectual guise, it must take on a *class* nature, deriving from the "class nature" of the needs with which it is dealing, and it must constantly sense the direction in which economic life pulsates.

Let us see, however, to what extent sociology can introduce the factor of "creativity" as something separate from needs and ideas drawn into the series of social causation, and whether it can, from the standpoint of its criticism, recognize in it the same shaping character, determining the direction of the transformation of society given by practice or whether, on the contrary, it should reduce its position to the self-recognition of ideological social changes, which, however, cannot have any significant influence on the course of the evolutionary process and remain only a mental reflection of what is happening spontaneously, only deluded by the intellectual illusion that history needs its ideals and listens to its ethical norms, its guidance on how to develop.

A Selection of Writings by Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz, edited by H. Chmielewska-Szljajfer, Leiden–Boston 2018, Brill, pp. 35–36].

A creative ideology, which appears in history in every period of transformation, is distinguished above all from the general mass of ideological facts in that it contains the element of *deliberate choice* and not only does not identify itself with all that is the moral result of given economic processes but is even able to resist and counteract those among them that do not correspond to the set goal. In addition, its entry into social processes gives rise to a new category of moral facts, namely those whose causes should be sought not only in objective conditions, but in the deliberate action of a certain idea. While it may be argued that the same idea belongs to the series of social causation as the necessary result of certain conditions, this assertion does not in the least remove its purposeful character, by which it is distinguished essentially from all other facts: its selective activity, with which the causative series cannot remain the same and must represent something new. It should especially be noted that this selective purposefulness is not only the psychological nature of a given idea, a subjective mode of understanding it by the person in whose mind it emerges, but that it also appears clearly in history, where it finds its special expression in institutions whose task is to achieve a certain social *purpose*. In considering, for example, the sociological significance of the early Christian Church, we can argue, on the basis of determinism, that it must have been the result of certain moral needs which arose under the influence of the conditions of life at that time' but on the other hand, it cannot be ignored that in the general nature of its propagating, ethical organization there was more than an adaptation to the existing conditions, namely, a tendency to *produce* certain moral needs, and that this tendency to normalize the development of social life according to an ideal pattern was not insignificant for the direction of this development. History would not be the same if the original Christian Church had not been a propagator—if it remained only an ideology, confirming past and ongoing moral transformations, without trying to impress on them the stamp of its selective creativity.

For these reasons, just as psychology, while remaining indifferent to the metaphysical assessment of "freedom" in relation to determinism, must nevertheless designate a separate place for the ethical category of "should be" and acknowledge its reality if only because it manifests itself in separate mental facts which are not identifiable with others in our internal experience, so sociology must give a real and separate value to the factor of creativity, if it finds its social expression in special institutions, such as political parties, religious sects, and various organizations of a propagating nature, where it is not so much about the representation of existing needs as about the creation of new needs and about combating all the factors arising from a given environment that stand in the way of the intended goal. This character is particularly

evident in the initial period of these institutions, because then the task undertaken by them is so strongly opposed to everything that exists in society that it always looks almost like a utopia.

Historical acts cannot provide convincing proof of whether such a fact of socialized creativity significantly influences the development of social life or is merely an intellectual excess of it, defining itself entirely according to determinism, because it is impossible to compare the same process of transformation with and without the creative factor. It is impossible to check, for example, whether feudal society would have been the same as it was in history if its formation had lacked a creative factor: the propaganda of the Church. There is, however, another way to find out the importance of a factor of this nature for history, namely, by considering a given economic process as a sufficient cause for the transformation of society into a new type. Only in such a case would the factor of creativity—that is, deliberate choice—turn out to be sterile and unnecessary: if the elements that arise spontaneously in the human soul under the influence of economic changes all strove by their nature to a new type of life, and without struggling with each other and without being able to adapt to the existing environment, they required its removal. However, this is not the case. While the economic process evokes a new need in the human soul, it does not thereby withdraw it from the existing environment, and since the awakened need is above all practical in nature and cannot be satisfied with theory, it will seek to adapt as best it can to a given environment, at least as far as the individual's life is concerned. This can easily be explained with the help of contemporary examples.

There are theorists who believe in the revolutionary future of capitalism, on the grounds that by virtue of its culture it significantly expands the scope of the human being's civilizational needs, while simultaneously making his welfare and the security of his property rights less and less certain; from this antagonism, a revolutionary force is supposed to arise and introduce a new type of social organization, essentially contrary to the existing one. If, however, to judge the possibility of such a revolution by what its factors express *individually* (and according to my theory there is no other criterion), then it turns out to be a completely unjustified supposition. What, after all, is this "revolutionary" expansion of cultural needs in the practical life of an individual, in view of the fact that the individual lives, breathes, and acts in the atmosphere of capitalism? Above all, it becomes *a monetary interest*, because as long as it goes beyond the scope of theory and seeks its concrete application, then nothing else can be found for the incarnation of that tendency but money, with all the scaffolding of the social ways and means by which it is gained today. The thought that needs pertaining to a higher standard of living could

be satisfied without money in a different system remains only an intellectual question, a premise for the distant future, without for the moment any practical significance in the life of an individual. Although the change that occurs may aggravate the class struggle in collective life, it nevertheless perpetuates a conservative trait in the individual human soul: the same element of monetary interest, savings, profiteering, and exploitation by which the institutions of capitalism live. Similarly, the uncertainty of the preservation of property and a proper degree of individual welfare, given today's productive forces and their economic cataclysms, can only theoretically awaken interest in a different form of property better suited to these productive forces. In practice, however, in the private life of a person, it will only incline the person to protect his property and welfare as effectively as possible through the existing legal means, and to join with the interest of *the state*, which to some extent may counteract both legal and illegal attacks on property, normalize the degree of exploitation, and protect the interests of the population from various market and monetary speculations. And in this case, the new life condition may produce, on the one hand, antagonism to the existing environment, which it denies in theory, while on the other hand, in its practical expression in the life of an individual it connects the new need with an existing environmental factor and in effect—though from a different, unexpected side—intensifies the existing environment.

Therefore, there are dual moral effects: subversive and conservative, resulting from the fact that any change in living conditions, manifested by a new need, tries to find its practical application in the existing social environment and thus obstructs the distribution of these individual equivalents, and thereby the type of a given system is preserved. For this reason, it should be assumed that economic factors, left to their elemental causation, would prove powerless in transforming society into its antithesis and incapable of deriving a new type of life from the antagonisms and moral elements that arise under their influence in the human conscience, in order to introduce a new type of collective life that would resolve the accumulated contradictions. Thus in order for such a developmental direction to be able to define itself from self-born moral elements of unequal, non-homogeneous, ambiguous, and also often mutually exclusive value, the factor of purposeful choice needs to appear: the factor of creative self-knowledge that would be able to work some of these elements—the most contradicting ones—into an ideal, and thus to enhance their meaning in the human soul.

Obviously, the appearance of such a factor must be conditioned both historically and psychologically; the ideals and social forces that are organized for their service are always closely related to the developmental phase through

which history is passing, and in their content the nature of the moral influence which ongoing economic changes exert on people can always be found. The same shows us that *creative consciousness derives its genesis from those individual foci through which economic processes are transformed into equivalents of other social categories, that is from the human conscience, and that pure intellectualism, being separated from the sphere of life needs, would not be capable of producing it.*

The psychological nature of the fact confirms this assumption even more. Creative consciousness—that is, what appears in history in the form of an ideology aiming deliberately at a certain social transformation—differs from a solely affirming ideology in that it is ethical, is expressed continually in categories of “should be,” and uses this category according to a certain ideal which is not entirely determinable as the necessary result of existing conditions. This trait is, first of all, one of conscience, as ideology shaped in the sphere of needs. *Need* is the only concrete fact of the human soul, where there is the element of *practical norms*, the element that opposes “what is” with “what should be,” which it strives to express through some change in the environment. Need differs from feeling and perception, from namelessness and intellect, in that it seeks to objectify itself in something outside, to create a new fact that would be the source of feeling and perception. In it, the universal social intellect is at the service of pain and pleasure—emotions that are completely individual and intertwined with the deepest secrets of organic life. It is never possible to be satisfied with merely perceiving pain and pleasure. The entry of the element of needs into processes of the intellect forces that element to create a new form of comprehending, and this form is precisely the ethical category that decides what should be. It can even be said that what *I sense* as a need takes the form of an ethical category in thought and that the appearance of this category, in any ideology, is an infallible reagent, and that it is shaped not in pure rationalism but in the sphere of needs and is permeated by the living cenesthesia of the human being.

The same reagent can therefore be applied to history. The emergence of a new current of creative ideology, such as Christianity, the Reformation, humanism, or the bourgeois democracy of the eighteenth century and the social democracy of our time, should be regarded as a symptom of the fact that the transformation has begun essentially in its individual elements, that a new conscience is being created in relation to which history will have to play its part; for it is only from there, from the sphere of needs, that the factor of creativity—which is seemingly contrary to the objective nature of social phenomena—can come, and if it occurs constantly at every turning point of human history, this only proves that the transforming forces of this history

have their foci of an individual nature, and that each new social world is born in what the human being recognizes introspectively as his own conscience.

§ 17. The relationship between human conscience and the social world becomes even more visible if we pay attention to the fact that the mere ethical movement of the human soul, what we commonly call “the voice of duty,” always has an objective expression in social institutions and is coupled with them in an interdependence which can never be broken.

We have already seen that in the primitive ancestral societies [*społeczeństwach rodowych*] of Greece and Rome, when social objectivity was not yet very developed, individual ethics was entirely identified with institutions and legislation. It would be impossible to define which of these two categories should include the worship of ancestors, the obligation to have offspring and maintain the purity of their origin, the religiousness of marriages based on clan adoption [*adoptacji rodowej*], the undivided possession of the land, the power of the elders, etc., because the whole of that customariness was equally a moral obligation and a legal institution, and a transgression of its principles was not only a sin, involving throes of conscience, punishment by the clan gods [*bogowie rodu*], and the necessity of ritual purification, but also a transgression of a legal nature, entailing punishment by the social organization. It was from this source of natural coherence between ethics and legislation that the primal relationship of political power with the priesthood arose, which seems to be common to all peoples (at least the studies of ethnographers show an enormous quantity of its traces in living barbarian tribes), as well as the connection of political institutions with religious rituals and the restriction of customary law to a community worshipping the same ancestral gods [*bogów rodowych*].

In keeping with the commonality of descent, we also find a close correspondence between the moral concepts of virtue and vice and the institutions of the society in which they live. In tribes whose common law is based on clan communism [*komunizmie rodowym*], and where the institution of property is restricted to items of personal use, we find the “transgression” of hunting a buffalo alone (the Omaha Indians) and a strict duty to share every hunting prey. The Greenland Eskimos¹⁷ believe that if a person borrows an item and then loses or breaks it, he is not obliged to make any compensation; if a person

17 * Abramowski means the Inuits, a group of culturally similar indigenous people inhabiting the Arctic and subarctic regions of Greenland, Canada, and Alaska. In the past, the name Eskimos became common and is now considered offensive by many in Greenland and Canada, as it is believed to be derived from the phrase “raw meat eaters”. In the Inuit languages, the word *inuk* means “person,” while *inuit* means “people”.

owns more than three boats, he should give one to a companion; a theft that went unnoticed by the owner is not considered a transgression, as it means the stolen item was not necessary for personal use.¹⁸ Nomadism also had its own ethics; according to Robertson,¹⁹ the law of the Nabataeans made it an offense to sow grain, build a house, or plant a tree: "It was a fixed and settled principle in the nomad to reduce the country he invaded to the condition of a waste and open pasturage ... He looked upon such a course as a religious duty."²⁰ Here, then, the same individual element, the necessity of life, appears clearly in its twofold form; as social, as customary law, and introspective, as moral obligation. The personal need of a human being—a community of work or nomadism, which has arisen unconsciously under the influence of certain conditions of life, a certain adaptation of the individual's productive forces to the surrounding nature—after having self-socialized in a customariness suitable to itself and having become objective through collective action and consequently liberated from the psychology of the individual, returns again to its introspective habitat, but marked with an ethical element. More precisely, *an individual need, in becoming socialized, at the same time changes its psychological nature in the introspection of the individual; it is transformed into the category of moral duty and becomes the voice of conscience for which human consciousness seeks theological justifications.* Moreover, such a metamorphosis is in full agreement with the psychology of "needs," which by themselves contain the embryo of an ethical category, a creative freedom that can easily develop under the influence of greater awareness, in contact with the social environment. Even the most natural feelings are incapable of developing into ethics and becoming the guiding conscience of an individual if the interests of the community do not allow their socialization. A characteristic example is *the ethics of infanticide*, which is expressed in ancient Greek laws and is widespread among today's barbarian tribes, especially those of the militant type. In this ethics, we find the characteristic choice made by social conditions and the institutions connected with them between human feelings, which gives that choice a moral meaning in accord with the nature of the conditions: usually, for example, it is female children whose killing is morally legitimated and

18 An observation of Rink and Ross: see: Ch. Letourneau, *L'évolution de la morale ...*, op. cit., pp. 156–157.

19 William Robertson Smith (1846–1894), a Scottish orientalist and Old Testament scholar, who was an author of the "Nabataeans" entry in *Encyclopædia Britannica* (11th ed., 1911).

20 H. Spencer, *Zasady Socyologii*, vol. 2, translated by J. K. Potocki, Warszawa 1889, Drukarnia Maryi Ziemkiewicz, § 265, pp. 124–126 [H. Spencer, *Principles of Sociology*, London-Edinburgh 1876, Williams and Norgate, pp. 598–600].

this is strictly due to the fact that women, due to exogamy, could not cultivate ancestor worship and at the same time did not constitute a major productive and military force for the tribe; therefore, given the limited means of food, their greater number was harmful to society. There is no reason to suppose, however, that the feeling of paternity did not exist in people subject to this customary law, for it is too common—preserved by species instinct—and is sometimes found in modern savage peoples to a high degree. It must thus be presumed to have existed as an inherent property of individuals in Greece at the time of Lycurgus²¹ and Solon.²² Probably, thus, in the soul of the barbarian with regard to the ethics of infanticide, the well-known process of a struggle between feelings, natural needs, duty, and the voice of conscience that ordered the killing of a child took place in the soul of the barbarian. The same must apply to every other natural need which, under any circumstances, has failed to socialize and arrive at the objective existence of the institution; in the psychology of the individual it is only a personal feeling, a want or a desire that can easily be antagonized against socialized needs' that is, with regard to the obligations of conscience and the overwhelming moral consciousness of the individual, as a criminal drive which must be restrained and suppressed. The conceptual opposites that belong to common human intuition and are contained in the terms "right or wrong" and "pleasant or unpleasant" are therefore reducible to the above psychological difference between an individual's socialized and unsocialized needs.

Turning now to modern society, we see that religion, morality, and law have become differentiated into separate social categories; institutions have acquired their characteristic bureaucratic automatism and police-state power, which gives their functioning the nature of something completely independent of the moral beliefs of humans. Nevertheless, the original link between individual ethics and the social system is by no means broken; it is only masked by the more differentiated and more substantively developed forms of coexistence. The duty of punishing criminals, respecting property, protecting one's interests, work, marital fidelity, paying and charging interest, returning loans, and so forth—all that constitutes today the ordinary drivers of human behavior and that speaks to the human being with the inner voice of ethical precept—everything that prohibits or permits, has at the same time its representation in legislation; it lives not only in front of our introspective eye, but

21 * Lycurgus (390?–324 BC) was a logographer in Ancient Greece. He was one of the ten Attic orators included in the "Alexandrian Canon" in the 3rd century BC.

22 * Solon (630?–560? BC) was an Athenian statesman, lawmaker and poet, one of the founders of the Athenian democracy.

also objectively outside, as facts forming part of the social organization and independent of what exists inside us.

Both in history and in people's private lives, experiments are sometimes unconsciously created which reveal this ethical and individual nucleus of social institutions. If, as a result of any condition, their side weakens or is temporarily derailed from its organizational automatism, then the element of moral opinion appears, striving to achieve consciously what the institutions do automatically. A weakening of the state usually provokes a strong outburst of patriotism; compulsory taxes are replaced by voluntary sacrifices²³ and a broken army is replaced by self-organizing militias of volunteers; the state police, after being disorganized by internal disturbances, are replaced by voluntary civic police. If it happens that a wrongdoer has escaped punishment, then the consciences of citizens will not be at ease until legal justice is satisfied. Likewise, the sacrament of church marriage, which is stripped of its police force where there are civil weddings, is nevertheless preserved in the broader circles of the population due to the mere pressure of moral opinion.

A sociologist who wants to investigate the durability of a certain institution does not have a better criterion than in the customary ethics of contemporary people; it marks with meticulous accuracy all the forms in which collective life has been captured and acts as their spokesman for the inner essence of the human being, forcing him to use his own life to support the functioning and life of institutions socially, to take a practical part in them, to confirm them with deeds, to give them back for consumption his individual, feeling soul, in spite of possible intellectual deviations and precisely in those cases where the social organization itself could not achieve the same by compulsory means. Without the help of ethics—because human needs are often at the mercy of dispositions, moods, contradictory feelings, and the influence of the intellect—the proper functioning of the institution might often be disturbed, as not all its aspects can be secured by the penal code and police protection, and even these become, to a large extent, powerless in the face of a lack of goodwill and civil conscience. Using, for example, the help of a judicial organization to defend one's family and property interests, or in defense of honor, handing evil-doers over to justice, acting in accord with marital morality, maintaining a man's legal advantage over a woman in life, saving money, and working—these are aspects of the life of individuals that are closely united with institutions and the entire social system but that cannot be effectively supervised by the police and state

23 I encounter a confirmation of the same in current politics: the newspapers of December 1898 are reporting from Budapest that, as tax collection was suspended due to a lack of agreement between Austria and Hungary, the population ostentatiously paid their taxes, crowding the royal and imperial tax offices.

authorities, and if they were left to the free psychology of human beings, might often be contradicted by unexpected waves of feeling. This is what the social environment protects against by establishing its internal police: an ethics whose task is to guard so that there is unity and harmony between the moral interior of the individual and the objectively existing institutions, and to speak with the voice of duty when need, as a natural feeling, might want to betray its social doubles. It is a trick used by the very nature of socialized human needs that they are shaped into duties in order to control the individuality of the human being more easily and to consolidate the vitality of the institutions that arise from them. The compulsion which we feel on the part of ethical concepts, which distinguishes them from all other states of the soul, is subjectively colorless at times and devoid of the cenesthetic power which, for example, emotions have, and could therefore be regarded as an introspective revelation of that social objectivity which presses us from outside and whose essence and moving force rests—as real *destiny*—in what we consider very individual: our conscience.

Conversely, as well, what is not present in institutions does not exist in the normal conscience, in the duties of practiced and living ethics. The evangelical fraternity of people remained at best a theoretical rule of morality, corrupted by various intellectual discussions: a rule that is usually avoided without reproach or internal struggle. If, however, such an obligation does appear in the sphere of human introspection, then the human being senses the enormous difficulties posed by his conduct with regard to the social organization and must withdraw almost completely from all legal relations and all interests of life connected with society in order to be able to satisfy his internal ethics, which the institutions contradict. In this case, an irreconcilable struggle arises between duty and the institution, between the objectivity of the social world and its individual essence, the outcome of which depends on the extent to which this new, abnormal ethical element is capable of spreading among human groups; either an individual will have to isolate himself from society with his subversive ethics, which will be stigmatized as utopian or criminal, or, if this isolation reaches a certain degree of collectivity, social institutions will weaken in their proper functioning, separate themselves more and more from the private life of people and in general reveal all kinds of symptoms of the degeneration of a social phenomenon from whose individual sources it has been cut off. Assuming that the “conscience” of the Iroquois or Doukhobors²⁴

24 * The Doukhobours or Dukhobors (Russian: Духоборы, *Dukhobory*, also *Dukhobortsy*, literally “*Spirit-Warriors*”) are a Spiritual Christian ethno-religious group of Russian origin. They are one of many non-Orthodox ethno-confessional faiths in Russia, often categorized as “folk-Protestants” or heretics. They are distinguished as pacifists who lived in their own villages, rejected personal materialism, worked together, and developed a tradition of oral history and memorizing and singing hymns and verses (the “*Book of Life*”).

could have been instilled in the peoples of the civilized world of our time, there is no doubt that this would have led its institutions to fall apart with the same force as those institutions would have repressed that conscience in individuals. The compatibility of individual conscience and social organization is necessary because neither of these facts can have an isolated existence, for the very reason that they are only *a twofold expression of the same socialization of the human soul.*

Stefanin, November 29, 1898

Socialism and the State

II The Doctrine of the Revolution

According to the principles of socialist programs, the state cannot be excluded from social life. In itself, today's production and culture require the cooperation of great masses of people, and therefore also a compulsory organization that would be able to block and remove the contradictions of individual interests for the benefit of the whole. Thus, only the type of state can be changed, by taking advantage of those revolutionary, elemental forces which emerge from the development of the capitalist economy and which, by their very nature, tend to express themselves in a political organization appropriate to themselves. The development of capitalism puts newer and newer economic tasks on the state: the protection and expansion of markets; communication; policy on banking, colonial affairs, customs, railways, and factories; care of the poor, etc. It also forces the state to concentrate various enterprises in its hands: in addition to the former state assets, there are also arsenals, shipyards, post offices, railways, telegraphs, and various monopolies such as tobacco, salt, vodka, etc. This economic activity of the modern state is the natural starting point for development leading to a socialist community.¹

The state is a secondary and adaptive formation that is the expression of—and at the same time strengthens and promotes—the system of social forces that exist in a given historical period at the basis of collective life, i.e., in production. If the state of today is adapted first and foremost to the interests of capitalist property, this is not due to the nature of the state as a compulsory organization but to the nature of those economic factors that have brought the bourgeoisie to the fore in social life and made the interests of human culture dependent on the interests of capital! However, as more and more acute antagonisms develop between human culture and the social role of capital, between the interests of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, and as this proletariat comes to the awareness of its class interests and expands its demands for civilization, the historical necessity also arises for this new system of social forces to be expressed in the transformation of the state into a representative of the

1 See: K. Kautsky, *Zasady socjalizmu. Przekład dzieła „Das Erfurter Programm,”* anonymous translation, Londyn 1902, Wydawnictwo Towarzystwa Zachęty Nauk Społecznych, pp. 76, 78 [K. Kautsky, *The Class Struggle (Erfurt Program)*, translated by W. E. Bohn, Chicago 1910, Charles H. Kerr & Company Co-operative, part IV, chapter 3: “Socialist Production,” pp. 95–104].

interests of labor, connected more and more closely with the interests of general human culture. In this way, the working classes are faced with the problem of creating *a new state*, which, while corresponding to the social nature of production, would be identical with its organization. The consequence of this entry of the state into the field of production, as a representative of the collective interests of labor and culture, must be the replacement of private enterprises and economic monopolies by collectivism, and the replacement of property legislation by that of labor, without the characteristics of a commodity, that is, in other words, the abolition of hiring.

How can the working classes do this? To this, despite the theoretical differences between the revolutionary and reform camps, the politics of socialism gives only one answer: the working classes should transform the state of today in the direction of their own interests; they should strive to make it a representative of the proletariat; and whether this transformation will lead to a crisis and a revolution, from which the proper socialist organization will emerge, or whether it will occur through gradual breaks in today's bourgeois state, is a completely secondary question—a question of preferences and predictions, which makes no difference in press policy in practice. This conscious transformation of the state in a given direction takes place in two ways: by means of *the democratization* of the state so that the widest possible masses of people become participants in state legislation and communal boards, and by forcing the state *to extend* its legislation to the relations of production and circulation as a defender of workers and consumers.² The more the state organization fuses

2 It should be emphasized here that with regard to the democratization of the state, the position of the socialists is not always clear and distinct enough. In addition to sincerely democratic views, which logically and without reservations develop the concept of the people's supremacy, we also find views where it is really difficult to discern the spirit of an essential and reliable democracy. Such are expressed, for example, by Kautsky, and not just anywhere—not in his personal discourse, for which he himself could only be responsible—but in the Erfurt Program. There we find such statements as that the working class must strive to have the state power at its service. This can only be done by parliament. Direct, popular legislation cannot replace the parliament, at least in large countries, and only such countries are discussed here. The peasantry and petty bourgeoisie are unable to participate in parliamentary life, and therefore they want to replace parliamentarism with popular legislation, or they condemn political activity in general. The proletariat, on the other hand, is becoming more and more capable of parliamentarism, both through its own organizations and through a broader kind of thinking. Hence, its political idea is to strengthen parliament in regards to the government, and itself in parliament. (See: K. Kautsky, *Zasady socjalizmu*, pp. 126–129 [K. Kautsky, *Class Struggle*, op. cit., part v, chapter 9: “The Political Struggle,” pp. 184–188]). Democracy in this form is thus presented as the omnipotence of a parliament controlled by the working class and ruling a great centralized state. The characteristics of democracy, which only popular rule can ensure, namely direct participation in legislation, referendum

with the interests of the whole society and the deeper it enters into wealth-producing relations, the closer and more inevitable will be the moment when it will transform into a system of collectivism, regardless of whether that system is decreed by the street or parliament. Hence it is clear that the practical task of liberation is reduced to a *political struggle*. Elections to parliament and municipal boards, the fight for the democratization of legislative institutions, inspectorates, and the army, for factory legislation and the ministry of labor, for state insurance for workers, for the transfer of various enterprises, means of communication, and other public utilities to state or municipal property, and finally for the nationalization of education as the necessary equivalent of the democratization of power—these are the main, almost sole guidelines of the real politics of socialism, the core of its practice toward which all party forces are centered, all the power of agitation and awareness. Since in this struggle an organized and skillfully disciplined mass is of much greater importance than a morally revolutionized individual, all the tasks of propaganda only have value for the politics of socialism insofar as they enable the proletariat to conduct mass action for the transformation of the state. The ethical ideals of life most in keeping with the spirit of the socialist future can nevertheless be detrimental to socialism if they loosen the discipline of mass action or are not adaptable to the demands of the day-to-day struggle; conversely, the features most closely related to the morality of capitalism may nevertheless be useful for the purposes of the struggle. Workers' self-help institutions—trade unions, cooperatives, etc.—are assessed from the same viewpoint; they are mainly assessed as auxiliary to the political struggle, while less value is ascribed to their social importance as forces shaping new economic and moral relations. And the question of how a social system based on principles of common ownership and universal democratization of power is to be reconciled with human nature adapted to the conditions of capitalist society is resolved by the hypothesis that the system educates the human type. The moral revolution will happen

rights, and initiatives, are presented here as retrograde endeavors and not in the class interests of the proletariat. It is actually a program not of democracy but of class dictatorship. In political practice, however, it has so far not been distinguished from the general democratic movement of the working class, which is almost spontaneously striving to win political rights for all, equal rights, and the greatest possible participation in the government. Only one phenomenon in socialism having more affinities with class dictatorship than with democracy could be indicated, namely, its sympathies with state centralization, and some singular facts not entirely in line with democratic ideals, such as the opposition of the Belgian socialists to the project to extend universal voting to women; however, they were afraid at that time of the clericalism of the women and of strengthening the project initiators, that is, the clerical party.

by itself under the influence of the collectivist state, and the state will develop under the pressure of class interests arising not from the ideals of new life but from the contradictions of modern life, which are more and more pronounced.

This is the true core of the politics of socialism. Taking away the phraseology of the agitators, which is individual and diverse, and does not always express what is really involved in a political action, the whole thing can be reduced to two basic practical postulates: *omnipotence and the democratization of the state*. They constitute the characteristic that distinguishes socialism as a socio-political movement from all other contemporary movements. The mere pursuit of democratization does not yet constitute socialism, as it does not involve the economic transformation of society toward nationalization; democratization is also to be found in political movements foreign to socialism and even fighting against it. Similarly, the very striving for the supremacy of the state, for extending its functions to all social relations, without democratizing it at the same time, cannot be identified with socialism, as it does not involve the transformation of the state into the representative of labor interests and may even appear in the policy of absolute or oligarchic governments, as "state socialism." On the other hand, the combination of these two postulates is the strictest definition of socialism as a political movement that can be checked in the programs and policies of all socialist parties and with whose help socialism can be distinguished as precisely as possible from all the rest of the reform or revolutionary movements.

In this program, it is easy to distinguish three main theories that make up its logical whole. We first have a theory about *the indispensability of the state* in this system of social forces that is developing in the heart of capitalism. It is a theory deduced from certain data and concepts about human nature in general and about the nature of production technology as the joint action of the social masses. There are also questions that necessarily arise as to whether state coercion can really be considered the sole organizer of production liberated from private monopolies, and whether there are natural factors developing in modern economic life that could suffice to organize this production. Then we meet the second thesis: that the state, as a compulsory regulator of life, *can be perfectly adapted to those interests of the proletariat that are to revolutionize human relations*, i.e., to the interests of economic commonality and individual freedom; this assumption is based on the democratization of the state. Here again questions arise as to whether democratization can embrace all areas of the state and identify itself with the actual liberation of an individual from bureaucratic coercion, or whether perhaps, from the nature of the state, democratization must be limited to the legislative side of the state mechanism. Second, does the bureaucratic implementation of collectivism

and the secondary institutions necessarily connected with the state—the system of defense and punishment—not distort the original interest of commonality and freedom into something else entirely? In general, after all, it can be said that a human need, in becoming nationalized, undergoes a whole series of changes, first in legislation, then in the executive-bureaucratic system, which cause it to return to the human being as something different from the need that lives in him in reality and that strove towards its own socialization. Finally, the third thesis, which is related to the two previous ones, relates to the method of practical action. It can be expressed in the assertion that *there is no significant relationship between the moral and social revolution*, i.e., that people whose daily behavior, relationships, and customs are completely adapted to the norms of the ruling system can nevertheless make an upheaval aimed at destroying this system and bring about completely new forms of coexistence. This is due to the fact that the state is posited as the sole organizer of the ideals of the future. Collectivism is the absorption by the democratized state of those productive organisms that develop under capitalism. In order to bring about collectivism, it is enough to influence the state toward democratization and the identification of its functions with economic matters. In this way, a regulator enters into the productive-exchange organisms of capitalism and, out of concern for the interests of workers and consumers, increasingly removes from such organisms the characteristics of private monopoly and class privileges. This transformation cannot be accomplished by an undemocratized state, because such a state does not express the interests of the popular masses and is not sufficiently flexible to adapt to the changes that take place in these interests; neither can it be done by a democratized state that would leave the field of economic relations aside; both of these considerations guide the politics of socialism. So what role can individual factors play? Of course, they do not need to transform life relations in the spirit of collectivism, as this will be achieved through the entry of the democratized state into the productive and exchange organizations of capitalism, and only such moral factors as are useful for the political struggle can be significant for a revolution: thus, first of all, the ability to make mass demonstrations in the name of the ideas supported by the party and to understand these ideas. It is only necessary to be a collectivist when there is political action; otherwise, in everyday life, revolutionary ideals have no meaning and pass by the morality of the individual without touching. The result of this view is the withdrawal of socialism from individual ethics.

While postponing a proper critique of these three theories which constitute the intellectual scaffold of the socialist program, we now turn to a special issue that concerns us here, namely the *methodological* aspect of this program.

The question is what is the *method* that socialism uses to create the principles of its politics? And a critical evaluation of the method consists in resolving two questions: first, does it correspond to the nature of the facts with which it deals? And second, does it correspond to the logical requirements of our cognition?

On examining the reasoning on which the politics of socialism is based, it is easy to see that it can be reduced to a syllogism of the following structure: every organization of a society of the modern economic type must be a state organization; the liberation of the proletariat requires a new social organization, and therefore the liberation of the proletariat requires a new state organization. The conclusion thus obtained defines at the same time the fundamental goal of the policy, which is to transform the state. The nature of the main goal determines by itself the more immediate goals, the problems of the present moment, and the methods of operation being adapted to them. This syllogism consists of two assertions of varying values: the second premise, the minor one, is inductive; it merely expresses a generalization of the various facts of the contradictions that exist between the material and moral well-being of the worker, his needs and aspirations, and the social conditions in which he lives; it also concerns the truth that lives individually in many people, the psychological truth, because it expresses in general what many know as their own life experience and what they feel as depression derived from the conditions of life. This premise, however, as in any syllogism, does not by itself determine the nature of the conclusion. The fact that the liberation of the proletariat requires a transformation of social relations does not mean that it requires a new state; social relations are also conceivable as stateless organizations, and are not only conceivable but even exist and have always existed as such in various human associations. Therefore, in order for the conclusion of the syllogism to emerge, another proposition, which would identify the social organization required by the interests of the proletariat with a new type of state organization, is absolutely necessary.

This role is fulfilled by the statement contained in the first premise of the syllogism. But while the second premise, as we have seen, is only a generalization of the facts of life, a statement of an inductive sort, the first—the most important, because it determines the nature of the conclusion, its predicate—is only a hypothesis. The assertion that any organization of a modern economic society must be a state organization is above all a real and not a verbal judgment, i.e., it consists of two substantially different concepts, and not of two synonyms of the same concept. The identification of a social organization with a state organization is hindered by the factual side of things, because we know that outside the confines of a state organization there have been and always

are various human associations organizing relations of production, exchange, education, and defense, or seeking to satisfy the mental, aesthetic, and religious needs of the individual; thousands of different matters of life, great and small, of a moral or economic nature, are dealt with in this way by means of a self-generating organization that develops and performs its tasks without the factor of territorial coercion characterizing the state and that often takes on its shoulders what the state organization is unable to cope with. Therefore, at the very beginning, it should be noted that there is a fundamental difference between a social organization—a concept that encompasses self-generating and stateless associations and institutions or state ones equally—and a state organization, which is only one type of social organization, being distinct from others by its nature of *territorial coercion*.

The assertion that all organization of modern-type societies must be a state organization contains an inductively derived and only partial truth; limited to the generalization of facts, it boils down to the statement that the modern societies known to us so far have always had a state organization. Induction has the property that, on the basis of the constancy of the laws of nature, it can always be extended to all past facts, facts to be, or facts of the same category, e.g., the gravity of all bodies that have ever existed or will exist in the world. But under what condition is such a popularization of an induction that does not include all experience legitimate or even required? On the condition that it relates to the same thing, unchanged in its essence, always revealing the same features under the same circumstances; if, for example, we affirm the universal gravity of bodies, there is the implicit assumption that the essential nature of matter has been and will always be the same as that which we have experienced; in assuming, however, the fundamental variability of matter and the existence of bodies wholly unlike those we have, we could no longer ascribe to this induction the sense of a universal law. Therefore, for the assertion about the indispensability of the state in modern societies to have the value of a universal induction, it must contain the notion of a certain fundamental invariability of what is understood by the word “modern society,” and this invariability can only be taken into account if the very type of society in question, with its economic and moral conditions, the state of technology and the nature of man, are identified more precisely, that is, the correct induction could only be the following statement: a social organization, if it is developed on the same economic foundations of property and employment as today, with the same technology and civilization and with the same people as it deals with today, must be a state organization.

However, the socialist assertion about the indispensability of the state does not have the characteristic of a modest generalization of the observed facts,

nor does its premise contain a postulate that the social type is unchangeable; on the contrary, it is based on an evolutionary approach—the constant transformation and changeability of those technical, cultural, mental, and moral elements that determine human relations and social organization. In order to reconcile this evolutionary position with the decided firmness of the statement about the logical and historical indispensability of the state, it is necessary to make a number of different assumptions relating to possible future societies of a different economic type and to find in them the essential, unchanging features of society, which, despite its transformation, will unavoidably require a state organization. It is therefore assumed, first, that the social nature of production will require a state organization because otherwise private and associational monopolies, acting to the detriment of the rest of society, could not be eliminated, and, second, that state coercion for the advancement of culture and education, for the protection of health and safety, is required because it is accepted from the outset that there will always be groups of people incapable of understanding their interests or seeking to attack the peace or life of others.

The principle of immutability, thus required by induction, is also found here in relation to *human nature*. Everything changes: technical talents, the organization of work, the form of ownership, the needs of human culture, the nature and power of civilization; only man's moral nature—the narrowness of egotism which prevents him from seeing beyond the limits of his immediate everyday interests—remains unchanged, requiring state coercion to obstruct his backward urges, which are harmful to general affairs, and to force him to adopt more perfect forms of life. On the basis of this immutability of the moral nature of man, the conditional assertion about the state as a necessary formation of today's social system turns into a universal and certain assertion that the state is also necessary for all social types that can develop from today's system.

But can this principle of *moral immutability* really have the value of an axiom, and can it be defended from the evolutionary standpoint of the whole ideology of socialism? Now, ignoring the actual critique of this concept, we will only pay attention to its logical nature. First, to understand the moral nature of man as one that remains unchanged despite all the changeability of life, despite the constant transformations of technical and cultural phenomena, of science, ideology, and social relations, is to understand it in a metaphysical way, as something independent of the entirety of phenomenal changes, not subject to the influence of these changes and not remaining in any real causal relationship with them: in a word, as some extra-phenomenal substratum that manifests itself only externally in various ways, remaining always the same. Again, the concept of the invariability of the human being's moral

nature is not only not a simple generalization of the facts of experience but cannot even be verified experimentally. If we understand the “moral nature” of people to be their selfish or altruistic tendencies, their innate life talents or dullness, and finally their features of degeneration or nervous deviation, we see that these are not some metaphysical entities, uniform, and non-complex in themselves, but on the contrary, they are the results of highly complex and intersecting psycho-physiological elements. In order to check whether there is always something constant and unchanging in the psycho-physiological evolution of various human types, we would not only have to know the exact mechanism of interaction of these various elements but moreover to subject entire human generations to strict psycho-physiological observations—which is not possible for today’s science and is completely beyond reach for the study of today’s human being in relation to past generations. Even supposing that forensic anthropology and research into characters (a science in its infancy) have reached the desired conceptual and experimental accuracy and that they allow us to define certain permanent human psycho-physiological and moral types which always react in the same way, proper to themselves, in spite of different environmental influences—even in that case, we could not yet infer the fundamental invariability of these types at all stages of social development, or even in the immediate future, for we could never predict precisely and in detail all the transforming factors that will someday enter human life.

The concept of the immutability of the moral nature of man, of the constancy of certain human types, is therefore an arbitrary prediction, based on very insufficient empirical foundations, and for this reason it can only have the significance of a hypothesis of very dubious value, like all predictions in the field of psychological and social sciences, which are still far from being able to be considered exact sciences.

The value of this concept is by no means consistent with the role it plays in the reasoning behind socialist programs. Thanks to this concept, the induction which is contained in the first premise of the syllogism and which could only refer to the existing capitalist social organization turns into a universal and certain law, referring to any social organization that may develop from today, and this premise, set forth in this capacity, determines the conclusion itself of the syllogism, i.e., the goal of socialist politics. Hence it is certain that the aim of politics must also be hypothetical, since it follows from a syllogism whose first premise is only a hypothesis, and a hypothesis based on fragile experimental foundations and of no use for the explanation of the facts; moreover, it is not a hypothesis advanced to explain anything but only as a guideline for a practical problem.

Moreover, it should be noted that the aim of politics, thus derived, bears the double stigma of a hypothesis: first, it contains the hypothesis of the indispensability of the state, deriving from the premise of the first syllogism, from the notion of the invariability of certain features of human nature introduced into it; second, the concept of a "new social organization," which the syllogism replaces with the concept of a "new state," limits and adapts to itself, like all determinations of judgment, the subjective concept of "the liberation of the proletariat." This concept, which derives its content from various problems of individual life, both economic and moral, from issues that arise not as a result of a certain mental theory but spontaneously and elementally, must adapt in this juxtaposition to the hypothesis deduced; it must lose its original freedom in regard to life issues and close itself within the limits set by the theory of the indispensability of the state.

However, liberation, as a real matter which consists of the aspirations and needs living in people, cannot be freely adapted to the theory, and if something similar occurs, it always happens at the expense of reality itself; crammed by force into the framework of theory, it experiences the fate of an embryo of a living being that is forced in teratological experiments to turn into a monster; some developmental elements are suppressed, while others are overemphasized, distorting the whole organism. In the matter of the liberation of the proletariat, or in fact, in the matter of the liberation of the human being from the social subjugation that is crushing him today, there are a multitude of elements that cannot be included in the program of state reforms, and that are consequently either completely withdrawn from the scope of socialist politics outside it, or are transformed in the state program into something entirely different from what lives individually as a need and aspiration. For example, the whole issue of life morality and new ethical ideals, which is troubling today's revolutionary process, had to be withdrawn from socialism, because the state nature of politics left no room for it: it could not include it within its framework. On the other hand, in socialist politics, we can see symptoms of governmental legalism, solidarity with expansionist interests, with the state's colonial and foreign policy, and with the slogans of military patriotism, which have nothing to do with the interests of liberation and which even contradict all the individual elements of the revolution, and appear only as a necessary corollary of adapting the workers' affair to the state program.

So here we find the classic hallmark of intellectualism: *a goal enslaved by theory*. It does not arise freely out of the issues of life boiling in human breasts; it is not a simple reflection of the aspirations, desires, and needs that the revolutionary process of society develops in individuals, but on the contrary, it must constantly reckon with its nature as a deductively derived *conclusion*,

and to adapt to the supreme principle of the indispensability of the state as an obligatory norm for all socio-revolutionary thought. Therefore, the extremely important and decisive question arises as to whether such a method is correct. Can a living thing be made dependent on a hypothesis? Without even entering into a dissection of the question of the degree to which a given hypothesis, serving as a starting point for deductive reasoning, is correct or not, we can limit ourselves to the methodological question itself: is it possible to apply deductive reasoning to the phenomena of life, even if the principle from which one starts had the value of a certain thing?

Such a method was used at the dawn of all biological sciences, before the human mind was freed from the domination of doctrine. A rationally justified theory was put forward as a starting point for the research, e.g., the principle of the invariability of species, the substantiality of the soul, or the hypothesis of a life force, and the examination of the facts was then adapted to it, rejecting everything that could not be included in the doctrine. Yet what emerged when the experimental method and criticism declared battle against the old rationalist method? It turned out that entire worlds of phenomena remained invisible to human thought that followed the path of deduction and was bound by doctrines, and that almost everything that rational science regarded as the achievements of knowledge was only our own mental construction, logically derived from a priori principles but having nothing to do with the actual reality of life; it was not the phenomena in question that were investigated but one's own concepts. The sociological sciences, where the experimental method based on induction has only recently gained legitimacy, felt the domination of doctrine even more heavily. Until now, sociology has been the true kingdom of hypotheses and systems ruling over facts, where everyone was free to develop their idealistic or materialistic doctrinal inclinations, and the origin of this is doubtless that nowhere has the influence of religious dogmas been so deeply entrenched as in questions concerning the human being. For so many centuries the human mind has grown accustomed to grasping all that pertains to human life in the form of conclusions drawn from sacred doctrines that even when these doctrines failed, the habit of the method remained—the need for other doctrines from which to deduce and to define moral and social issues—and there remained the fear of free inquiry, where no syllogism would reign. The influence of theology has reached even to the method followed by socialist politics. It has also been fostered by the naivety of rationalism, which, along with the tradition of the great French revolution, passed into socialist currents of thought, and which, while fully acquainted with the psychophysiological sources of concepts about things and relations, attributed to

them an ontological value—the value of something that really exists beyond human thought and, importantly, that rules and should rule the world of facts.

How is the validity of a method judged? On what standard do we rely when we say a method is false in one case or appropriate in another? Such a test is, first of all, *the compliance of the method with the nature of the object under study*, or more precisely, with *the relation between this object and our cognition*. In this respect, there are two fundamentally different methods corresponding to essentially different categories of research objects. There are research objects *that we create ourselves*, that exist only in our definitions, and that live a life of our own reasoning. These include all objects of the mathematical sciences, as well as everything that is studied by metaphysics, theology, and dogmatic ethics. In the world of nature, there are neither geometric figures, strictly speaking, nor squares, roots, logarithms, integrals, differentials, etc. Mathematics must first create the concept of these objects. It must call them into existence by means of deduced definitions, and only subsequently can it study them, analyzing the logical conceptual elements contained in those definitions. Mathematical research is therefore only the study of concepts—the study of certain mental constructions that have developed on the basis of an abstraction of quantity and space. These constructions already contain certain a priori assumptions, certain postulates of our cognition, on the basis of which they could be built, and which serve as a point of reference in deriving their logical properties. Similarly, the objects of study of metaphysics do not exist anywhere as the material of our experience, and in order to study them they must first of all be created by means of a definition, as a result of which an analysis can detect in them only what has been put into the definition itself, namely the *logical* relations that constitute it: for example, the Platonic idea, the Leibnitz monad, and Hegel's opposites do not impose themselves on our mind as facts independent of their constructive operations and having to be dealt with in order to understand reality, regardless of the theories professed, but on the contrary, they only become an object for our examination for as long as we are able to deduce a cognitive pedigree of their definitions, and it is not they that induce the need for a certain theory, but, on the contrary, a certain theory causes their existence as an object of study. If, on the other hand, similar creations of the mind sometimes give the impression of something real—real not only psychologically but also ontologically—then it originates not from our having found their experimental elements but only because they satisfy our logical requirements, because they give some explanation of the various connections between facts, and because they transform real diversity into a certain system of uniformity, which has the more special privilege that we perceive it as truth. The same rationalist character is also found in the

object of dogmatic ethics, whether it comes from religious dogmas or from dogmas based on a certain scientific theory. In order to lay down rules for morality, it must first of all create the concepts of "good" and "evil," virtue and vice, for without them there would be no object to which these rules could apply. The rules here follow logically from the given basic terms and therefore must change depending on them.

Therefore, wherever the object of the study is a definition based on deduction, and not a fact independent of it, a method is used that corresponds to the nature of the object, a method that comes from certain mental assumptions and subjects the object to the logical requirements of the concepts contained in the assumption. The object is here a complete slave to the theory that gave rise to it—a slave to the postulates or hypotheses from which the theory grows. And it cannot even be otherwise, because in the object itself there is nothing else but the requirement of a rational thought; in the absence of a theory, the object vanishes; and there are only those features that can be derived from the theory. A mathematician who wished inductively, without assumptions, to derive the laws of, e.g., geometrical figures from the givens of nature, would not arrive at any results, just as a metaphysicist or moralist who strictly adhered to facts would not be able to build either a system explaining the totality of beings or absolutely binding rules. An inductive method, unsuited to the nature of the object, would kill these sciences and replace the object of study with a completely different one.

The second category of research objects is fundamentally different from the former. They are objects that *exist regardless of their definition*, objects which are not brought into being by theory, but which, on the contrary, force us to create an explanatory theory by exerting a spontaneous pressure on our cognition even before any scientific definition or term appears. This category includes the objects of all the biological sciences, including psychology and sociology. We call such research objects natural facts or simply *facts*. Their spontaneous nature, independent of our reasoning, is obvious. It would be impossible, for example, to argue that such things as "exploitation," "class struggle," "price," "commodity," the "state," etc. exist only as our concepts, contained in certain scientific terms, or—what comes to the same thing—that they come with a theory that defines their meaning and tries to explain it; they exist, after all, under a different name only, in the life experience of even those people who do not have the slightest idea of the thinking of economists and sociologists; they existed and took their toll on the human being, changing the trend of his behavior and the content of his feelings, even when there was no theory to baptize them with terms and encompass them with definitions. They are, moreover, such objects which have not hitherto possessed any uniform, fixed,

and certain science, and around which various hypotheses and definitions are developing, which are often contradictory with one another and are strongly tinged with class interests, with a tendency having nothing to do with the rational requirements of cognition, and nevertheless social and individual life does not change when one school of theorists gives way to the victorious criticism of the other: the causal connections of facts and their essential nature—what they are in our personal experience—are things wholly independent of these descriptions and of the logical connections between the concepts which this or that theory creates.

There is an opposite relationship between the object of study and theory, as we have seen in the mathematical or metaphysical sciences. We consider a quantitative or spatial relation that does not conform to the laws of mathematics—similarly to a logical relation of concepts that does not conform to the rules of a certain philosophical theory—to be erroneous or as one that does not belong to a given system of thought. Contrarily, in the psychological and social sciences, it is not principles and theories that determine which fact is to exist or not, but rather facts determine the existence of principles and theories; it cannot be said here that a fact is wrong because it does not meet the requirements of the theory, but on the contrary it is said that the theory is wrong because it does not correspond to the facts. In each of the concepts by which economics and sociology operates, significant portions of the elements undoubtedly originate exclusively from our mind and are often connected with hypotheses and theories that developed independently of the life of the fact itself and on the basis of motives that had nothing to do with its own nature. Often, the need to incorporate a certain fact into a given system of thoughts, a love of symmetry, or the historical and class role of certain principles has meant that a deductive, artificial nature was introduced to the definition of a fact, which changed it in a sense into a metaphysical object of study. We may, for example, reject the notion of “equality” in the exchange of goods as arbitrarily derived, or question the notion of human labor as a factor giving exchange value to things, or of “socially necessary” labor as a factor determining the rate of its value; we can still psychologically criticize the very concept of a “commodity” and reveal its purely abstract character, drawn from objects as dissimilar as, for example, land, human labor, a product, and a talent or skill; nevertheless, having rejected all that comes from our reasoning and abstraction, having rejected the entire mental structure of the definition, there is always a *remainder* that cannot be reduced to anything else nor translated into the language of intellectualism; the very fact of a “commodity”

remains: this “hidden dogma” of Gottl³ is something alive *that requires definition* and to which definition, as well as theory, must bend. To embrace—in the form of postulates or hypotheses—that living thing, that irreducible remainder, which is left at the bottom of every social phenomenon, under the intellectual layers, is just as impossible as to find a mathematical definition by induction, between the givens of nature. For if we subject it to the requirements of the theory and transform it into a conclusion drawn from certain general assumptions, then *instead of the living thing that we really wanted to study, we have only a product of our own mind*, i.e., we completely miss our goal as a result of using a method of rationalism that is inappropriate for the given object. The general assumption is always of intellectual origin, since no experience can ever encompass the totality of the facts, and as primal and raw material, any generalization, abstraction, or prediction, is by its very nature unsuitable for playing the role of a universal rule. Even when the assumption is merely a simple generalization of experienced facts, it contains a hypothetical basis—originating in our minds—to the effect that nature must always act in the same way, and thereby it limits the unforeseeable variety of experience and forces our mind to hold to certain patterns in assessing unknown facts. And if the general assumption is not an induction but a postulate of a purely logical nature or a deduced assertion, then there may be a fear that the fact of life, subjected to its influences—subjugated by it by means of a syllogism—will be completely removed from the object of our study, leaving in its place the intellectual product, the notion inferred from the assumption. This is the fundamental error whose avoidance requires that both the biological and social sciences should adhere to the descriptive and inductive method, while keeping away from any doctrines whose intellectual requirements would constrain the free and correct examination of facts.

As we have seen, socialist politics commits such an error in making the goal of social revolution dependent on the state theory. For how are we to view the nature of what we call the goal? Is it a living thing, a fact that exists independently of its definition, or, on the contrary, is it the definition itself, a product of our reasoning, whose life and existence are at the mercy of our theories and doctrines? Of course, a goal may well belong to both the first type of objects and the second, depending on the position of the program behind a practice aiming at a given goal. If, for example, we take the stance of social utopians or religious reformers who derive their goal not from the pursuit of life but from

3 * F. von Gottl-Ottlilienfeld, *Der Wertgedanke: ein verhülltes Dogma der Nationalökonomie*, Jena 1897, Verlag von Gustav Fisher.

an *a priori* ideal of social or moral perfection, then it is obvious that the aim has only the nature of a mental concept, a deductive model that lives only in the definitions of its adherents and dies with the collapse of those theories that sustained it. But such a position is entirely alien to scientific socialism; above all, scientific socialism does not see social life as a shapeless and passive material that could be freely worked and adapted to any deductive patterns; furthermore, its goal is not based on an “ideal of perfection” but on those technical and cultural tendencies that develop spontaneously in capitalist society. Moreover, the very basis of scientific socialism—historical materialism—makes it impossible to understand the goal as a deduced thesis. For what essentially differentiates historical materialism from the so-called idealistic or rational understanding of history? First of all, it is a different understanding of social *changes*. The *idealistic* view of history brings to the fore the individuality of heroes, leaders, rulers, and reformers; it looks for the sources of social transformations in the offices of lawmakers, in the studios of thinkers and poets, in church synods and conspirator’s clubs; according to it, the ideologies formulated in the laws of philosophy, literature, and religion, and the will of individuals aware of their aspirations, are the main sources of the shocks from which transforming waves spread to the social world. *Historical materialism*, on the other hand, reduces those same seemingly creative ideologies, as well as the striking, heroic facts of epochal meaning playing out on the stage of history, to the elements of people’s everyday life, to small but still active transformations, to those small moral and mental changes which, influenced by the development of productive technology and the conditions of economic life connected with it, take place in the brains of ordinary people, in the brains of peasants, workers, merchants, and the bourgeoisie, gradually igniting there the start of new needs and new interests which must finally come out of their subjective concealment and explode on the social stage in the form of new class struggles, hidden under various slogans and carrying with them everything that belongs to social life, and thus legislation, religion, sciences, and literature.

With this view of history, is it possible to maintain the goal of social transformation as a deduced thesis? The purpose of the transformation, i.e., all this revolutionary ideology by which the party directs itself, is, like all social ideologies and reforming currents, reduced to the smallest psychological changes which follow from the productive foundations of society; its creators are neither the thinkers nor the leaders of socialism, nor the discussions of party congresses, but a gray, nameless crowd that capitalism ejects from its previous habits and conditions and forces to have different desires and a different understanding of life. Wherever there is a yoke of exploitation, the oppression of state rights, uncertainty of existence due to dependence on the market, wherever there is a

change in family relations due to new earning conditions, the need to associate to fight for one's right to life, prosperity, and independence—in all those places vital, individually felt elements of the revolutionary aim, the desire for change, and unmet needs are born and as a result spontaneously transform in human souls into the ideals of a new life, into new social interests. The revolutionary ideology only comes afterward; it comes when it already finds this revolutionary ferment and only plays the role of a rational codifier in relation to it; it gives a uniform expression to the new desires, translates them scientifically, adjusts philosophy to them, looks for the simplest practical solution for them, and builds a theory of a political system [*system polityki*]. But it does not create the very question of revolution; it finds it ready in thousands of those small, individual revolutions that have taken place and are still taking place in human life and brains, and in the absence of which it would at most be capable of proposing a sterile thesis, living only in the offices of scholars, or a dreamlike utopia that binds some handful of its followers, but without any influence on social life. Today's revolution has not been produced by the *Communist Manifesto*, nor by any theories of Marx and Engels, but itself sparked the manifesto and theories. Just as we could not suppose that any scholar or congress could, by creating a new social theory, annihilate all the life quarrels that capitalism produces and tear from human hearts all today's unsatisfied wants and needs, we cannot claim that any theory could create these disputes, needs, and desires, that is, that it could create elements of the question of the revolution, the vital elements of the aims of the revolutionary parties.

It is therefore clear that the goal of socialist politics is not only a mental concept, a deduced object, and that having separated from it all the layers and intellectual structures originating from various theories, its living core—the fact of the existence of revolutionary elements independent of theory, of human needs and desires seeking to become real with blind spontaneity—remains in it as an essential thing, and that the understanding of the aim as a deduced thesis living in definitions contradicts not only the social reality, which shows us something else, but also the very foundations of scientific socialism, reducing it to the position of utopian ideology and a rational understanding of history. Therefore, if socialist policy makes its goal dependent on any theory, if it presents it as a conclusion, derived from certain general assumptions, then first it commits a fundamental methodological error in substituting a deductively inferred concept for a living thing, and second, it is completely at odds with scientific socialism, which does not allow social transformation to be understood as an intellectual thesis.

It is easy to predict the charge that the above criticism may meet. It is contained in the fact that the politics of socialism is guided not by the deduced

postulate of the “state” but by *the development tendency of capitalism*. It is not philosophers, as Kautsky says, who determine the direction of social progress, but economic development. The tasks of the state are increasing day by day. It assumes not only those functions that were fulfilled by the medieval community and church organizations, such as the development of communication, education, care for the poor, etc., but in addition the capitalist system of production results in new functions for it, which the medieval social organization could not imagine and by which the state penetrates deeply into economic life. If the statesmen of previous centuries had to be diplomats and lawyers above all else, then today’s must, or at least should be, economists. In the political dissertations of our time, the decisive arguments are not treaties and privileges, not ancient documents and precedents, but economic principles. The scope of politics today includes issues of banking, colonial affairs, customs, railroads, labor protection, insurance, etc. But that is not all. Economic development also forces the state to concentrate more and more enterprises in its hands, whether in the interest of self-preservation, in order to better perform its functions, or ultimately to increase revenues. In addition to the former state assets, the development of militarism brought into being arsenals and shipyards, the development of communication—post offices, railroads, telegraphs; finally, increasing monetary needs created all kinds of state monopolies. As the economic functions and economic power of the state thus continually expand, at the same time the entire economic mechanism becomes more and more complex and individual capitalist enterprises are ever more interdependent. Simultaneously, however, their dependence on the state grows and economic disturbances increase, and to remedy them the capitalists must call upon the intervention of the state, as the greatest economic power. The economic omnipotence of the state, which the Manchesterians consider a socialist utopia, is unfolding before their eyes as a necessary corollary to the capitalist system of production. The economic activity of the modern state is the natural point of development leading to a socialist community.⁴

This is *the theory of tendencies*. The development of capitalism tends to transform the state into an economic organization embracing all social issues and needs, and this historical tendency must be followed by a political party that wants to be the party of the future, a conscious representation of the interests of the proletariat, if these interests are to affect the scale of historical development and decide its final outcome. Therefore, the action conducted

4 See: K. Kautsky, *Zasady socjalizmu*, op. cit., pp. 76–78 [K. Kautsky, *Class Struggle*, op. cit., part IV, chapter 3: “Socialist Production,” pp. 95–104].

by the politics of socialism and leading to the nationalization of social life, to expanding the functions of the state to ever newer issues of collective needs, is not deduced from any doctrine about the state but is a conscious expression and deliberate approach to these *self-born* tendencies which modern economic life constantly develops and intensifies. The method is therefore more natural than intellectual.

Such a defense, however, does not withstand stricter critique. First of all, it should be noted that the concept of a "developmental tendency" can have two fundamentally different meanings and values. In the one case, it may in fact represent living things, an induction of facts, and in the other, *it must* be a doctrine.

Namely, if, when comparing the earlier periods of history with the present, we see how, along with the development of capitalist production, the social and economic role of the state also increases, then the assertion of the tendency of the state is only a simple observation of what is happening before our eyes, the knowledge of a certain real relation between facts. Then we express only what is happening and what can be perceived in life experience if we are willing to observe it carefully and skillfully. We notice the interests of entrepreneurs, which require colonial and customs policy, militarism and administrative centralization, the workers' interests requiring labor protection, consumer interests in seeking protection against monopolies, etc. These are real factors which live independently of the theory, factors which manifest themselves in various attempts, and which we can put together into one general statement of a purely descriptive nature: that capitalism extends and strengthens statehood, or, what comes to the same thing, that capitalism has a *tendency* toward the nationalization of social life. In this case, the concept of a "developmental tendency" represents only a certain reality of life; it has no control over this reality but is wholly subject to it; it does not contain any elements of foreign origin; it is a description, not a doctrine.

But then we are still in the field of *science*, not politics; the concept only claims what is or has been. To move into the field of politics, we need to look to the future; there can be no politics that is limited to observing things that exist; it deals with what is yet to come, what can be done. Therefore, if we want to make the concept of the "state tendency of capitalism" a guideline for action, we must fundamentally transform its nature. It can no longer be limited to the expression of a certain existing reality of facts, but, on the contrary, must go further and contain a certain *inference* about the future. It cannot confine itself to stating that a given tendency exists in economic life today; it must also claim that it is *necessary* for the anticipated social development—*the most important* of all tendencies that can be discerned in modern life, *the most useful* or best

suited to the intended aim. Only after having absorbed these various attributes, after transforming them into something *cognitively* necessary and certain, can the notion of a “state tendency” become directive of politics. It is obvious, however, that by adopting such attributes, the notion can no longer remain descriptive; for the description of an existing fact does not include either an anticipation of the future, or an assessment of the fact in regard to something else; predictions and judgments can only be deduced; and in order to make the state tendency something more than a simple given fact, there is a need to prove, reason, and justify, and in doing so, other more general assumptions must be invoked, other facts that have no direct contact with the given fact, hypotheses that allow the inference of something about the general laws of development or of human nature. In short, the notion of a tendency, in passing into the field of politics, must become *a doctrine*.

To what extent the thesis of the “state tendency,” on which the principles of socialist politics are based, is an intellectual work, we can see in every attempt to justify the program. First, we meet the general rule that what is developmentally necessary must be followed, otherwise one will remain in the world of utopia; socialism is only an awareness of the development tendencies of a given period; politics strives for the economic state, because all present-day development strives for it. However, the question arises as to what should be considered a developmental necessity, given the fact that in contemporary social life not only state tendencies can be noticed, but also stateless tendencies opposing them: *the development of free associations*, embracing ever new areas of human needs and increasing as the conditions of life, struggle, and culture change under the influence of capitalism. We cannot overlook the fact—of significant sociological value—that it was during the period of capitalism that those numerous associations developed in which today a large part of the entire intellectual, cultural, educational, and artistic work of society is focused, and that almost every day new human groups come to take up various mental or practical tasks related to security, safety, hygiene, farming, the struggle with nature and addictions, beautifying the country, providing assistance, and combating various institutions and customs. All this great diversity of associations becomes more and more complex in the lives of one and the same people, and encompasses ever larger masses, especially in those countries where economic life is moving at a more accelerated pace and where political conditions leave enough room free from state intervention, prohibitions, and regulations. Each area of guaranteed civil freedom won from the state is transformed in a short time, under the influence of natural needs and stimuli, into a real anthill of intersecting associations that produce a strong, normal, and comprehensive pulsation of life, both individual and collective. The nationalized part of social

tasks—tasks carried out on the basis of the laws in force and by means of a bureaucratic hierarchy—are less impressive when compared with this self-born community life, which is not codified by the police.

Nor can we close our eyes to this association movement which develops on its own out of the class struggle. Indeed, alongside the political movement which, so far, has always followed the path of state socialism, wherever the class struggle has developed more strongly, other currents and associations have developed which are either exclusively workers' associations or which enter deeply into the life of the working classes but are not purely class-based in composition. These are, namely, militant organizations that fight exploitation on their own; mutual-assistance institutions based on occupational or general human solidarity; associations aimed at promoting the culture of the popular masses, such as self-study societies, popular universities, abstinence societies, etc., and finally, urban and agricultural food and production cooperatives organizing a new type of economic relationship—production and exchange. They all have one common and highly significant characteristic, namely that they seek to transform social relations and employment conditions, or to satisfy the cultural needs of the people, *while avoiding the mediation of the state altogether*. They have varying relations with the socialist parties, whose programs are mostly limited to the enlargement and democratization of the state; most often they are pre-party entities, or develop independently of a party, with the participation of variable, temporary social ideologies, which are often struggling with each other, such as, for instance, the English trade unions and the entire cooperative movement of the West, with the exception of Belgium. In other cases, we see them consciously and systematically developed by the socialist party or connected with it ideologically and politically, such as, for example, French workers' syndicates and Belgian cooperatives. But even when they derive from the party, their relationship with official socialism is of a more formal than an essential nature; it is limited, for example, to the moral obligation of cooperative members to vote for socialist candidates and devote part of the common funds to party activism, as is the case in Belgian cooperatives; or this relationship is expressed in the participation of workers' syndicates in congresses and demonstrations, and in supporting the political action of socialism, which of course also involves the official acceptance by syndicates of the ideology contained in socialist programs. However, such permeation with the ideology of socialism does not significantly affect the essential nature of these institutions. It would be difficult to point to any fundamental difference between the socialist cooperatives of Belgium and the non-socialist cooperatives of England, or between the French syndicates, which for the most part are hand in hand with the politics of the socialist parties, and the English trades unions, which keep

away from these parties and not so long ago were still denying their principles; at best there would be only a different phraseology here and there, used in rallies and writings, different political sympathies, and a different way of reacting to politics among a number of members. However, these differences only concern the people participating in the given institutions and not the institutions themselves: institutions as such do not change their essential character depending on the beliefs of their members if their beliefs do not determine the social task and the position of these institutions—if they do not themselves constitute the moral bond from which the institution grew.

We also see that this entire movement of industrial and cultural democracy adheres to a method exactly opposite to that of the politics of socialism, even if it is organizationally and ideologically linked to the socialist parties. Namely, while socialist politics seeks protection against exploitation and poverty through labor legislation and state insurance, trade unions seek to resolve the same question through direct class struggle and mutual aid by organizing unemployment and old-age insurance funds, job exchanges, boycotts, strikes, collective contracts, and arbitration courts; the force limiting exploitation and striving to improve the living conditions of employment, instead of coming from a state which is democratized in one way or another, is born here directly from workers' solidarity, from institutions arising on their own under the influence of life struggle.

We see the same in purely cultural tasks: alongside the political demands of socialism—the introduction by states of free compulsory education, the reform of education in a democratic spirit, or the counteracting of clerical influences—free, stateless education associations are created which, without waiting for ministerial changes of direction and the results of electoral struggles, undertake the democratization of knowledge on their own. Finally, we see the same in the field of economic reform. At a time when socialist policy expects the abolition of hiring, with the elimination of market competition and crises by the nationalization of production, and tries to conduct all its social enterprise in this direction, food and production cooperatives appear which without a clear revolutionary ideology, without the slogans of revolution, introduce a highly revolutionary factor into the organism of the capitalist economy: enterprises of the collective type, run by consumer associations, based on planned statistics of demand, and by their very economic nature seeking, on the one hand, to eliminate the mercantile intermediary and the omnipotent role of money, and on the other hand, to eliminate private monopoly and hiring, giving each consumer the opportunity to become a co-owner of the wealth produced and a participant in the management of enterprises.

Everything, therefore, that the politics of socialism poses as a task to be realized through the democratizing state and to which it is aiming through the electoral struggle and by introducing its representatives to state organs—all this occurs simultaneously or seeks its fulfillment in a different way, not through the mediation of the state, but with the help of various associations which arise spontaneously from the needs of economic struggle, as the natural ferment of social transformation. Consequently, we can say that in the emancipation movement of the masses of the people today, and even in socialism, two factors, two methods, two policies which are essentially different—*state* and *stateless*—coexist side by side as *a social fact*. The former is contained in party programs and confined in the rigors of a reasoned ideology; the latter is manifested in spontaneous movements of free association, unrestrained by any ideology and not yet aware of its existence as a *revolutionary political force*.

By affirming this fact of the existence of free associations as a factor transforming social life, we also obtain a new point of support in judging the issue of revolution. For the dogmatists of statehood, who are the most sealed in their theory, cannot deny that the movement of forming free associations, in taking into its hands the interests of class struggle and the democratization of economic and cultural relations, demonstrates a powerful, spontaneous force of development that causes even socialist parties to change their own position and to favor those self-generated institutions that were previously condemned in the name of doctrine, such as food cooperatives, and that finally the social character of this movement is not retrograde but revolutionary, because what it introduces into social life are institutions that restrict capitalist exploitation and monopoly, such the workers' unions, or that democratize capitalist production itself, in seeking to eliminate wage labor and commerce, creating new types of collective enterprises based on modern technology, such as food cooperatives and agricultural syndicates. Thus, there is the potential for the historical transformation of society by a different way than through nationalization—transformation through free associations that arise automatically out of the needs of life's struggle, and whose outstanding feature is that they settle matters of life independently of theory and without any general hypothesis. However, this possibility and this development tendency seem to be completely forgotten by the politics of socialism, which presents the issue of revolution as if there were no other forces outside the state transforming society and no other path of liberation except through legislative reforms.

In order to defend and justify this fundamental point of view, the politics of socialism must therefore refer to principles other than the principle of a development tendency. For the fact of the class struggle in which this policy has its source and natural foundations shows different and contradictory trends. The

choice of one among them, therefore, as a guideline for action, and the logical narrowing and adaptation of the entire class struggle to it, is inevitable, and such a choice can only be made on principles of pure *rationalism*, on the basis of something rational, which in the nature of the fact does not exist.

Thus we encounter the proposition that the state tendency is only compatible with economic collectivism, which requires great centralized, planned, and uniform production. In order to substantiate this claim, we must devise, at least in general terms, a plan for future collectivism, contrary to the reservations made in this regard by the theorists of socialism, because this collectivism, which is developing spontaneously before our eyes, in the form of enterprises run by consumer associations or associations of farmers, does not at all foretell such an outcome but rather indicates economic development toward an organized community without state intervention and beyond the limits of its mechanism. We must therefore deduce *a priori* a certain type of economic system, recognize it as the sole one possible for future collectivism and in regard to the ongoing evolution of production relations, and only then can we justify the claim that the “collectivism” we have conceived and constructed can only materialize in state forms, in a bureaucratically managed economy.

In addition, to justify the state program, we must also put forward another thesis, namely that both in the future and at present, *a certain state* is always essential as a necessary normalization of human egoisms that clash with each other, as a social interpretation of the natural rights of the individual, the result of which is the common interest of all. In foreseeing this indispensability of the state and presenting it as a general sociological law inferred from the *nature* of human society, we introduce into politics a theory that goes far beyond the limits of today's class struggle, and at the same time tries to bind and tighten its natural developmental features, by means of assumptions and sociological theses that do not derive from it. It should also be noted that this auxiliary thesis about the indispensability of the state, while being as strict and true as possible, can in no way warrant or justify state policy. The fact that the nature of human society will always require a certain, even minimal state, to secure common interests against the antisocial tendencies of various egoisms, does not yet explain to us why the emancipatory policy of the proletariat should be to *nationalize* almost *all* social life, to the omnipotence of the state. The opposite position—striving to reduce the state to that *indispensable minimum*—would be consistent with the above thesis of a general “sociological law.”

Finally, a third claim we can make in defense of state policy is that it is *more useful* than any other means of struggle *for the advancement* of the working class *today* because state gains are universal and permanent, like every law. The factory legislation or insurance obtained is a sure acquisition that cannot

be taken away and that can be enjoyed by all, even by those who are not yet capable of organizing and fighting on their own; thanks to these things, the working classes can redirect their efforts elsewhere and strive for new achievements. This usefulness cannot be denied, especially since even strong organizations such as the English Trade Unions lean more and more clearly toward launching a coherent parliamentary campaign for labor legislation. This is the only practical consideration that gives the state trend its vitality and that ties the doctrine of the state in a real bond to the self-generated interests of the proletariat, namely, the interest of protection against exploitation.

This principle has every appearance of being a purely practical one, originating only in the needs of the struggle. However, it must be taken into account that the issue of state protection against exploitation is not at all self-enclosed and limited. Set as a postulate of politics, it applies in life and logic to the workers' movement in all its further development, and captures all its needs and tendencies in the same rigors of state policy. As the safeguarding of labor interests shifts to the realm of legislation and becomes a function of state offices, the self-born workers' institutions, which fulfill the same tasks, lose their *raison d'être*; the association movement of the classes, in which a new moral and social culture is taking shape, must disappear; and all the questions of life which the revolution of the proletariat raises must necessarily conform to that supreme position which the state occupies as social protection against exploitation. This one step determines the entire further development of the workers' movement.

Therefore, as the principle of politics, not only must the social necessity of the state be adopted but the issue of the proletariat must be reduced to the matter of transforming the state toward omnipotence and democratization in order to give the legislative struggle against exploitation the advantage of utility over the self-protective struggle of workers' organizations. However, no practical considerations per se, no supposedly greater ease and effectiveness of the legislative struggle, could incline politics to adopt a direction that would be contrary to its essential aspiration.

Thus, the doctrine of the "state" reigns supreme and undivided over the politics of socialism, reducing the whole question of revolution, the problem of the liberation of the proletariat and man, to government philanthropy.

PART II

Ethics



The Metamorphoses of Subjectivity, the Transitions of the Social

The Ethics of Edward Abramowski

Cezary Rudnicki

Abramowski begins the last chapter of *Individual Elements in Sociology* with the following conclusion, drawn from his findings to that point:

Considering *the interdependence* of various social categories from an individual standpoint, therefore, leads us to a new statement: *that the generator of the social world is the human conscience*—the emotional and practical set of concepts living in personal needs.¹

This thesis counters the deterministic concepts of history—especially historical materialism—which were developing at the time and is an expression of the “ethical turn” which had occurred in Abramowski’s thought only a few years earlier; that is, a turn toward the study of human conscience, its changes and political role. In one of his last texts, Abramowski defines this “pojęciowość żyjąca” (lived set of concepts)—the human conscience—as “its way of relating to other people and living with them.”² Thus, he understood conscience as a certain way of being in the world; in other words, conscience is nothing other than what in modern philosophy is usually referred to as subjectivity. Abramowski maintained the conviction, from that moment until the very end, that *the form of a social system depends on the form of subjectivity* of the individuals who constitute the system, and that ethics, in a way, precedes and conditions politics.³ Or, to express it a little differently, the only proper form of politics is its ethical form. Abramowski, who with time began to depart from party activity in favor of being involved in the organization of

1 E. Abramowski, “Individual Elements in Sociology,” in: this volume, p. 123.

2 Idem, „Odczyt o Zw. Przyjaźni, 6 maja 1917 r.,” in: idem, *Pisma. Pierwsze zbiorowe wydanie dzieł treści filozoficznej i społecznej*, vol. 1, Warszawa 1924, Związek Polskich Stowarzyszeń Spożywców, p. 382.

3 During a popularizing lecture delivered a year before his death, Abramowski argued that “Every institution, *state*, and *association* alike *lives only in people*, in their needs, habits, beliefs and feelings. It lives as *long as it finds itself in the human conscience*” (ibidem, p. 381).

cooperatives and Friendship Unions, could have said the words that a hundred years later were uttered by the French philosopher and activist Michel Foucault: “I would more or less agree with the idea that in fact what interests me is much more morals than politics or, in any case, *politics as an ethics*.”⁴ The juxtaposition is not accidental, because both authors share a specific and far from moralistic understanding of ethics as a set of conditions and practices responsible for the transformation of human subjectivity—but more on that later.

As I have already written about Abramowski’s ethical—or ethical and political—postulates several times⁵ and as they are discussed in this volume by Aleksandra Bilewicz and Kamil Piskala, I would like to focus on another aspect of Abramowski’s thinking: not his proposed ethical strategy for the struggle against the prevailing (state-capitalist) form of social system but the logic behind the strategy. In other words, this text will be devoted to the above-mentioned relationship between society and subjectivity (conscience). The topic seems particularly worthwhile because a superficial reading of such texts as *Ethics and Revolution* often leads to erroneous, reductionist conclusions. Hence, I will refer to this, and not another, contemporary conceptual grid. Dorota Sepczyńska has convincingly demonstrated that the ethics of friendship or fraternity developed by Abramowski are close to the feminist ethics of care.⁶ However, the convergence only applies to the axiological level. That axiology, however, was built on a certain theory of conscience, and the concepts developed within poststructuralist theory of the subject, in the broad sense, turn out to be more useful for its explication.

4 M. Foucault, “Politics and Ethics: An Interview,” in: *The Foucault Reader*, edited by P. Rabinow, New York 1984, Pantheon Books, p. 375, italics—CR.

5 In English: C. Rudnicki, “An Ethics for Stateless Socialism: An Introduction to Edward Abramowski’s Political Philosophy,” *Praktyka Teoretyczna* 2018, no. 1(27).

6 D. Sepczyńska, „Czy Edward Abramowski jest etykiem troski? Część I. Prezentacja etyki troski i etyki przyjaźni,” *Principia* 2019, vol. 66, DOI 10.4467/20843887PI.19.004.11637, and eadem, “Czy Edward Abramowski jest etykiem troski? Część II. Porównanie etyki troski i etyki przyjaźni,” *Principia* 2020, vol. 67 (2020), DOI 10.4467/20843887PI.20.011.13841. As Sepczyńska writes in the summary of the second part of her article, “When comparing the ethics of friendship and the contemporary ethics of care, significant content and structural similarities can be noticed” (p. 29). She then enumerates these common features: relationalism instead of atomism, holism instead of rationalism, situationism instead of normative apriorism, a pro-feminist attitude instead of patriarchalism, and dialogicality instead of paternalism (pp. 29–31).

Social Organization and Individual Consciences

At the base of Abramowski's political strategy is the conviction that the human conscience—that is, the human being's "internal" morality—generates the social world and therefore it is this morality that must first be revolutionized. As he writes,

History knows no other process: every social change has always been accompanied by a moral one; the appearance of a class that took upon itself to destroy the old orders and institutions also meant the appearance of a new morality to which the socio-legislative forms had to adapt.⁷

It is easy to make the accusation here that Abramowski does not notice that "the old orders and institutions" are what shape people's consciences. After all, Foucault might be recalled again at this point; from his *Discipline and Punish* it is possible to draw the conclusion that it is disciplinary institutions that shape human beings and their conscience, their subordinate subjectivity. And since institutions depend on "the socio-legislative forms," then the transformation of consciences would be impossible without a prior change on the political and legislative level, which can only be brought about by the state apparatus. Therefore, it would be advisable to completely reverse the causality indicated by Abramowski and claim that the social world is the generator of conscience.

So we have two competing theses: (1) it is individual consciences that shape the form of social organization, or (2) it is the form of the social organization that shapes individual consciences. The situation is complicated by the fact that in the last sentence of *Individual Elements in Sociology*, Abramowski seems to reject both theses. He writes that

The compatibility of individual conscience and social organization is necessary because neither of these facts can have an isolated existence, for the very reason that they are only *a twofold expression of the same socialization of the human soul*.⁸

This means that he ultimately posits the existence of a kind of Spinozan parallelism, in which individual conscience and social organization would be like two sides of the same page. They would not so much condition each other as

⁷ E. Abramowski, "Ethics and Revolution," in: this volume, p. 193.

⁸ Idem, "Individual Elements in Sociology," in: this volume, p. 139.

be two faces of one and the same thing (socialization), which as such remains hidden somewhere in the depths and does not appear directly to us. In order to understand that there is no contradiction between the theorem opening the third chapter of *Individual Elements of Socialism* and the theorem closing it, the generated form and the process responsible for its genesis must be distinguished in Abramowski's thought.

When society is in a state of "equilibrium," individual consciences and social institutions respond to each other. Both are pervaded by the same custom, which causes good or evil to be perceived in the same things: what is an offense against the law is also a sin against morality, and what is considered virtuous is also a social obligation. According to Abramowski, the concordance is confirmed by ethnographers' research on the political institutions and religious rituals of so-called primitive societies: "It was from this source of natural coherence between ethics and legislation [i.e., socialization—CR] that the primal relationship of political power with the priesthood arose, which seems to be common to all peoples."⁹ The same is true even in modern societies, although here the relationship has been obscured by "the more differentiated and more substantively developed forms of coexistence."¹⁰ For example, marital fidelity or the principle of repaying loans find expression both in ethics and in legislation. The unity of ethics and legislation, of individual and institutional needs, is reflected in the voice of conscience:

The relationship between human conscience and the social world becomes even more visible if we pay attention to the fact that the mere ethical movement of the human soul, what we commonly call "the voice of duty," always has an objective expression in social institutions and is coupled with them in an interdependence which can never be broken.¹¹

According to Abramowski, the connection is so strong that a direct study of society could actually be replaced by examination of the individual conscience: "A sociologist who wants to investigate the durability of a certain institution does not have a better criterion than in the customary ethics of contemporary people."¹² Institutions and conscience, law and ethics, guard each other; a deviation within one causes an immediate reaction of the other, so that the whole system is brought back into balance as soon as possible.

9 Ibidem, p. 134.

10 Ibidem, p. 136.

11 Ibidem, p. 134.

12 Ibidem, p. 137.

For Abramowski, however, the “equilibrium” is at most a certain metastable state—not because it is constantly threatened by imbalance, but because there are always forces at work within society which will eventually knock it out of its present condition and push it onto a path leading to a new metastable social form, to a new state of “equilibrium.” Although the principle of the double expression of the same socialization is a fundamental principle of Abramowski’s social theory, the most important role is played by the idea of a transition from one system to another: from the ancient slave economy to feudalism, from feudalism to capitalism, and—potentially—from capitalism to communism. Even if, in the synchronous approach, the principle of the concordance between conscience and institution applies, the diachronic perspective reveals a more complicated and dynamic picture of this dependence. To fully understand why politics should be practiced as ethics, it is necessary to answer this question: how does history work?

At the turn of the 1880s and 1890s, Abramowski conducted historical studies on so-called primitive societies,¹³ feudalism¹⁴ and capitalism.¹⁵ Around 1898, he successfully used the knowledge he had gained to address the above-mentioned problem. It would be banal to say that the advances in ethnology and history over the last 100–150 years have made many of his descriptions obsolete, superficial, or sometimes even ridiculous. What is important for the reconstruction of his thoughts are not these or other ideas about a given era but the logic of historical change. Abramowski distinguished three phases of development in moving from an old to a new system: economic, ethical (or moral), and legislative and political. He also pointed out that this was only an analytical approach, because in fact these three phases “cannot be separated in time because each of them, having reached a certain degree of development, necessarily requires the coexistence of others.”¹⁶

13 Idem, „Społeczeństwa rodowe,” in: *Pisma. Pierwsze zbiorowe wydanie dzieł treści filozoficznej i społecznej*, vol. 4, Warszawa 1928, Związek Spółdzielni Spożywców Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej.

14 Idem, „Feodalizm,” in: *Pisma. Pierwsze zbiorowe wydanie dzieł treści filozoficznej i społecznej*, vol. 3, Warszawa 1927, Związek Spółdzielni Spożywców Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, and idem, „Społeczeństwo feodalne (szkic),” in: *Pisma*, vol. 3, op. cit.

15 Idem, „Nowy zwrot wśród farmerów amerykańskich,” in: *Pisma*, vol. 1, op. cit., and idem, „Kapitalizm,” in: *Pisma*, vol. 3, op. cit.

16 Idem, “Individual Elements in Sociology,” in: this volume, pp. 124–125.

From Living Conditions to Needs, from Needs to Social Phenomena

Abramowski starts from the premise that even when society is in a metastable state of “equilibrium” processes take place that lead to the emergence of new technical and cultural elements.¹⁷ Their direct expression is a change in the conditions of production and consumption, which translates not only into a change in people’s attitude to the products of their work but above all into a change in living conditions and the needs arising from them. Abramowski understands economic change as a *change in the material sphere*, which—“insofar as it antagonizes the existing organization of society”¹⁸—becomes an impulse for *individual, subjective change*.

“The economic factor, in its role of transforming society, is therefore limited only to the fact that it changes the needs and simultaneously the ideas and feelings of the human being into whose life environment it enters.”¹⁹ According to Abramowski, an example of this process was the transition from large estates based on collective slave labor to a share-cropping form, that is, the Roman colonate system. In his draft on feudalism, Abramowski proves that the impulse that underlaid this technical and organizational change and determined the aim of production was the interest of the masters: their demand for luxury goods of ever better quality.

As a result, *diligence in work* and good performance began to play an increasingly important role in production. The cultural needs of the master required more skilled production; they created new branches of it, and because the tools and knowledge were not yet developed (which is of major importance today), the personal qualities of the worker were of major importance [...]. These main tendencies of production at that time were not suited to the form of large slave estates. The large slave estate had, as its inherent features, difficulty with supervision and the reluctance of the slaves to work, which made it impossible to achieve exactly what the production managers wanted most—good performance.²⁰

17 Ibidem, p. 125.

18 Ibidem.

19 Ibidem.

20 Idem, “Feodalizm,” op. cit., p. 77.

Of course, the transition from *latifundia*²¹ to the colonate system was not possible without certain forms of technical progress, such as changes in land cultivation, which were necessary to increase individual productivity (Abramowski writes “the surplus value produced”). However, more important than this material (organizational and cultural) change was the alteration in living conditions and the needs that change entailed. The former slave now gained a certain independence in his life, home, and family, and the land he farmed allowed him—after paying rent—to derive personal benefits. This, in turn, produced a real moral revolution: the transition from slavery to the colonate system also meant the subjective transformation of an individual from a slave into a *colonus*.

Thus, a simple economic transformation—the substitution of cooperative production by share-croppers—hatched the “humanity” of the slave and his relationship with the community through the acquisition of legitimated family bonds, property rights, inheritance, and judicial defense.²²

Abramowski emphasizes the role of living conditions in the process of moral change this emphatically in order to counter the thesis that a change such as this occurs under the influence of intellectual deliberation. On the contrary, all significant reformatory trends are only the realization of moral elements that have appeared along with the new living conditions.²³ However, this “hatching” of new ethics and new subjectivity *is not* a process strictly determined by the previous material transformation. Abramowski devotes the most extensive fragment of the third chapter of *Individual Elements of Sociology* to clarifying this issue (that is, discussing the ethical phase).

These new moral elements are new *needs* that arise under the influence of new living conditions. Needs are, next to “namelessness” (feelings) and intellect (perceptions), one of the facts of the human soul, thus they are individual and subjective. At the same time, they are the sole components of the soul of a practical nature: they are norms that find their expression in purposeful action and the striving to transform objective reality. A need “seeks to objectify

21 For a critique of the concept of *latifundium* see: P. Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle. Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350–550 AD*, New Jersey/Woodstock 2012, Princeton University Press, pp. 18–21.

22 E. Abramowski, „Pierwiastki indywidualne w socjologii,” in: *Pisma. Pierwsze zbiorowe wydanie dzieł treści filozoficznej i społecznej*, vol. 2, Warszawa 1924, Związek Polskich Stowarzyszeń Spożywców, p. 214.

23 *Ibidem*, p. 211.

itself in something outside, to create a new fact that would be the source of feeling and perception.”²⁴ An example could be the need to sit on a raised platform, which objectifies itself in the form of more and more comfortable chairs and armchairs, and thus becomes a need-thing, detached from the rest of the human soul, and yet dependent on it, having value only insofar as its subjective side still exists. And that its subjective existence is not at all obvious, we will realize, as soon as we note the fact that a great part of humanity, perhaps even most of it, sits on the floor and *does not need* chairs or armchairs.²⁵ An individual need, therefore, tends to express itself in a certain objective phenomenon, and this is a phenomenon of a social nature, because the objectified need also becomes available to others—many different people can sit on a chair: “We stand here on the threshold where individual fact ends and social fact begins [...] Different individual souls came into contact with each other and found each other in *a thing* that was created under the inspiration of purposeful work, under the inspiration of an intelligence common to all of them.”²⁶ Abramowski, however, is less interested in a strictly object-oriented objectification of needs, and more in those that are social practices or institutions, such as private property, monogamy, or legislative institutions. Each of these exists only insofar as there is a related subjective need and disappears along with this need; sometimes it only continues

by the power of the routine itself and the power of the organization they have created [...]; this existence, however, can only have temporary strength; it is based on superficial social factors and in various manifestations; in the need for the artificial care of consciousness and organized strength it betrays its lack of essential vitality and internal troubles.²⁷

Need therefore has its subjective and objective, individual and social sides, occupying the same position in the conceptual structure of this theory as that of the double socialization of the human soul. Therefore, when a society reaches a metastable state, rights and moral obligations align with each

24 Idem, “Individual Elements in Sociology,” in: this volume, p. 133.

25 “Differences in posture, like differences in eating utensils (knife and fork, chopsticks or fingers, for example), divide the world as profoundly as political boundaries. Regarding posture there are two camps: the sitters-up (the so-called western world) and the squatters (everyone else). Although there is no Iron Curtain separating the two sides, neither feels comfortable in the position of the other” (W. Rybczyński, *Home: A Short History of an Idea*, New York 1986, Viking Penguin Inc., p. 78).

26 E. Abramowski, „Pierwiastki indywidualne w socjologii,” op. cit., pp. 160–161.

27 Ibidem, p. 162.

other: they are an expression of the same needs. Need should thus be perceived as one of the key categories of Abramowski's social ontology.²⁸

Viewed from the subjective side, the entire sphere of needs creates what I previously defined as subjectivity (human conscience). This means, therefore, that it is not needs that are an expression of subjectivity but that subjectivity is the expression of a certain system of needs.²⁹ In this respect, needs constitute

a set of concepts [*pojęciowość*], fused with feelings into a single psychological whole to which reasoning tries to adapt without being a condition for its existence; the ideas that constitute this set of concepts differ from their intellectual figures in that they are not only reasoned but also felt; they can not only be developed mentally but are also expressed in the *behavior* of the human being, and they are not only logical but also have a deliberately creative, practical significance for the course of life.³⁰

Need is a kind of undecidable in which the intellectual order (ideas, concepts) and the affective order (passive affects, i.e., sensations, and active affects, i.e., actions) converge. Thus, a change in the sphere of needs each time entails a change in the sphere of notions and feelings.

The Role of Ideological Propaganda

Let us now return to the question of the transformation of ancient society into a feudal one. According to Abramowski, the transition from the slave system to the colonate system was equivalent to a transition from production based on compulsion to production based on individual moral advantages: "diligence, management skills, faithful fulfillment of one's obligations."³¹ All these features become important not only for the *patron* from whom the *colonus* leases land or a workshop, but above all for the *colonus* himself, because they enable

28 B. Błesznowski, M. Ratajczak, "Principles of the Common: Towards a Political Philosophy of Polish Cooperativism," *Praktyka Teoretyczna* 2018, no. 1(27), p. 112.

29 Compare what Maurizio Lazzarato writes on the subject of the relation between subjectivity and desire: "Desire is not the expression of human subjectivity; it emerges from the assemblage of human and non-human flows, from a multiplicity of social and technical machines" (M. Lazzarato, *Signs and Machines: Capitalism and the Production of Subjectivity*, translated by J. D. Jordan, Los Angeles 2014, Semiotext(e), p. 51).

30 E. Abramowski, "Individual Elements in Sociology," in: this volume, p. 119.

31 Idem, „Pierwiastki indywidualne w socjologii,” op. cit., p. 214.

him to earn a surplus, which is his personal profit. But since the *colonus* is no longer sold like a slave but is allowed to raise a family and pass his property to his offspring, his need becomes marriage and fidelity, which ensure him of legal heirs. These new economic conditions also entail the moral requirement to limit the arbitrariness of the masters (*patrons*), which is now considered harmful to production. The master is expected to treat his subjects more humanely. The expectations were completely different in the economy based on slavery, where the very organization of work—involving control, punishments, and cruelty—prevented the development of such moral qualities as kindness, gentleness, or mercy.³² Along with all this, finally, the humanity of the *colonus* emerges—the humanity denied to slaves, who were treated like tools or work animals. At the same time, however, there is a peculiar shift from external to internal submission. According to Abramowski, the classical world knew only compulsory servitude, that is slavery, and in its ethics it condemned all forms of subordination and praised freedom. However, as feudalism developed, obedience, humility, and fidelity became economically necessary—first in regard to the *patron*, then in regard to a liege. Hence, a new ethics of subjection developed.³³

And yet all these new needs could not develop freely, because they had the entire customary-institutional-legal system against them. Abramowski repeats many times that *living conditions fulfill a double role: conservative and revolutionary*.³⁴ New needs seek their practical expression in the still extant social environment; that is, they try to fulfill themselves without transforming the environment itself. To illustrate the point, Abramowski evokes contemporary phenomena. For example, he writes about workers who organize themselves into unions and demand an increase in their wages only in order to save a certain amount of capital—thanks to which they will themselves later start a business and become exploiters. A potentially revolutionary practice serves completely conservative purposes. “So even ‘dissatisfactions’ with life,” as he notes, “are not necessarily a factor in revolutionizing people and can perfectly well be the engine of even the most backward tendencies.”³⁵ At this point the action of ideological propaganda becomes necessary to tip the scales of victory one way or the other.

32 Idem, „Feodalizm,” op. cit., pp. 89–90.

33 Idem, „Pierwiastki indywidualne w socjologii,” op. cit., p. 215, and idem, „Feodalizm,” op. cit., p. 175.

34 Idem, “Individual Elements in Sociology,” in: this volume, p. 132 and idem, “Ethics and Revolution,” in: this volume, pp. 194–197.

35 Idem, “Ethics and Revolution,” in: this volume, p. 196.

Or rather, it will not tip the balance so much as it will accelerate the process of change and determine the trajectory that a destabilized society will follow. Abramowski does not after all take into account the possibility of such a thing as conservative propaganda, the task of which would be to insert new needs into the already existing social order. (In his theory, it is the existing legislation and institutions that are conservative, not ideologies.) It even seems that within his social ontology something like the active promotion of conservatism is impossible, and in any case such propaganda would not be able to achieve the goals it sets for itself: the processes of social change, once launched, would be impossible to stop.

Perhaps it could only delay the inevitable.³⁶ In any case, Abramowski does not deal with the issue at all, focusing entirely (both as a theorist and social activist) on the ideology that he describes as *creative*. What is specific to it and determines its creative character is the constitutive element of *purposefulness*: such ideology advocates adjusting actions to ethical norms, to “what should be” rather than to “what is.” Seeming purposefulness could also be attributed to conservative ideology, but it should be remembered that the normative-purposeive character referred to here has its source not in purely intellectual propositions but in the life needs of individuals. Thus, whenever new needs arise under the influence of new economic conditions—and this is the situation we are considering—whatever contradicts the current order acquires the status of an ethical norm. Although Abramowski himself did not make a distinction between ethics and morality anywhere, and he often used these terms interchangeably, a consistent reading of his texts allows a distinction to be made between these two forms of people’s “conducting themselves.” Morality is inherently conservative, serving to keep society in its present metastable state, while ethics is always revolutionary.

The formula “should be” does not serve in this case to indicate those moral norms that are already in force in a given society—although not everyone has

36 Moreover, it would be consistent with the diagnosis of Deleuze and Guattari, according to whom it is impossible to stop the ongoing processes of deterritorialization (departing from the existing order, “*territorium*”). Although some political forces react to the emergence of these processes with an attempt to maintain the current state of affairs (e.g., consolidating codes that are decoding), such a tactic turns out to be completely ineffective. As a result, after some time, the strategy changes completely: instead of stopping the process of change, an attempt is made to intercept it and put it into a new framework, which Deleuze and Guattari call “reterritorialization” (see: G. Deleuze, F. Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, translated by R. Hurley et al., Minneapolis 2000, University of Minnesota Press, and eidem, *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, translated by B. Massumi, London/Minneapolis 2005, University of Minnesota Press).

submitted to them—but defines goals beyond the current customs and laws, which are to lead society beyond what is in force. When Abramowski invokes the traditional distinction between “is” and “should be” it is not to speak out in the dispute over ethical naturalism. Instead of seeing in the distinction a thesis about the separation of facts and values, it is better to see in it a kind of forerunner of the much later Deleuze and Guattari distinction between territory and de-territorialization.³⁷

As I just mentioned, ideological propaganda is necessary to break the deadlock resulting from the dual, conservative-revolutionary nature of life factors. And while such propaganda should take into account institutions and legislation, its effectiveness depends entirely on how much it appeals to the human conscience. The latter,

[as] individual and psychological, [...] is at the same time *self-knowing* and therefore accessible to creativity; in following in itself the germination of new social life, it simultaneously forms certain ideals of what is to come and is capable of transforming the results of living conditions, which it perceives in itself, into purposeful and ethical norms that define what should be.³⁸

To practice propaganda is to propagate a form of life (individual and social) that exists only in seed form and is yet to come. Creative ideology therefore depends on (new) needs, which in turn are the product of (new) economic conditions. At the same time, however, Abramowski is against reducing *the creative factor* to needs and ideas. He speaks about creativity precisely because he wants to indicate an element in human subjectivity that is situated outside the deterministic series of social causation.³⁹ Without this factor, in his opinion, it is impossible to explain the social transformations taking place in history. As he mentions repeatedly, because of the dual nature of living conditions the economic process itself is not enough to produce such changes.⁴⁰ In other words, the categories of creativity, purposefulness, ethical “duty,” and propaganda overlap here as they serve to express one and the same problem: the impossibility of explaining social transformations solely on the basis of economic processes. (They are also not explained by the political and legislative

37 Ibidem.

38 E. Abramowski, “Individual Elements in Sociology,” in: this volume, p. 129.

39 Ibidem, p. 129–130.

40 Ibidem, p. 131.

processes, because these—as will be explained later—are only an expression of social changes that have already taken place).

Life Propaganda

This does not mean, of course, that Abramowski denies the importance of economic, organizational, and technological factors: they, after all, lead to the emergence of new needs, with the practical purposefulness specific to them. Abramowski also does not deny value to theoretical descriptions of the patterns of the new society; he only points out that they cannot be purely intellectual products but must be rooted in human needs. What he is trying to do is to show that, apart from these two, there is also a third factor, an ethical one, which is not only irreducible to the other two (because it introduces facts of a new kind) but also requires activity specific to it. If giving social life a new form requires not only changes on the economic level and the development of new theories but also stimulating the processes responsible for the transformation of human subjectivity, it becomes necessary to take action to produce such stimulation. This third form of activity, which is neither economic nor theoretical, is defined by Abramowski as *life propaganda* or the propaganda of a new morality.⁴¹ It is a kind of propaganda whose aim is to bring about a moral (ethical) revolution; to transform the subjectivity of individuals, who constitute society. The weaknesses of political strategies that relinquish this type of propaganda (favoring purely intellectual propaganda or reducing propaganda to a minimum) are discussed in detail in Chapter II of *Ethics and Revolution*. I will not summarize the issue here. Instead, I would like to focus on the specifics of this life propaganda.

Such propaganda has both a negative and a positive aspect.⁴² The first aims to oust existing habits and the idea that people should fulfill their needs based on the existing social order. By using social, artistic, and conceptual means one should “humiliate and ridicule the smallest symptoms of” prevailing customs,⁴³ and in their place arouse contradictory feelings, consistent with the set goals. In its positive aspect, propaganda should give these feelings a practical form and accustom people to act in accord with new ideals. In fact, nothing else is involved but the classical anarchist idea of propaganda by deed—although Abramowski himself does not refer directly to that idea at any point.

41 Ibidem, p. 127 and idem, “Ethics and Revolution,” in: this volume, p. 208.

42 Idem, “Ethics and Revolution,” in: this volume, p. 214.

43 Ibidem.

A short digression is necessary here. A reader of such texts as *Ethics and Revolution* or *Stateless Socialism*⁴⁴ will quickly realize that Abramowski's project—in terms of ideas, suggested practices, and promoted goals—fully deserves to be called anarchist. Yet Abramowski himself never reaches for this label (preferring to speak of stateless socialism at best), nor does he cite the writings of other anarchists. It would seem that his avoidance was due to the then strong association of anarchism with terrorism, especially in Central and Eastern Europe. Abramowski, even at the stage of his youthful fascination with Marxism, was unable fully to accept programmatic terrorism.⁴⁵ And although initially he conceded that some forms of terrorism could be means of conducting the proletarian struggle (apart from strikes or trade union activity), with time he sought more and more intensively for alternative strategies to achieve his political goals. Thus, Abramowski used the anarchist idea of propaganda by deed, but immediately deprived it of its terrorist aspect, which was dominant at that time, in order to preserve solely the concept of propagating the idea by practicing it.

When in *Ethics and Revolution* Abramowski points to solidarity as the basic value of the new society, and common property and the right to laziness or statelessness as its specific incarnations, he indicates the need to propagate them not only in words, but above all in deeds, that is through mutual assistance or the refusal to use the help of state authorities.

However, this practice must—in order to limit the dual, conservative, and revolutionary influence of living conditions—be conducted within the framework of specially established institutions. The reader of this volume will see that at present the role of such institutions (which are to lead society beyond capitalism and statehood) is played by trade unions, various types of cooperatives, and above all, the Friendship Unions postulated by Abramowski. Nevertheless, I will discuss the role of this life propaganda using the above example of the transition from the ancient slave economy to feudalism.

As stated earlier, the change in needs caused by a change in the production system leads to the disclosure of the humanity of those who were previously considered animate objects, namely, slaves. However, all these metamorphoses take place locally (where new technical or organizational solutions have actually been introduced), and their spread over the entire social field requires active measures taken for the purpose. One such measure was slave revolts,

44 Idem, "Stateless Socialism," translated by W. Łobodziński and W. Pazdan, *Praktyka Teoretyczna* 2018, no. 1(27).

45 W. Potkański, *Terroryzm na usługach ugrupowań lewicowych i anarchistycznych w Królestwie Polskim do 1914*, Warszawa 2014, Wydawnictwo DiG, pp. 105–106.

which increased the inconvenience of slave estates and accelerated the introduction of the colonate system⁴⁶—although it must be admitted that in his unfinished manuscript Abramowski seems to deny these rebellions the role of initiation and sees them only as a way to accelerate what must happen anyway.⁴⁷ Reform movements, which propagate new philosophical ideas and economic concepts, are also dynamizing in nature. In this context, Abramowski is primarily interested in Stoicism because it “is perhaps the first to express the principle of ‘natural law,’ which was completely unknown in ancient ethics and legislation”⁴⁸ and it promoted the humanity of slaves. Stoic propaganda led to the spread of new moral elements in the social field and to legal reforms in the Roman empire.

Stoicism, however, was not capable of completely conducting this moral revolution, which, germinating under the influence of the development of the colonate, was to lead society into a feudal system; it was too closely connected with the old mentality of classicism.⁴⁹

Christianity performed this role much better. It promoted equality, although only moral and religious, not social, equality. Rather, Christianity sought to soften the relationship of dependency and grant certain rights to the producer class, but it did not take up the question of abolishing the relationship of dependency as such (and sometimes actively worked to maintain it) or of extending the status of citizen to all people. Christian propaganda did not fight the institution of slavery but only advised masters to “handle slaves fairly and mercifully and respect their human nature.”⁵⁰ Simultaneously, the propaganda advised slaves to “obey and remain faithful in their position.”⁵¹ Christianity was heading, along the theological and moral path, in the same direction as the colonate system. This means, however, not only that it harmonized with it (which may have determined the success of Christianity), but also that—similarly to the slave rebellions—it accelerated the ongoing economic transformation.⁵²

46 E. Abramowski, „Feodalizm,” op. cit., pp. 93–94.

47 Ibidem.

48 Idem, „Pierwiastki indywidualne w socjologii,” op. cit., p. 217.

49 Ibidem, p. 218.

50 Ibidem.

51 Ibidem.

52 Idem, „Feodalizm,” op. cit., pp. 91–93.

At the same time, though, Christianity, as a creative ideology, introduced completely new elements, not simply developing the needs that arose along with new living conditions:

What appears essentially new in the social ethics that the Christian Church promoted were the virtues of humility and obedience, which were unknown to the ancients in the nature of a *moral ideal*; Christianity was the first to raise them to this position and tried to form all the customs and concepts about human life in accordance with them, *for which, as a practical school, monasteries served excellently.*⁵³

Behaviors that previously resulted from external coercion (primarily based on violence) were presented in Christian propaganda as virtues—as what should come from within a person. Thus people were presented with the example of the obedient and humble Christ.⁵⁴ More important than such purely intellectual representations, however, is the daily, systematic development of appropriate habits in individuals, which Abramowski calls a “practical school.” Its role in Christianity was played by monasteries: they were the most important institution responsible for propaganda by deed. They provided individuals with the best conditions—largely in isolation from the influences of the external environment—for the transformation of subjectivity. It was from the monasteries that this new subjectivity (new conscience) and other ways of organizing collective life poured out onto the rest of the social field. Certainly, an exact recreation of the process would require a less rapid-fire study than that of Abramowski (he moves too quickly from what happened in the first centuries after Christ to the situation in the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries),⁵⁵ but his intuitions are roughly correct and more recent studies have confirmed them to a large extent.⁵⁶

53 Idem, „Pierwiastki indywidualne w socjologii,” op. cit., p. 219, the second italics—CR.

54 Idem, “Feodalizm,” op. cit., p. 175.

55 Although there is a justification for this leap: the socio-economic situation in the Roman empire in the first centuries after Christ and the socio-economic situation in the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries were much more similar to each other than to what happened in the period in between, that is, in the Middle Ages (see: D. Graeber, *Debt: The First 5,000 Years*, New York 2011, Melville House).

56 I am referring here primarily to the already classic study by Michel Foucault, in which he shows how solutions developed in monasteries (including the organization of space or the way of organizing everyday activities) are then transferred to barracks, schools, factories, and gradually spread to the rest of the social field, creating a disciplinary society and the corresponding form of subjectivity (M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison*, translated by A. Sheridan, New York 1995, Vintage Books, pp. 141–150). On

Abramowski writes, however, that creative ideology not only developed those elements that appeared under the influence of economic changes and introduced new, albeit harmonizing ones, “but is even able to resist and counteract those among them that do not correspond to the set goal.”⁵⁷ Moreover, Abramowski believed that if the early Church had simply encountered the changes occurring—if it had not actively propagated new moral elements—then “history would not be the same.”⁵⁸ Could history have turned out differently then? If the Church had engaged in promoting a different ethic, would an economy based on slavery have been replaced by an economy other than the feudal one? Abramowski does not consider this hypothesis, although he throws out a clue: the ongoing construction of the feudal world was opposed by “the communist teachings of certain Church fathers.”⁵⁹ Without penetrating the sphere of life, however, they remained only a purely theoretical utopia. Nevertheless, this possibility of history following different paths, this appearance in history of certain—as we would say today—“bifurcation points,” is a key premise of Abramowski’s political philosophy. The transformation of the social system’s form is stimulated by economic processes but is not completely determined by them. It depends to a great extent on the moral revolution (i.e., the transformation of subjectivity), for which propaganda by deed and its special institutions are responsible.

The Legislative and Political Phase

Economic processes knock society out of a metastable state; moral elements (primarily needs, but also feelings and ideas) are responsible for movement toward a new social form, and the direction of the movement is determined creatively (indeterminately) by moral or life propaganda. Society reaches a new metastable state when laws and institutions are established that correspond to the new form of subjectivity (conscience) that has dominated society. Abramowski does not deny that in the last phase some kind of political revolution or use of force may be necessary in order to take resources and privileges

monasteries as a place for developing a set form of life see also: G. Agamben, *The Highest Poverty. Monastic Rules and Form-of-Life*, translated by A. Kotsko, Stanford 2013, Stanford University Press.

57 E. Abramowski, “Individual Elements in Sociology,” in: this volume, p. 130.

58 Ibidem.

59 Ibidem, p. 128.

from those who represent the old order. For him, however, that eventuality is only a simple consequence of the transformation of subjectivity:

The last phase, therefore, the *legislative and political* transformation, is only the formal side of an upheaval that has already occurred. It establishes social facts and legally organizes what has happened in the depths of life—in human consciences.⁶⁰

The theory of society developed by Abramowski leads him to the conclusion that it is impossible to introduce a new social system from the “top down”; that is, through political reforms, new legislation, and other mechanisms of the state apparatus. Any change in social organization must be preceded by the emergence of appropriate needs among individuals. Otherwise, new laws and practices will have no support in human conscience and will have to be sustained by force:

Activism cannot even set itself a goal other than to transform the way of thinking and awaken new needs in those classes that it tries to influence, and if it really leads to a new system, then there must also be admission that this cannot be accomplished except by means of moral revolutions; all other paths to the revolution are inherently closed to it. Activism cannot affect the economic foundations of social life, which it finds ready as a product of the spontaneous processes of history, nor can it organize any political force capable of becoming a reformer until it produces in society those ideological and moral currents from which the organization, entering the fight against the old society, could derive its vitality. Thus, for activism there is only one field of activity, namely, the human soul, where it can in actuality develop the elements of the revolution with full awareness of its purpose.⁶¹

Hence Abramowski, in *Ethics and the Revolution*, was strongly critical of all projects aiming to introduce a new system (in this case, communism) from the side of the state apparatus—be it by coup d'état or by gaining a parliamentary majority through elections. In being incompatible with human needs—with the form of subjectivity dominating in society—such a system would always have to take the form of a police-bureaucratic dictatorship.

60 Ibidem, p. 127.

61 Idem, “Ethics and Revolution,” in: this volume, p. 193.

At the heart of Abramowski's social ontology is a reflection on the relationship between the form of individuals' subjectivity and the economic, legal, and institutional environment in which these individuals function. If twentieth-century philosophy is regarded through the prism of the dispute between those who emphasized the freedom of the individual (existentialists, personalists) and those who took the side of determinism (Marxists, structuralists), Abramowski, who died in 1918, belongs intellectually to the end of the century. His social ontology proposes an optics that would only begin to be developed in the 1970s, by representatives of so-called poststructuralism. Abramowski showed the individual's dependence on living (economic) conditions and the influence of the discursive-judicial order (ideology, legislation, police, bureaucracy, public education). At the same time, however, he showed that what sustains this entire external environment is the "interior" of individuals, their subjectivity, their life form. In other words, there would be no power relations that could organize and hierarchize society if it were not for a specific form of human existence.⁶² Therefore, if we want a more egalitarian and just society, we must influence not so much politicians and legislators as the form of social multiplicity. Before we can seriously consider any political revolution, we must first conduct a moral revolution. And in a sense: everyone has to do it themselves; no one can do it for us or on our behalf. All that other people can do is to create the right environmental conditions by setting up special institutions that will allow us to practice this new form of life. Whether these institutions are monasteries or religious sects, hippie communes, anarchist squats, trade unions, food cooperatives, or Friendship Unions depends on our political goals (our creative ideology).

Abramowski's concept of ethics is therefore neither deontology nor consequentialism nor any of the other theories recognized by so-called analytical philosophy. When Abramowski writes about ethics, he is not interested in answering the question "Do moral judgements express beliefs?"⁶³ He is, however, interested in the form of individuals' subjectivity (which determines their

62 This motif is very clear. For example, one of the guiding questions in Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* is why people desire their own repression (G. Deleuze, F. Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 29). It would also seem that the "ethical turn" that occurred in Foucault's thought in the late 1970s was largely due to his observation that pastoral power could not work—the priest could not influence the sheep—if the sheep had not first influenced themselves in a specific way, that is, if they had not used certain technologies of the self (e.g., examination of one's conscience) to subjectify themselves in a certain way (M. Foucault, *On the Government of the Living. Lectures at the Collège de France 1979–1980*, translated by G. Burchell, Basingstoke/New York 2014, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 235–236).

63 A. Miller, *An Introduction to Contemporary Metaethics*, Cambridge 2003, Polity Press, p. 8.

goals and how they pursue them, as well as their relations with other individuals) and in how this form of subjectivity is changed through specific exercises in certain behaviors—whether in egoistic concern exclusively for one's own interests or in solidarity and mutual aid.

Edward Abramowski's Writings



Ethics and Revolution

I

It is impossible to find a more characteristic feature of socialist politics than the method by which it tries to carry out its reforms. This method is based on the fact that the reforms are not the product of the ruling spheres but result from the conscious demands of the people and are created under their pressure. Everything that socialism has achieved through legislation has been not solely a question of parliamentary hearings but above all a question of street propaganda; the main efforts have involved persuading the working masses, not the legislative body—on which the implementation of the reform, however, directly depends. A clear example of this method is the introduction into legislation of the eight-hour working day, which has been one of the main points of socialist politics for a decade. Throughout this period of time, we see almost no efforts to obtain support for reform from ministerial cabinets, representative chambers, industrial departments, or international meetings, even when they specifically deal with workers' legislation, such as the Berlin labor congress, while all the energy for action unfolds at trade union meetings, at general meetings, in workers' writings, at May demonstrations, and in countless pamphlets explaining to the people the importance and benefits of the eight-hour working day. In a word, we see at once that the whole plan of politics is aimed at turning its legislative goal—the normalization of the working day—into a collective demand of the working class, as a conscious and strongly felt need of the worker, which today's legislation will be compelled to express. Reform enters the brains of the masses, moves hearts, becomes personal desires; and only in this form, when it has become a new moral force in society, should it impose itself on the legislative bureaucracy as a fact to which that bureaucracy will either have to yield or risk conflict with a new social current that will be dangerous for it. In this way, the reform of the working day becomes, above all, a reform of the worker himself, by awakening in his soul certain needs and concepts which he did not previously possess and which come into necessary contradiction with existing conditions.

The same principle guides the class struggle in winning various concessions from entrepreneurs. In order to obtain better living conditions for the working people, it has never been the policy of socialism to influence the “humanism” of factory owners, nor has socialism attempted to influence legislation by means of parliamentary diplomacy or gaining government influencers; the philanthropy of the entrepreneur is of no importance to socialism, and the

benefits received by the workers are considered rather harmful, even if the benefits actually improve the workers' material well-being, because the concession gained not under the pressure of workers' solidarity but as a gift of the humanism of the possessing class or the result of the goodwill of an individual is not a moral gain for the worker; on the contrary, it favors the consolidation of conservative elements, suppressing the conscious development of the need for solidarity and struggle in him.¹ In socialist politics, then, it is not only about the reform itself, or about improving the well-being of the working class, but also about how this reform and improvement are achieved. The same practical postulates that can be found in its program might also be—and sometimes even are—placed in the program of conservative parties; however, the manner of instituting these demands is almost always different. Conservatives and liberals [*wolnomyślni*]² often favor factory legislation; the Catholic social party is ready to support any reforms aimed at limiting exploitation; it admits the demands of workers on many occasions and stands up for their interests, but at the same time ensures that these just reforms are not the result of class struggle and in order to implement them calls on everyone but the interested class itself. It is a politics that in a fortunate set of circumstances can sometimes provide benefits to the people and hold back certain extravagances of exploitation and poverty, without revolutionizing the people's moral nature at all, while socialist politics, in carrying out even the same reforms, tries to make them the expression of changed human souls, of the achievement of the new desires and new ideas that have developed in the consciousness of the working classes.

We are not concerned to show here that socialist policy has always followed this rule. It can happen that socialist policy is influenced by the old bureaucratic rules of making history, and then such matters occur as the gaining of seats at the price of ideological concessions, and there are theories such as those about parliamentary or conspiratorial “coups” which would liberate the proletariat by legislative decrees—without its conscious participation in liberating itself—and which would reform society without the moral reform of the

1 An exception to this principle was “economic terror”: it sought to make the party a kind of revolutionary providence, which would bestow on the workers gains in regard to labor conditions without calling them to collective struggle for these gains. This system was contrary to collusion, that is, a conscious struggle using the weapon of solidarity; consequently, it could be identified as a system of philanthropy, and its results, if it were to develop, would prove to be just as anti-revolutionary as the suppression in the working classes of the need for collective action, which is the seedbed of their revolution.

2 * Literally: free thinkers.

people. It could even be said that in the history of socialism these two principles of politics are quite opposite to each other: the one that makes reforms on behalf of the authorities and the one that wants to achieve them as the gains of the people's new consciousness clash with each other in a constant struggle, and depending on which of them prevails the socialist movement either regresses, absorbing foreign ideological elements into itself (thanks to which it was possible to obtain a greater number of electoral votes or to win over public opinion for the party), or, on the contrary, it deepens more in the revolutionary direction, neglecting parliamentary and organizational benefits for more essential gains of a moral nature.

There is doubtless a certain antagonism between the official rise of party forces and their revolutionary nature. In constituencies where socialist propaganda was underdeveloped, seats had to be won with what was deeply lodged in the brains of the voting population. Thus, the most ordinary petit-bourgeois ideas, such as state protection of small properties, were introduced into the program and activism. In encountering peasant individualism, "collectivism" was transformed into an almost metaphysical slogan having nothing to do with practical reforms. Encountering the patriotism of the French "*revanche*," the foreign policy of the most backward segment of the bourgeoisie was honored—a policy that is not only anti-republican but, more importantly, damaging to the interests of the freedom of all humanity. Obviously, as a result of similar frauds and ideological compromises (which in the minds of their creators appeared to be the politics of "positive" socialism), the party necessarily expanded both in parliament and in the number of its supporters, increasing the trust and sympathy of even such spheres of people who had nothing to do with communism and the liberation of labor; but with this it also had to change its character and, instead of revolutionizing minds, to concentrate around its banner only the temporary discontents of elements fused with the morality, concepts, and interests of the ruling system.

However, the same deviations indicate that there is an essential and close link between the regularity of politics and the historical position of socialism. If socialism were only an expression of the defense of the interests of a certain class, having no tendency to create a new social world, if it were to take a position as the "junkers" party or the peasant party, whose entire task is limited solely to protecting the interests of a given class and being its guide in the battle of social antagonisms on the basis of today's system and without changing that system's foundations, then it would be completely indifferent in regard to how and by what path reforms appear. As a defender of the workers, it would try to secure their interests within the existing order of things; it would seek restraints on exploitation, just as the democrats seek protection for property,

and it would see the fulfillment of its task merely in obtaining certain reforms, not caring at all that at the same time as the reforms something would change in the soul of the workers, so that a new ideology and needs would emerge along with them. For its purpose—to protect class interests in the existing conditions—these new moral elements would be completely superfluous, and hence the policy of calling on the people to obtain everything for themselves, of seeking to awaken these elements, would then be of no significant importance to socialism, and would at best appear only occasionally as a means of the most effective struggle, just as today, in countries with universal suffrage, the workers' parties that are least concerned with the consciousness of the people must nevertheless strive to bring their proposals for reform to this consciousness in order to gain more power in the legislative assembly. For socialism, however, such a position is impossible, because the class interests of the proletariat are at the same time decomposing elements for the existing society; by taking on the defense of those interests, the issue of man's liberation is taken on at the same time and not the preservation of certain privileges or institutions threatened by antagonisms of the system. Furthermore, that defense must not turn against certain relations and arrangements of a given system, but against the system itself. Hence, the workers' cause inexorably becomes the question of a new social world, and the politics that defend it becomes simultaneously the policy of creating this new world, which, as communism, contradicts all previous factors of human coexistence without exception.

In view of such a task, which is imposed directly by the historical position of the proletariat, when it comes to the fundamental transformation of society the moral revolution must come to the fore in politics, awakening the kinds of needs and ideas in human souls that would contradict the existing order and would, with spontaneous force, push for the creation of communist forms of coexistence. In themselves, reforms for the improvement of the living conditions of the working classes are not enough, because the important thing is primarily to revolutionize these classes, to break all the moral ties with which they are closely related to the ruling system, to eradicate from their souls those interests and concepts that impede the free development of revolutionary elements; therefore, socialist policy should take care that the reforms are not given to the people, but that they are the product of their conscious demands, the result of reformed souls.

It is hard to suppose that the institutions of communism could appear in a society that does not correspond to either the needs or the concepts of these institutions. If such views have sometimes been found among socialist theorists, they have only been the result of a profound sociological ignorance; and practice has always contradicted them, for there have been hardly any

socialist activists who, regardless of their theory, were indifferent to what the popular classes thought and demanded. Activism cannot even set itself a goal other than to transform the way of thinking and awaken new needs in those classes that it tries to influence, and if it really leads to a new system, then there must also be admission that this cannot be accomplished except by means of moral revolutions; all other paths to the revolution are inherently closed to it. Activism cannot affect the economic foundations of social life, which it finds ready as a product of the spontaneous processes of history, nor can it organize any political force capable of becoming a reformer until it produces in society those ideological and moral currents from which the organization, entering the fight against the old society, could derive its vitality. Thus, for activism there is only one field of activity, namely the human soul, in which it can in actuality develop the elements of the revolution with full awareness of its purpose.

History knows no other process: every social change has always been accompanied by a moral one; the appearance of a class that it took upon itself to destroy the old orders and institutions also meant the appearance of a new morality to which the socio-legislative forms had to adapt. Capital has organized today's society not as an economic abstraction but as those human elements of a moral nature that were connected with its economic character, as certain conscious needs, life interests, and the concepts and ethics connected with them, that were completely unknown to the former feudal-type societies. The "bourgeois," as a moral type of human being, with his own conscience and characteristic concepts, existed much earlier than the formation of the bourgeois social system; the type was produced along with the commodity economy and was opposed to the feudal moral type, just as commodity opposes the natural economy; it then developed in the struggles that cities waged with feudal laws; its political awareness was shaped as the "humanist" of the Renaissance. In the sciences, liberated from the influence of the Church, it tried to fight tradition in the "Enlightenment," and in the pre-revolutionary eighteenth century it tried to reform all morality, all beliefs and manners. As mercantile interests prevailed, eradicating from minds ideas that were inconvenient to those interests, institutions also changed; and when the moral revolution, under the pressure of those interests, had penetrated almost all the relations and customs of everyday life, the political revolution was then an unavoidable and elemental necessity, and official only in its confirmation of what had changed in the depths of society.

Is it possible to believe that the emergence of the communist system could bypass its previous phase of moral revolution? That communist institutions could be organized without finding the appropriate needs in human souls, without having their basis in the consciousness of the people? Suppose for a

moment that some revolutionary providence appears—a group of conspirators professing the ideals of socialism, which manages to take over the state mechanism successfully and with the help of the police, dressed in new colors, to introduce communist arrangements. Let us suppose that the consciousness of the people is not at all involved in this matter, and that everything is done by the power of bureaucracy itself. What happens then ...? The new institutions have removed the fact of legal property, but property remains as a moral need of the people; they have removed official exploitation from the field of production, but all those external factors from which human harm arises would be preserved, and there would always be a sufficiently wide field for their manifestation, if not in the economic field, then in all other spheres of human relations. To stifle property interests, the organization of communism would have to use broad state power; the police would have to substitute for those natural needs through which social institutions live and develop freely; moreover, the defense of new institutions could only pertain to the state, which would be founded on principles of bureaucratic absolutism, since any democratization of power in a society that has been forced into a new system would risk the immediate collapse of this system and the resumption of all the social rights living on in human souls untouched by revolution. In this way, communism would not only be something extremely superficial and weak, but, moreover, it would turn into statehood, oppressing the freedom of the individual, and instead of the old classes it would create two new ones—citizens and officials, whose mutual antagonism would necessarily manifest itself in all areas of social life. If, therefore, communism in this artificial form, without the moral transformation of people, could even survive, it would in any case be a contradiction of itself and would be a social monster that no oppressed class could have desired, especially not a proletariat defending human rights and destined by history for liberation.

Therefore, the supposition that a new social system can appear without a moral revolution is a sociological absurdity,³ and probably no one would argue for it in this form. But there is also another question on whose justification the “heroic,” or rather bureaucratic, theories of revolution seek to base themselves. The idea is that the moral revolution will occur spontaneously, under the influence of economic conditions alone, and that the party, on gaining power even without the participation of the popular consciousness, could carry out a complete social reform, because it would immediately find support in the interests of all the classes oppressed by the yoke of capitalism; today’s oppression

3 * In the original: *absurd socjalistyczny* (socialist absurdity). This is probably an editorial error.

itself is supposed to suffice for the economic reform to become a vital need of the greater part of society, and the elements of dissatisfaction and antagonism produced by the ruling system can serve the party to create a new system, and the rest can be done by the political consciousness of those who lead the movement.

It is indubitable that the development of economic conditions produces new moral elements everywhere [that] it strongly affects a person's life situation. Without this, it would not even be possible to speak of a moral revolution; in order for a propagated idea to penetrate the soul of a person so deeply that it really becomes his moral transformation, his new need, and new rule of behavior, it is necessary to have the proper life influences inclining a person's sentiments toward these things. But at the same time we also see the opposite influence of the living environment—that it tries to adapt the moral nature of man to itself and—through strong ties of practical advantage, connect his personal interests with the existing order. We see this influence as a common phenomenon even in the class whose economic situation should revolutionize it as much as possible. The worker, who has not been reformed by the influence of socialist propaganda, does not at all sense the historical interests of the proletariat (the abolition of the state, property, and oppression stemming from productive labor). He has his own real personal interests which direct his life, without the least concern for those other ones. The fight against poverty appears to him as a practical matter of obtaining higher wages—even higher enough for him to save and slowly become a small rentier; the freedom of life has a much lower value for him than an increase in wages, so that in almost all spontaneous strikes it has primarily been about increasing wages and rarely about reducing the working day; and factory owners usually manage very easily to introduce additional hours for a small extra payment. Only in the event of major conflicts with the capitalists does he feel genuine antagonism toward the state, but in various minor matters of life he necessarily resorts to the help of state-police institutions, thereby recognizing their usefulness; inheritance proceedings, the retrieval of stolen items, the guarantee of security against thieves, the law that punishes criminals, and so forth, are all facts that connect a personal interest with the organization of the state and consolidate in the brain a certain notion of political orthodoxy. Ownership and police interests themselves develop with even greater force in those working classes that have a little something, such as the petty bourgeoisie and the peasants, and whom the revolution must take into account, especially as they do not at all betray a desire for quick economic disappearance, and with a protective policy on the part of the state they could delay their own social death indefinitely. The theoretical antagonism between individual property and socialized labor and

the development of modern technology does not affect either the peasant or the petty bourgeoisie, as long as it does not really become a threat of economic expropriation, and the difficulty which these classes encounter in keeping their property in the face of the enormous competition of capital primarily develops in them—alongside various social discontents of a conservative nature—the concern to maintain their current position as owners of shops or farmsteads.

It is therefore impossible not to recognize that the influence of the environment in which the working classes live has a dual action: revolutionary and conservative. Moreover, the element of dissatisfaction, the feeling of oppression, considered individually, i.e., in each individual person, often prompts him to seek countermeasures that are not revolutionary at all, to use any help there may be in today's system, starting from the state courts and ending with credit institutions, charity institutions, or any sort of profiteering ideas that could lead him out of a difficult material situation. So even "dissatisfactions" with life are not necessarily a factor in revolutionizing people and can perfectly well be the engine of even the most backward tendencies, as we see in various programs of popular democracy. In order to counteract these conservative influences, and to develop the genuine revolutionary elements which germinate in human brains under the influence of today's oppression, the action of a party is needed, the influence of the ideas which, by using what life itself gives, could form the human being into a new moral type. Both the technical and cultural patterns presented by today's capitalism, and the poverty that develops together with it, can only acquire a truly revolutionary meaning through the interaction of ideas; otherwise, all the human aspirations that are self-generated under the influence of these economic stimuli will revolve—as if in an enchanted circle—around what will remain their moral idol, their life need, that is to say around private property and its necessary complement: police ethics. It would be futile to delude ourselves that today's social institutions exist only by means of artificial state coercion, as if supported by the force of bayonets. They also live in human souls, where they are fastened by many bonds of religion, morality, reasoning, interests, and habits, and therefore destroying them is neither so easy nor possible by way of a bureaucratic overthrow; if they were even superficially combated, in the political sphere, they would revive with their natural force as long as they remained untouched and preserved in their moral center. The same applies also to the reverse—that an essential and complete fight against the property and police system requires introducing communism into human souls and awakening communist needs—because new forms of social coexistence would have to develop with blind fatality from these new moral centers. In this, therefore—in the revolution of the human soul—rests

the entire task of the revolution in general. We need not be concerned either with drawing up a detailed plan for the social future, or with laying out in advance the guidelines by which the political revolution is to take place; it will be enough if we develop a moral communism that lives in human needs and concepts; the organization of the society of the future, as well as the nature of the political struggle for it, will be of the same sort as the moral revolution that precedes it and the guidance of which is the entire and sole task of the party.

II

We shall now see how the party carries out the task of “moral revolution” and whether the method used for it actually achieves the intended purpose. Usually the whole propaganda of communism consists in speaking to the workers about it as the system of the future, explaining that common property results necessarily from today’s development of manufacturing technology and that it will provide people with all the social comforts; at the same time, it is naturally made clear that the conquest of such an order can only be the work of the revolution of the proletariat, and that there must be a striving for this revolution, an organizing of one’s forces for the struggle. The worker thus acquires new knowledge and concepts, with which, however, he does not know what to do. For him, communism remains a matter of a distant, undefined future, a theoretical message which he might hear with curiosity and try to understand but which has no practical application in his life. The whole practical side of propaganda is reduced to strikes, to trade-linked coffers, to defending current interests, to participation in election voting or in demonstrations, and all this is not in any direct connection with communism but could equally be conducted with or without an awareness of the idea. In a word, today’s propaganda in regard to “communism” is limited to giving workers theoretical information about it, as about the social system of the past, more or less in the same way as popular information about Darwinism or about primitive peoples is imparted; and in matters of current interest it follows a different method; it is no longer just a question of understanding the matter, but also of its practical application, of putting it into practice. Class antagonisms, the political rights of the workers, the importance of organizations and strikes, are promoted so that new messages and concepts are expressed by appropriate conduct. The difference, of course, comes from the fact that communism—considered solely as a system of society that will someday exist—must necessarily remain an abstract question in regard to the problems of life and to have at most a purely intellectual meaning and interest. The idea of it, having penetrated the brain

of the worker and satisfying a certain mental curiosity, has nothing more to do there, because, being a theory of the social future, separate from current life, it thus becomes completely alien to all those real, living facts that constitute the content of human life and of the soul. If it appears from time to time in consciousness, it is only in a completely sterile form, as a theoretical conviction or a scientific message, not binding anyone to anything, as a thought of a detached nature, untranslatable into anything specific that surrounds a person in life. It sometimes speaks at meetings in discussions; it is recalled during demonstrations or voting in elections, but always in the same abstract character, not having anything to do with the existing reality; moreover, beyond those exalted moments of conviction, a person lives, thinks, and acts as if the idea were not in his brain at all.

Of course, an idea that lives in the mind in this way, isolated from everything that really concerns and moves a person, from his interests and everyday affairs—an intellectual idea only—cannot constitute the root of a moral revolution; for this it is too superficially connected with human nature. First of all, it must remain abstract, living only in a verbal formulation, in more or less vague sentences, because the body and blood of the life surrounding it have been removed. As with all practical ideas concerning human needs and the human conscience, we can always point out its relation to this or that matter—that this fact confirms it, and the other contradicts it; we can find its practical models in our own surroundings and in some way see tangibly what it is by looking at its real form. With communism, understood only as a system of the distant future, this cannot be done; if we disconnect individual ethics from it, then in the surrounding life we find nothing in which it expresses itself concretely, not a single matter with which it is vitally and directly connected; therefore it necessarily remains in people's minds only as a certain economic and legal formula, with very general meaning, whose development even in its presumed and imagined details presents great difficulties. By the same token, the idea remains weak, poor in its associations, and it cannot take possession of either the mind or the moral conscience; it appears only as a result of intellectual motives, the rarest and least vital in man, bypassing at a distance his real internal driving forces, those that govern his conduct in everyday affairs. It can only be enlivened and nourished by speculative minds, which are interested in purely theoretical issues, and thus by few in number.

In addition, only speculative minds can preserve its conceptual purity; thus, usually due to the fact that it remains an abstract, general formula, devoid of the content of life, it transforms itself, absorbing elements completely alien to it. This is a psychological law that cannot be prevented. Communism, as an isolated concept, tries to translate itself in every mind into a very concrete

concept and takes on what it encounters in the human soul: the life patterns and the moral motives of today's system. Since the human being's practical and everyday ideology has remained individualistic, property-based, and police-based, the communism of the future takes on the same features in his brain, and it does so in such a spontaneous and unconscious manner that a person does not even notice when he starts to enact a comedy in his mind, concealing old things under the veil of a revolutionary new name. Hence, such widespread logical monstrosities arise as, for example, the police dictatorship of the proletariat in the future system, "work cheques" replacing the role of money, remuneration on the basis of the number of hours worked, state collectivism with officials instead of factory workers, a penal system forcing individuals to fulfill the obligations of communism, and so forth; and in completely uneducated minds, in workers who have only occasionally been thrown ideas of the future system by propaganda, communism takes this form: we will take the place of the bourgeoisie and rule over it as it rules over us today. In a word, only the roles and names change, and the relations between people and people remain the same. Ideality, being overgrown with life, defeats the abstraction and impresses its mark on it; the idea keeps the old content and the pretence of revolution and is the more disastrous because in deluding itself about being something new and better, it allows the firmer preservation of the conservative moral type.

Leaving aside this degeneration, truly revolutionary ideas are always merely a sort of showy feature of people; their whole life is contained in words: we are revolutionists when we speak at meetings, when we have discussions, when we formulate our wishes for the social future—thus generally in our reasoning and theoretical intentions. The cases where life comes into contact with a revolutionary idea are always symbolic in nature: voting for a socialist candidate at election time or taking part in a demonstration.

There is, however, no direct embodiment of the idea of communism, such as, for instance, the realization of the principle of "fraternity" in deed, a disinterested principle, when the idea itself becomes a living and visible fact without any explanation; there is only a conventional relationship, consisting in making a certain agreement as to the meaning of a fact: I am taking part in a street march, which means, according to the party proclamation, that I am, for example, a proponent of common property or an opponent of the government; so for a moment this idea comes alive in my brain, as long as, naturally, the very meaning of the manifestation is not altered; and the distortion of this pre-arranged meaning is very frequent, because each participant is demonstrating for what he imagined to be contained in the given slogan. Thus false content, having nothing to do with revolutionary ideas, is all the more likely to

appear in electoral voting, because in this case the tactics of the candidates, who want to have at least "*Stimmvieh*"⁴ in the absence of other kinds, often contribute to it.

Against this fragile, symbolic nature of the ties of the revolutionary idea with life there is the whole old conservative ideology, burrowing deeper into the human soul every day. A communist, outside of meetings, demonstrations, or voting, is an ordinary person and the same as everyone else; like everyone else, he cares for money, for property; he cares first of all for his personal interests, calls for police assistance, uses state institutions, is enthusiastic about the national army, victories, and the power of the state, if he is in a politically free country; he exhibits sincere patriotism and even racial chauvinism; in a word, this is the most ordinary petty-bourgeois type of person, who only in solemn moments of "political action" becomes a revolutionary.

In recent times, since the current of "positive" politics began to prevail more and more in the camp of social democracy, a point of honor has even been made of this moral socialist petty bourgeoisie, in trying to convince opponents of the party that a socialist is the same good patriot and citizen of the country, a follower of the same domestic gods of home, work, and order, like every other decent person.

What might result from this state of affairs? This is above all the division of the indoctrinated individual into the conventional revolutionist and the actual conservative; therefore, in order to organize a social revolution with people of bourgeois morality, "Jacobinism," a bureaucratic revolution, is absolutely necessary; it is necessary that the conscious party intelligentsia, having in some way gained the support of the masses, seize state power and by means of a "dictatorship" build a new society. The theory of "state coercion" is thus closely related to the nature of today's communist propaganda, and it must be admitted that it is the entirely logical result of this conventional, conviction-based revolution, to which propaganda has voluntarily confined itself.

Communism, as a separate concept, is too weak a moral factor to suffice for the spontaneous transformation of society, even if assisted by all the forces of technological development; the proletariat, which has preserved in its soul the needs of the petty bourgeoisie, the property-and-police conscience, would not be able to liberate itself according to the truly revolutionary motto "liberate thyself"; it thus needs to be helped toward a "revolutionary state" and by a dictatorship to do that for which there is no basis in the people's consciousness. Moreover, "statehood" is considered to be such an innocent thing that it

4 * An English equivalent would be "voting cattle"—translator's note.

cannot change the desired social ideals in any way, and it is overlooked that on entering the new world as a component factor, statehood thereby prevents it from being essentially new.

In countries without political freedom, such as Poland in the Russian partition, where there is no regular party life, the relation between revolution and conservatism is even worse. The socialist ideology that has reached workers at club meetings or through pamphlets does not even have the points of consolidation and connection with life that it has in free countries; only mental activities could sustain it in the form in which it is propagated, but these, by its very nature, cannot be enjoyed by the wider working masses; it is therefore doomed to fade away as soon as the first period of interest in the novelty—the period of adolescent faith that at any moment this social ideal may descend to earth—has passed.

Usually, a few years are enough for everyday personal life, which has remained completely alien to the revolutionary ideology acquired thanks to propaganda, to outweigh it, obliterate it with the vitality of its interests, and almost oust it from the brain of the worker. This is the origin of those situations often observed in the Polish movement, where groups of workers who were previously animated by the idea of socialism, and among whom there had been vigorous propaganda efforts, withdrew from the sphere of party influence after a few years, simply because intellectual interest in the idea had weakened. Over the passage of time, the idea itself had not merged with anything practical in life, remaining at best general theoretical knowledge; thus, if there was no occupational affair—no current interest such as successful strikes—contact with the party would break off and the socialist movement would be extinguished in the given group.

In such conditions, “Jacobinism” seems to be an even more necessary, artificial means of conducting a revolution—the only possible means; it is necessary, however, to have something to uphold the slogan of a revolution that is unable to take root in human souls, to give it a fictitious force, if there is no real one. No wonder then that the tactic of “terror,” which gives the party in the eyes of the people the charm of some hidden providence that is fighting for it, so often returns to the minds of activists struggling with the inadequacy of propaganda for which they could not create a living form.

It is obvious that when communist ideology has such a theoretical, purely intellectual character, the influence of the party cannot be sustained, nor can it extend to the larger masses of the population, if it (the party) did not embrace the vital interests of the present moment with its propaganda. The “minimum program” only saves it from political lethargy. Instead of theoretical postulates isolated from current life, there are goals of a practical nature, ideas associated

with everyday interests, such as gaining a higher wage, a shorter working day, political rights, class antagonism—ideas which, on being brought to the consciousness of workers' brains, also become new needs and provoke appropriate action; they enter into life and change the conditions of life, and are therefore extremely vital.

Out of all the socialist propaganda, they alone penetrate the working masses in a significant way and constitute the real content of the class movement. In seeking the "revolution" of the proletariat today, no other mass manifestations could be identified but those that fulfill the minimal program of socialism—the struggle for current class, economic, and political interests; and the idea of communism is only formally connected with it, as a kind of superfluous addition, which the aims of the current struggle could do very well without.

When it comes, for example, to getting better terms of hire from the factory owners, or forcing the government to introduce some reform favorable to the working class, such as the 8-hour day or universal suffrage, the communist thesis plays a purely conventional role in these matters; everything goes the same with it or without it, because it does not participate either in the subject matter or in organizing people for the struggle undertaken; workers' organizations, such as the former English Trade Unions, waged an economic struggle with the capitalists, setting the same goals and principles of class antagonism as the socialist parties; and parties such as those advocating for people's democracy or liberal ones [*wolnomyślnych*], which take an essentially hostile position toward the idea of communism, have organized the masses to fight for political rights on an equal footing with the socialists, setting out the same postulates and goals to be achieved, as was the case, for example, with universal suffrage in Austria and Belgium. It only proves that the minimal program of the socialist movement is not bound by any significant link with its revolutionary principles—that it essentially behaves with indifference toward communism—and therefore its propagandizing in that regard, although it gives the party enormous benefits, does not yet constitute that revolution of minds that would lead society to communism.

The socialist party is perfectly aware of this and usually considers that this whole class-struggle movement for the interests of the day is only a preparatory period for revolution, a school in which the proletariat learns to know its own strength, to organize and fight with its terrible weapon of solidarity. However, there can be no stopping there, as this would risk the reversal of history and the bankruptcy of the revolution. Higher wages, normal working days, and political democratism can perfectly come to terms with the present-day

system and become only a certain improvement of the ownership and police society,⁵ lulling its factors of discontent and rebellion.

The gains achieved in this regard in the face of the party's historic tasks mainly involve the preparation of a freer field for propaganda. The improvement of the economic welfare of workers, and especially the shortening of the working day, gives them greater freedom of life and mind, and raises their intelligence; the right to vote in elections makes it possible for socialist propaganda to come into more frequent contact with the ideas of the masses and can therefore be beneficial for the purposes of revolutionary parties; no one, however, supposes that the mere fact of achieving better material conditions or greater political freedom will bring a worker morally closer to communism and social revolution, in view of the fact that there is often tremendous conceptual conservatism in those categories of the proletariat that have been able to win favorable terms of hire (e.g., the workers' aristocracy of the English Trade Unions), or in those countries where the political rights of the people are the most extensive, such as Switzerland. There is a double game here, between the soul of the human being and the social fact that has made his life easier without changing the foundations of the existing system in any way. On the one hand, as a result of acquiring greater freedom in life and politics, he becomes more intellectually gifted and can adopt new concepts and participate in social reform movements; on the other hand, he is more tightly bound to the ruling system; the basic institutions of the system, such as property, the state, the penal system, and the army, find a more solid basis in his personal needs, he becomes morally less capable of accepting a revolutionary idea. Even if it were true, the supposition that the desires of the working class will increase as they receive various concessions does not yet settle the question of becoming revolutionized, for the task is not really about increasing the desires of the human being today, but rather about changing the direction of desires; the point is not that the working class should develop an appetite for "bourgeois" life, but rather that the desire for a new life based on entirely new principles and moral factors should develop. This is especially the case given that even the improvement of the material existence of the working classes cannot become a universal and permanent fact, while the property foundations of the present system are maintained; with the ever stronger tendency of manufacturing technology to limit the number of hands occupied in production, and with ever greater pressure on the world market by the great capitalist monopolies,

5 * In the original: *społeczeństwo wolnościowo-policyjne* (libertarian and police society). This is probably an editorial error. Throughout the text, Abramowski uses the phrase "własnościowo-policyjny" (ownership and police).

the gains made in terms of employment conditions would necessarily become the lot of a smaller and smaller part of the proletariat, jealously guarding their privileged place as workers engaged in regular work against a mass withdrawn from production, living on the basis of temporary jobs, or non-production jobs, such as domestic servants, for whom the benefits of the concessions obtained in factory occupations would have no significance. The extension, therefore, of only those moral factors that lead the workers to fight for better conditions of hire, the desire for a higher standard of living in bourgeois society, cannot in any way lead to the liberation of the proletariat, being economically limited as to its realization under the capitalist system and morally conservative; there is no reason even to suppose that a skilled worker who has succeeded in the gradual struggle to achieve higher wages would not be closer to becoming a shareholder in these various enterprises—which are founded on the principle of small shares, which develop more and more, concentrating small savings—than to transforming himself into a communist who wants to free human life from all forms of exploitation and monetary interest. Similarly, political gains are not a sufficient factor for a revolution, because if propaganda has failed to embed the idea of communism in minds, the political rights obtained will serve to consolidate ownership institutions and the police state associated with them, as is the case today in all democratic societies; political consciousness, although revolutionized enormously with the democratization of power—the popular vote, the right of initiative, of referendum, etc.—has a fatal and fundamental end in economic conditions, namely that it cannot make a firm break with the police as long as there is a private-property interest.

So we come to the following two conclusions: first, that the propaganda of communism, which has been conducted to date by the intellectual method, is due to this very method completely incapable of making a moral revolution; and second, that the conduct of this moral revolution, which necessarily precedes the new system, is also impossible through the promotion of a “minimal” program, as it lacks a revolutionary ideology and thus may even become a factor of social conservatism. However, the solution to the task is very simple and results from the juxtaposition of these two types of propaganda. The vitality of the ideas promoted by the minimal program consists in the fact that they translate, in the minds of the workers, into concrete things that concern them personally—they pass from the intellectual sphere to the sphere of life and seek to transform present life. The worker, having adopted them, not only thinks differently about social phenomena, but, more importantly, acts differently and evaluates his own life interests differently; the acquired ideology is thus perpetuated by everyday matters, and the very course of life constantly fuels it with every clash of class antagonisms. Therefore, out of all socialist

propaganda, only a few minimal postulates survive among the masses and develop elemental force, not even caring about material influences. The propaganda of communism must acquire the same character if it is truly to fulfill its task of morally revolutionizing people. Instead of being only an abstract concept and theoretical message, not affecting the current affairs of life in any way, the idea of communism should translate in the brains of its followers into concrete things, find itself in everyday matters, be a question of the living present. Instead of remaining only in mental convictions, where it is condemned to deadness and degeneration, it should reach the real human being—what he feels, what he desires, and what guides his behavior; it should connect with his personal needs, and become, in a word, his moral conscience and banish from there all this bourgeois Christianity by which all the institutions of the present-day system are supported.

For a moral revolution—this core of every social transformation—to take place, communism should take control of people in such a way that it can be known from their very lives, their customs, their private and everyday matters, that they are communists, people of a new type, of a new revolutionary morality, so that, upon entering among them, it would immediately be felt that this is some other human world, having nothing to do with the bourgeois world, a social life developing on completely different principles and governed by new moral motives and factors. For this to happen, however, first of all the very idea of communism should cease to be treated solely as an economic and legal thesis of the future—because in this form it must remain only an intellectual issue—but should also become a thesis of individual ethics which could even now govern human life. Let us see if this is possible and if there are such conditions in today's life that would allow communist morality to be introduced into it, as a fact united with people's needs and significantly shaping people's mutual relations.

III

Properly speaking, there has not been a single social system, not a single institution established by custom and law, which did not have its expression in the individual ethics of the human being. There is such an essential relationship between the two that from the moral laws professed by people individually, as the internal motor of their personal behavior, the social arrangements among which they live can always be known. The legal code repeats what a person sees in conscience as his duty, with the only difference that, in the former case, the police act as a "sufficient cause" and in the other we have an imperative of

theological origin. So we find marriage as a social institution, protected by law, and marriage as a personal ethic, with its sins and its virtues, scruples of conscience and rules of "honor"; we find the institution of "property," whose functioning involves various bureaucrats, courts, and prisons, and "property" as an ethics that lives inside man, which guides his behavior, defining the boundaries between theft and exploitation, the fair and unfair acquisition of property. Individual morality dictates the punishment of the criminal, condemns idleness, the non-payment of debts, and extravagance; likewise, the legal code penalizes offenses, persecutes vagrants, and protects the interests of creditors and owners. In a word, the same life needs, which socially organize themselves into institutions and laws, individually appear as the conscience of man and take the form of ethical principles. A member of the Iroquois tribe leaves his home open to any passerby who needs a rest and a meal: "The efforts (says the Jesuit Charlevoix) with which the redskins [sic] surround widows, orphans, and the infirm, the hospitality they cultivate in such a delightful way, are for them only the result of the belief that everything should be shared by people."⁶ The Bushman, having caught the game, divides it among his companions, leaving the smallest part for himself. When, in search of food, the Fijians find a whale, they do not start feasting until they inform their tribesmen of their prey. The commons appears here not only in family institutions such as property and collective work, which are necessary for the maintenance of an individual's life, but also as a rule of morality, a voice of duty, and is so deeply rooted in the human soul that it is preserved in some customs even when it has already disappeared economically, giving way to individual farms and property. A member of bourgeois society has a different ethics, just as his social organization is different from that of barbarian families. The morality he professes does not in the least require him to share what he has with anyone; his conscience would not be moved by the first-come passerby who asked him for hospitality; in refusing to help him or in invoking the police order against vagrants, he is not only in harmony with existing laws but also in harmony with his own conscience and with that ethics which his soul has absorbed since childhood.

Therefore, if we consider a certain social system as an economic and legal issue, it is completely arbitrary and artificial. In fact, the social system lives not in a bureaucratic world—the formula of a code and administrative regulations, or in some disconnected production technique, but in the human world,

6 *P.-F.-X. de Charlevoix, *Journal d'un voyage fait par ordre du roi dans l'Amérique Septentrionale: adressé à Madame la Duchesse de Lesdiguières*, vol. 6, Paris 1744, p. 13.

where every type of behavior and mutual relation has its internal motives—in needs and their justification in a set of concepts, and where, therefore, every institution that embraces a certain side of man's life must necessarily fuse with some part of his soul and have there its moral representation. Socialist theorists know very well about this relationship between the social system and the moral type of man, and are not inclined to imagine that in the communism of the future the bourgeois human brain will be preserved as it is today. They assume, however—it is not clear why—that the moral change, i.e., the change of individuals, the formation of a new conscience, will appear only as a result of the age-long influence of the social system on people. The question arises, however, of what this new system would be supported by, if people's needs and ideas about life remained the same; how could it encompass human life and be its social expression, if in its essential factors, i.e., individual interests and aspirations, it remained permeated, as in the past, with the spirit of property, competition, and exploitation? The need to eliminate poverty and the pursuit of prosperity cannot be a sufficient cause for the introduction of communism; as internal engines of man, they probably existed from the very beginning of the appearance of humans, despite the fact that social life took various forms, and ethics expressed various moral types; in this respect, a communist will not differ from a member of the bourgeoisie—both must equally avoid hunger and desire the comforts of life that the surrounding culture can give. The difference between them is something else, namely that well-being in life for the bourgeois is conditioned by property and exploitation, and for the communist by commonality; in both cases it appears in different moral categories, in a different context of human relations. Hence, with the same civilizational striving to increase social riches, different moral aspirations must appear in the classes of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, and only under the influence of this difference can the course of history change—toward the ideals of communism. If, therefore, we say that the social transformation will come under the pressure of the interests of the proletariat, it should not be forgotten that its class and historically revolutionary interest is not the interest of achieving prosperity in general—which is common to all the classes and, since the flood, has had its place in human souls—but the interest of commonality, the only one which, in the present conditions of production technology, can ensure the social liberation of the class and the individual liberation of man.

For these reasons, since it is about the emergence of a new interest, communism cannot be considered as a bureaucratic question, dealt with by the same people, but is above all a life and moral matter which can only develop socially and politically along with an appropriate moral revolution. However, the most important question remains: how can the new communist interest

develop in today's social environment? What are the natural factors coupled with the economic conditions that would favor this development? For it is obvious that the teaching [*propaganda*] of a new morality can only find appropriate ground for its development when the very conditions of life instill its elements in human brains by inborn force; the power of ideological creativity and purposeful action, however great it may be, cannot create new mass currents out of nothing, but develops only those seeds that arise under the action of spontaneous processes of history. If the establishment of communism is really, as we suppose, the historical task of the proletariat, to be fulfilled by it, then in the very conditions of the life of this class there must be an unknowing germ of the same force that will one day express itself in the new social system; to know it would be to discover the true "magic word" for socialist propaganda.

Among all the factors of life that are cultivated in the atmosphere of contemporary capitalism, there is only one that is the germ of the self-generated revolution, the most working-class and the most opposed to the foundations of the existing society, and that is solidarity—a significant coupling between my interests and life and the well-being of other people. Comparing the successive types of production, from the family producing for its own use, to machine factories and their modern combinations into cartel enterprises, we can see the continuous growth of this new type of life solidarity. The former economic unit—the family, which had a natural economy and was able to meet all its needs on its own—is completely isolated from the rest of people in the interests of everyday life; its well-being in no way depends on the conditions in which other families live; their spheres of interest are alien to each other. In a barter economy, this distinctness of producers' interests takes the form of competition, of economic struggle; the artisan seeks protection against it in guild organizations, and this may be the first beginning of common interests, which then turns into a monopoly. Moreover, all types of small-scale production and property, farmers, shopkeepers, and foremen, meet each other in their economic interests only in competition with the market, and, insofar as they do not participate in the interests of exchange, remain completely independent from each other; hence self-help has become the moral principle of the petty bourgeoisie and peasant farm-owners. It is only with the arrival of the factory and the wage-earners that the conditions appear that make solidarity a necessary business of life. In a group of people subjected to the same exploitation, the interests of the individuals are interdependent and form a single collective interest; the source of my misery or well-being applies equally to all my fellow workers; they can only benefit if everyone else gains; I will lose when others lose. Therefore, with each clash of class antagonisms, wage labor, and exploitation, the principle of solidarity and mutual aid must appear in the minds of

workers, as the only factor of their struggle and the only means of resisting exploitation. This principle extends to more and more groups of the proletariat as capitalist enterprises themselves come into ever closer economic relationship with one another through the universal market and the development of productive technology.

The fall in wages in competing factories, the labor exploitation of women and children which threatens to oust the better paid male labor force, the lack of resilience on the part of workers arriving from the countryside and their easy submission to the worst employment terms—all of these are of personal interest to workers employed in any enterprise and directly affect the conditions of their lives, even though occurring outside the sphere of their own exploitation. Likewise, the excess of labor on the market and the length of the working day in other enterprises (which influences the former) affects those who work in better conditions and does so increasingly the more machine production develops equality between hirelings, devaluing workmanship and enabling everyone to work in various areas of production. With the emergence of cartels concentrating various phases of production—from the selection of raw materials to the retail trade—in companies associated and grouped under the control of the same capital, the life solidarity of hirelings expands even more, because then the interests of agricultural, factory, and railway workers and shopkeepers are directly linked to each other and are opposed to one capitalist organization. The personal well-being of the worker becomes increasingly bound by economic ties to the conditions in which his fellow workers live and, as a result, any effort on his part to improve his position in life is massively and unknowingly transformed into an interest of mutual assistance.

This interest, among all the moral phenomena of capitalism, has the special value that it eminently points to its contradiction of the existing understanding of life—that it is reflected back from the social environment in which it appeared as an anachronism, contradicting by its nature the entirety of established customariness and all the basic foundations of the ruling system: competition, individual property, self-help in the struggle for existence and exploitation. The human being's inherent striving to secure his well-being, which in today's organization of relations between people requires, above all, selfishness and skilful use of socially weaker individuals, in this case abandons its previous moral allies, defeats the established understanding of life as an exclusively selfish matter, and brings to the fore the need for commonality, for solid concern for the harm being done to someone else, and shows human life in this new light which is so foreign to eyes used to the bourgeois mode of seeking happiness.

Obviously, the entrance of such a new factor into capitalist society, which lives by quite different elements, must be very timid; it must wear the cloak of old custom and adapt to the prevailing morality, hiding in the unconscious of man under cover of that morality's established and despotic doctrines; it does not have sufficient inborn strength to oppose the idols of society, its rules of conduct, clearly and openly. Hence, left to its own devices the factor of solidarity appears only as a temporary means of fighting for the personal interest and, being consequently dependent on the set goal, it cannot develop morally and control minds. Being limited to one form only—strikes to win a higher wage, a shorter working day, or other concessions from manufacturers—it is weakened by the various economic and political conditions that hinder striking or make it impossible to achieve the intended goal; it also weakens when this goal is achieved by other means, such as government reform or carefully made voluntary concessions on the part of entrepreneurs. In general, the principle of solidarity appears here in a very modest role and is limited to only some moments of workers' lives; that is, during the strike period, fading away when the strike has passed, or when personal interest does not require this form of struggle.

In other cases, however, and in working-class groups in which the class consciousness is more mature and more morally independent of bourgeois doctrines, we see mass phenomena in which the principle of solidarity manifests itself as the slogan of struggle or other collective efforts not necessarily linked to the personal benefit of those who are struggling. These are facts such as strikes on account of harm affecting only some individuals among the working people (e.g., the famous coalman's strike in France in 1894, due to the expulsion of several hundred old miners as unfit for work); strikes supporting the struggle of another trade (e.g., the recent construction works at the Paris exhibition in 1898); or mass support, by donations, of a strike taking place in another enterprise, in another country, or even another part of the world. In such cases, solidarity becomes completely independent of personal interest; it starts from its limited role as a temporary means of gaining certain benefits and shows itself to be strong enough to become the driving force behind people's actions. It is in this solidarity that there is the natural element of the whole ethics of communism, an element developed by economic conditions that creeps spontaneously into the brains of the workers as the characteristic stamp of their class. It is also the only way by which communism can enter human life, regaining its vital and real form of individual ethics, as an everyday matter. A huge and completely unexploited field opens for the party to carry out a real revolution of minds, not solely an intellectual one based on formulas of convictions, but life-practical, reaching the very core of the human soul, its

innermost moral essence—a conscience on which conduct, life concepts and ideals are all completely dependent.

The development of conscious solidarity would first of all consist in its being able to manifest itself freely in all its forms and, from the role of a temporary means of struggle for personal interest, to pass on to all life as mutual aid for the oppressed; and such a task can be fulfilled only with the help of the influence of propaganda working in this direction. There is no doubt that this type of propaganda has all the givens for development, since the factor of solidarity is self-born in the proletariat, and therefore it could also be propagated with the same success and inexhaustible vitality as, for example, class antagonism, which today absorbs almost all the forces of activism. Just as raising awareness of the contradictions of class interests now expands their scope immeasurably and finds practical application at every step, giving a different direction to various matters, the same is the case with the propagation of solidarity—this factor, increasing in size, would make itself into a class consciousness, and would one by one seize ever more areas of human relations, producing a new kind of life in the working class, based on mutual help and commonality. It is easy to foresee that such a revolution in customs would also be a spontaneous infiltration into human brains of a new morality—one that without caring for any theological dogmas rebels eternally against all property and police laws, i.e., the morality of fraternity. Suppose it became the class consciousness of the proletariat and dominated the human being so strongly that it became his inherent conscience; then the task of the moral revolution would be fulfilled, and the transformation of the social system into communism would result automatically from the first clash between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat as two different moral worlds. For there is such a close and natural relationship between the communist system and the morality of fraternity that even when social conditions do not at all tend toward this system, its ideals and basic principles appear automatically in minds, if that morality has developed in the conscience. We see this, for example, in the first Christians who, while they were followers of the religion of fraternity, did not recognize private property or the state, lived in communes, and were governed by the resolutions of the group; and we see the same in some sects today. It might be surprising that the socialist concepts—common possession and anti-statehood, which, as social results, derive only from the final stages of the development of the capitalist process—should appear in undeveloped social environments having nothing to do with those modern conflicts into which the human individual has entered. This phenomenon can be individually explained, however, if we note that the ethical ideal of fraternity, which independently of the era or environment can take control of certain minds, in seeking its real application

to various matters of life must by means of intuition alone, ignoring all complexities of understanding, adopt those same ideas that are advanced by the theory of socialism.

Here there is a blind force of feeling that gives a human being clairvoyance in regard to the truth. A special logic—very simple but at the same time immensely powerful—also appears.

There is only one dogma in the ethics of fraternity—absolute respect for the human being, and one principle of understanding life as the interest of the community, in which the individual finds the true meaning of existence and the desired happiness. Hence the complete revolutionizing of human concepts and relations; communism—“everything for everyone”—is opposed to property; the “obligation to work with the sweat of my brow” is contrasted with maximum freedom as a condition for human development and joy; self-government of the individual is opposed to the state. In the morality of conduct, all virtues lead to collective pleasure, all sins to human harm; other than that—let everyone do as he pleases. In religious terms, there is only room for “God in man,” and this one anti-theological dogma—the worship of the human being—defines all the duties and principles of the communist world. So if the future social system—the expected work of the proletariat—has its own ethics (and it must have, like any other system), then this ethic can only be the morality of fraternity. And if there is any way to put the idea of communism into human life and make it a real and living thing, then it is only by way of workers’ solidarity, which develops automatically under the influence of economic conditions, as the class element of this very morality of fraternity. In my opinion, the whole focus of the true revolution today is there.

How propaganda could develop in the working masses not only new general-theoretical beliefs, but also a new revolutionary conscience—life communism—remains to be specified, at least in general terms.

IV

There are three main theses of socialism which propaganda should turn into a concept of life, i.e., those that find their application in everyday human behavior; these are the rules on property, labor, and the state. Let us consider them one by one, trying to find an ethical expression for each of them, because only in this form could they even today enter human life and become something real for well-instructed minds.

1. The communist principle of property—this is the granting to every human being the right to use all resources, as the complex result of forces of nature

and the social production of entire generations. By comparing it with the original notion of property in clan society [*spoteczność rodowym*], according to which being a clan member [*członkiem rodu*] is sufficient to be co-owner of everything the clan [*ród*] possesses, the principle of communism today can be defined as an extension of this old idea of “clanhood” [*idei “rodowości”*] to all humankind. The title of human being is identified here with all the attributes of an owner. This principle, which by its nature belongs to ethical concepts, is the essential core of the organization of social collectivism; we cannot imagine in what precise form this organization will develop in the future society, to what extent it will adopt a decentralizing or centering of production, or on what administrative foundations the relations between demand and production will lie. Any definitions in this respect would today be only premature and even unnecessary assumptions. As a guideline for reform efforts, the basic principle itself—the organization of social production, freed from individual property—should be quite sufficient to grant every human being an equal and absolute right to enjoy the resources, preventing any expropriation of this privilege, which has been restored to the form of a natural law. Thus whatever administrative forms may be created, communism will exist—bestowing human life with all the consequences of its new civilizational power—only if this principle is socially realized; and it would degenerate into a system of state production that permits economic inequality among people if the right to enjoy the resources was violated by making it conditional upon “labor checks” or some other measure between production and the individual’s consumption. It cannot come to terms with the system of private property because any life matter that takes place on the basis of this system—the limited use of the source of wealth, the protection of my property interest—would necessarily require the elimination of this principle, both in social facts and in the individual conscience.

The same principle of an ethical nature, which occupies the main and guiding place in the understanding of communism of the future as a social fact, may also have its practical application in the lives of today’s people, because in this case it is no longer about the issue of legal and economic organization, but only about a new way of understanding human relations, and about facts that fall within the scope of my private conduct, and which properly express the recognition or non-recognition of the moral principle of communism. Above all, then, when communism is put into practice, it should eliminate all the customs of bourgeois property, such as borrowing money at interest, exploiting other people’s work (which is often practiced in the family relations of workers), legal proceedings for debts or inheritance, and, in general, all kinds of profiteering. This would be entirely possible, since the material existence of

workers would not be undermined at all by the abandonment of this category of interest. It is only necessary for the working class to develop a strong opinion in this respect to compel the individual to such behavior, in the same way as the idea of strike solidarity or the condemnation of betrayal and espionage has been formed. There is really no reason why party propaganda, which has been able to embed in the minds of workers the ethics of strikes and a strong moral aversion to betraying comrades for personal gain, could not just as well shape opinion on any private conduct such as exploitation, harm, or profiteering, which most vividly deny the idea of communism. The loss of personal benefits could not be an obstacle; though strike solidarity sometimes requires sacrifice of the personal interest of the worker, it has managed to become a moral rule of conduct. Introducing such an abstention from the bourgeois rules of life into workers' ethics would depend, above all, on the influence of propaganda; it would have to use all the wealth of artistic and conceptual resources that exist in minds and hearts to humiliate and ridicule the smallest symptoms of profiteering and exploitation, to pillory them before the ideal of the workers' cause, and above all to develop moral, literary, and aesthetic influences that will awaken a feeling of fraternity, opposing the habits of property most forcefully.

There is another, associated means of propagandizing—a positive one—which could help communism enter human life; this is the development of mutual assistance, of solidarity, in all possible forms. It is not known in fact why the solidarity that we so value in strikes could not become a general principle of workers' lives. The party's neglect of this can only be explained by the fact that the party has so far cared mainly for organizational benefits (for which strike solidarity has meant a lot), while paying little attention to what constitutes an individual revolution of minds. If mutual aid—this simple and vivid expression of communism—instead of being limited to instances of strikes were to extend to the whole of working class life, it would create an enormous customary revolutionary movement which would manifest in all sorts of forms the very idea of communism; it is even easy to suppose that it would become a certain protection of the workers' well-being, and thus take root more strongly in their habits. Workers' communes could appear, offering the collective protection of comrades over each of their members in all cases of illness, disability, loss of earnings, or any kind of misery in life, and providing friendly assistance to widows and orphaned children, making it unnecessary for them to have recourse to humiliating bourgeois alms, and finally having their own grocery stores, kitchens, etc., as has been successfully practiced by the socialist parties of Belgium and the Netherlands, and developing the inexhaustible resources of common social life, accustoming people to

breathe an atmosphere of collective and genuine friendship. Such communes, and the practical negation of everything that is exploitative and profiteering, with the strong support of opinion in this regard, would be something more than general theoretical beliefs: it would be a new human world, a new form of life which the proletariat would oppose to bourgeois society; in its atmosphere, self-generated revolutionary ideas would germinate and be absorbed by human minds from the earliest years of childhood.

2. The revolutionary principle of work is related to the development of manufacturing technique and the social organization of production. Combined, these two conditions can limit man's productive efforts to the smallest possible amount, extending his freedom in life accordingly. We suppose that the communist system will intentionally strive in this direction and that liberating man from the yoke of forced and utilitarian labor will be one of its main tasks, the fulfillment of which will determine the entire further development of humanity and the civilizational power of communism. This pursuit, however, includes not only a change in the physical conditions of human existence but also a new understanding of life.

The most outstanding characteristic of the soul of today's human being is this constant prudence, the constant worry and effort to secure his economic existence, which for some individuals is limited to working solely for the necessary maintenance of themselves and their family and for others takes the form of various speculations aimed at increasing their wealth or preventing bankruptcy; it is enough to look at the course of everyday life among ordinary people to see that this is where the whole content of their lives—everything that is serious and obligatory for them—is concentrated. In the ethics that bourgeois Christianity has imprinted in human brains, the pleasures of a purposeless, non-utilitarian life, without any economic interest, are disregarded and the search for them is considered immoral; while work and utilitarian procedures are presented as proper and essential tasks in life; they are understood not only as a necessity arising from the conditions, but also as a moral duty and merit. Obviously, removing from human life all its present-day utilitarian content through the social organization of production and property communism would be a complete revolution of such an understanding. Since the concern for existence would disappear by itself and productive work would be reduced to a small amount of effort, pleasures of an aimless nature would thus come to the fore as almost the sole content of existence, and accordingly the understanding of life as a duty of work would have to give way to a new understanding—as a question of pleasure, freely determined by the individualism of each person.

It is precisely against this that not only the official morality comes to the fore, but also the inner conscience of today's man; we simply do not have the moral courage to make beauty, play, and love the goal of life in themselves, for the sake of enjoying life together, without any secondary consideration of some "higher" ethics, utilitarianism, or theology; we are afraid to recognize that the joy of the human being itself can contain "the highest and absolute good" without needing any justification or any "ennobling" stamp—that its creation in the human soul can be a virtue and sufficient end in itself. This moral cowardice is closely related to the addiction to work and profiteering, which has suppressed the need for freedom in the human being and left a place in his soul for only such pleasures as are associated with benefit for the purposes of the struggle for economic existence, making him obtuse to everything beyond that sphere. It can be determined how poorly developed the need for freedom in life is among the working classes from the fact that strikes over the working day appear spontaneously quite rarely, while agitation for an eight-hour working day had to be combined with the notion of higher earnings in order to increase the popularity of the slogan, showing the economic relationship that exists between wages and a normal working day, or to demonstrate its importance for hygiene, health, life expectancy, etc. The aim itself of obtaining free hours, "the right to idle," is relatively unattractive because both by economic conditions and by the prevailing moral concepts connected with them, man's sense of using life has been blunted so much that beyond that economic concern in which his desires, hopes, endeavors, and thoughts develop, only an extremely narrow and poor range of needs that he is capable of feeling remains. In this respect, we are incomparably lower than the barbarian who knows how to participate with his soul in the life of all nature, or the ancient Greek, who was surrounded by the beauty of artistry, was fond of competitions and games, and was able to be keenly interested in the dialectic of philosophers; for such types, the need for the freedom to be idle is so strong that they often prefer to endure hunger and material shortages rather than submit to the regular yoke of labor.

Therefore, the revolutionary principle of work is directly linked to the development in people of the need for freedom in life, the expansion of the scope of their desires. This would be the liberation of the various senses and feelings of man, which have been suppressed and blunted under the pressure of work, economic concern (which is often an addiction and not just a necessity), and Christian-bourgeois ethics. For it should not be forgotten that only that person needs freedom in whom desires have been developed that are incompatible with the manner of a busy life, and that people with a work addiction, with a dull sense of freedom, would not be able to take advantage of the possibility of freeing themselves from work which would be given to them by the technique

of collective production; just as today they care little about the hours of rest obtained as a concession in factories, and often exchange them for an advance in earnings.

Moreover, awakening this need for freedom—by extending the scope of life—may be one of the strongest factors of antagonism toward the ruling system, because nothing would push people so strongly toward the collective organization of production and oppose their needs for individual economy and property as just that need to be free from production work, whose system of fragmented production and its subordinate private interests it could not satisfy; the strongest internal incentive for a small peasant owner to break with his economic individualism would be to feel this need. How can propaganda extend the scope of the life of a worker and tear his soul out of the pedestrian precinct of utilitarianism? First, it would have to conceptually liberate man's pleasure from the bonds of the prevailing ethics and inculcate the conviction that any pursuit by the people of common pleasure, even though it is completely pointless, is a virtue in itself, and that there is no sin where there is no human harm; this would make a person morally freer to experience the various sides of life and more capable of movements of the soul, not being caught in any rules. Then it would be about evoking desires and their qualitative development; we say "evoking" because virtually all of them, even those which seem to be the exclusive property of thinkers and artists, are embryonic in the soul of every human being, even of the lowest culture, and are only suppressed in their development by the unfavorable conditions of life; however, the manifestation of these needs can often be observed in self-generated aesthetics, and in the people's thinking, which proves that they are only artificially stifled. In order to develop them there would have to be appropriate centers of culture, not only intellectual ones but also aesthetic ones; for everything that develops the imagination of man and gives access to his soul, a purposeless psychology of beauty, perceived under all kinds of figures in nature, in arts, in play, or in memories—all this also has the power to free minds from the sole dominance of utilitarian motives, opens the senses to various sides of life, extends its scope, and awakens desires that require as many hours of rest and freedom as possible, but which are suppressed by concern for everyday life. This could also be achieved by developing a social life among workers, organizing various games, workers' holidays, common feasts, and trips. In an atmosphere of freedom and liberation from the interests of life, under the influence of uniting for common pleasure, people are easier to bring together; they are more accessible to the attraction of sympathy and friendliness. There is a close relationship between feelings of fraternity and the "right to idleness"; they are only granted to those people in whom the human being is valued; in the eyes of the

bourgeois moralist they can only be possessed by natures favored by talent or the creative intelligence of the mind, since only for them does the door to the Olympic lands open; the revolutionary principle of work wants to open them to everyone without exception, and considers the simplest man sufficiently worthy to use in his own way what the atmosphere of freedom, the liberation of the soul from the burden of work and daily routines, can give.

Since the entire development of the socialist cause depends on the acquisition of free time—because only in freedom can a new humanity develop normally and only in it can a revolution mature—the awakening of the need for this freedom, by awakening the need for a more versatile use of life, is one of the first practical tasks. Each intensification of new moral desires—*aesthetic, social, mental*—will have to manifest itself in a struggle to gain new hours of rest; every breach made in the blunting of the life of the worker, every particle of his soul torn from utilitarianism, will at the same time constitute a breach in the working class's day and in its moral adaptation to the capitalist system. The gains of freedom will be a field for the further development of the life of the workers, which will push them more and more toward the struggle for the "right to idleness."

3. Let us now turn to the third thesis of socialism, concerning statehood. In communism, the entire social organization is reduced to a purely economic one, as a result of which the political, legislative state that regulates relations between people ceases to exist. The idea of the state is always connected with the concept of bureaucratic and police power, through which society comes in contact with the human individual, forcing him to regulate his life in accordance with the system of existing laws. Such mediation, which today intrudes on all relations between people as a factor regulating their coexistence forcibly and automatically, is precisely the principle of "statehood," which can manifest itself in various political systems, both autocratic and republican, always maintaining the same attribute of the police oppression of the individual. This mediation historically grows out of property relations, as a necessary regulator of the antagonisms connected with them, and therefore it may become a socially unnecessary factor when these relations disappear under the communist system. The administrative affairs of production, having become the common interest of society, thereby completely separate themselves from the government of the people, and their settlement by any people's representative office can only have the nature of a "government over things." Thus, the political principle of communism is statelessness, the complete removal of the bureaucratic and police factor from relations between people, and the related "self-rule of the individual." The principle is economically justified by the fact that matters of production and consumption will find their natural regulators

in the commonality of human interests, thereby completely separating themselves from the individual, personal interests of the human being (whereas today the economic question is connected with the whole private life of an individual); morally, it justifies itself by the fact that maintaining state coercion contradicts the most essential task of communism—to endow man with absolute individual freedom.

All political movements of socialism have this character—the striving for an ever greater democratization of power, to transfer all its attributes to the masses of the people. From the period of expanding representation, they must move to the struggle for direct popular legislation, then to the dependence of the executive authorities on popular assemblies, and finally to the replacement of the executive power by dealing directly with matters at assemblies, which would only turn out to be possible after the overthrow of the private property system and the resulting significant simplification of human relations; so ultimately the democratization process would arrive at the complete removal of the state.

Political movements, however, are not enough to introduce into human brains the revolutionary principle of statelessness: first, because as a conceptual formula relating to the future it presents itself too abstractly for a human being participating in a certain political movement, and then because mass political struggle can only be a temporary fact, not a continuous thing, and it cannot even be undertaken everywhere—in countries without a constitution or in political stagnation for whatever reason, political indoctrination must be limited to the purely theoretical awareness of the anti-state ideal of communism.

On the other hand, there is a very simple way for this principle to enter the life of the working-class masses, to become visible and concrete, taking the form of a continuous revolution. First of all, it should be expressed in the practical negation of the state. To deny the state is to deny all the social needs by which the state exists and all the functions it performs as a defender of property rights, as an executor of justice, and as a guardian of public morality. The state, in spite of the hostile stance it usually takes toward the working classes, nevertheless encompasses all classes and is related to the needs of all insofar as property, justice, and morality concern all classes, whose private interests it socializes in itself: it therefore becomes necessary for people in a real manner and is recognized by them in practice, despite even theoretical negation, every time they call upon it for protection against thieves, punishment of an offender, or the settlement of any dispute in court in regard to perpetuating their paternal or marital rights. The negation of the state in individual life, the recognition of the essential revolutionary concept, would be to renounce all

those activities where the state is needed and to refrain from all aid provided by its functions. Propaganda should make every effort to remove the mediation of the state from relations between workers. This should be achieved in conjunction with the spirit of mutual assistance and should take the form of an amicable, democratic settlement of various cases and disputes, without resorting to the assistance of judicial and police bodies. Furthermore, in disputes with factory owners, it should be accepted that they can only be settled by boycott or strike, and never through government inspectors or courts. In addition, it is possible to extend the revolutionary negation even further and not to assign the state the role of a minister of justice and defender of moral principles by denying it all private or collective assistance in the prosecution and persecution of criminals. Both of these types of conduct should become fundamental concepts of workers' ethics, so that their betrayal—in actions such as bringing complaints to the courts, bearing witness, detecting wrongdoers, denouncing them to the police, etc.—should be treated in class opinion as equal to treason or breaking the solidarity of a strike. In this way, people would learn to do without the help of the authorities, and would break all links between the state and their personal interests; only then would the revolutionary anti-government concepts become the essential belief, the idea of a life value that has passed into conscience. It would be a workers' boycott of the state, a boycott with the effect that the state would in fact be canceled as a useful life force, at least in the working classes, which is where we expect its final defeat to come.

However, since the moral factors on which the state rests are closely linked in human souls with the corresponding ideology, the transformation brought about by propaganda must also combat this ideology. It is mainly summarized in two concepts: first, that the state is needed for the protection of property rights, which is sufficiently counteracted by communism in eliminating the very need for property; and the second concept—that the state should exist as a means of social coercion, obstructing bad and harmful human drives. The latter in particular supports police morality, which seeks the same under various forms, namely, social coercion, an organization of power that can oppress an individual in the name of the code it deems proper. Here, then, the idea of "statehood" is closely related to the idea of "coercion as a means of combating evil" and it is impossible to oust the former without ousting the latter. The latter is so deep in the brains that it even creeps into socialism in the form of a "revolutionary dictatorship" and "future state," understood as an effective means of teaching freedom and commonality. Statehood has its strongest roots in it; nothing so preserves its vitality, elevating it until it almost has the meaning of something absolutely necessary for all periods of history, like the conviction that legislation, with the executive which protects and implements

it, and the associated penal system, is an innocent means in itself, which can only counteract evil and consolidate good, completely changing its moral and social value depending on what purpose it serves and what ideology animates it. Hence, logically a bourgeois or autocratic state could be condemned, but the same bureaucratic-police organization could be recognized if it were to work toward democracy and collectivism; in the political consciousness propagated among the masses, this principle appears as an attempt to improve the state, to give it in new social colors but not to destroy it completely; thus, any “radicalization” of ministerial cabinets or the government’s entry into the path of a workers’ policy protecting the class interests of the proletariat can easily evoke the strengthening of allegiance and state patriotism even among the masses of the people who are headed today by socialist parties.

The concept of state utility—as a condition of security and a dam against vices—is also connected with concepts that have nothing to do with politics but directly influence what people think about government institutions and how they relate to them. Here, first of all, it is necessary to view crime and the penal system as a system of justice. A certain moral respect for the police authorities and recognition of their usefulness awakens in a person every time they deal with a criminal and act on behalf of social justice. For there is, on the one hand, the belief that the penal system moralizes people and prevents the spread of vices, thereby increasing social security, and on the other hand, that justice, as a moral principle, requires punishing the criminal; the unpunished criminal outrages not only the sense of order and security, but also the conscience of police morality. Against this, propaganda should spread the natural view of crime, showing that it is only a product of the social environment or a pathological fact, so there can be no judiciary as a moral principle, because there are no “guilty” in the legal and theological sense. It should also show that the penal system, courts, and prisons are actually a school of misdemeanors and by no means contribute to their social reduction. In addition, people should be made aware of the danger that lies in granting the state the power to judge and punish, while paying attention to the fact that the law and its executive organs, being bureaucratic in nature and based on formalistic and general schemes, can always draw into their categories of offenses even such deeds and intentions that are neither individually nor socially a fault, as court yearbooks provide abundant evidence for; and that they can become an instrument of political oppression, extending the concept of “crime” to anything that contradicts the established rules of order and social morality.

We are stopping on these general guidelines, because our only concern was to provide an indication as to the direction in which the moral revolution should develop in order to carry out that fundamental idea that the ideas

of socialism should become life-concrete concepts for the masses of the people and that only a continuous revolution, living in the conduct of a human being's private life and growing in his conscience, in his daily convictions, can become a truly revolutionary force and achieve the social and human ideals of the proletariat.

Friendship Unions I

I

Those who are troubled by human poverty and the decline of their homeland often confront the question of what and where is the redeeming power by which life could be made better and nobler. We look for it in all fields of work, and at the same time we feel instinctively that there is one most important fundamental thing that, if found and acquired, would settle all problems and provide a real, invincible weapon for combating evil. This instinct is not an illusion of ours. Such power is available and is in our midst and is called *friendship*.

A nation in which the feelings of friendship are developed, where instead of selfishness and egoism there is an innate need for mutual help, of selfless support in all areas of life—such a nation has already found an invincible power and has solved the mystery of freedom and prosperity. The same is true for a single person. If today we lament the fall of morality, the demoralization of hearts and minds, the disappearance of the nobility and chivalry of the soul, the decline of the living religion, then let us keep in mind that all this results solely from the fact that today's human being is so little gifted for friendship that the struggle for bread and the whole atmosphere of capitalism in which he lives makes him an egoist and suppresses in him from childhood the love of other people. It will not be an exaggeration to say that it is nothing other than self love that kills religion, and that in order to find God in oneself one must first of all know how to love people. This is an age-old but today too-often forgotten idea of Christ's, the sole social commandment that He left us.

What kind of havoc is caused in life and in people by the loss of friendship, we can see all around us in looking at poverty, ignorance, exploitation and harm, and at those ordinary terrible things to which we are so accustomed that we hardly pay any attention to them.

And perhaps too often we also forget that these small, petty, personal human troubles that we encounter at every step create this great thing that we experience as the decline and humiliation of the Fatherland, that this great harm to the whole—the powerlessness of the nation—arises out of these small harms that we do to each other with a clear conscience for the sake of profit.

However, let the feelings of friendship once come to life and begin to act, and this dark bane of human misery subsides and weakens. It is then that unions appear as a defense against exploitation: food cooperatives; farmers' companies; mutual-aid funds; childcare associations; educational, school, and charity societies, and so forth. They flourish openly and strongly wherever

even the smallest breach is created in human self-love. What capitalism and slavery destroy—namely the prosperity and nobility of life—cooperativism, the cooperation of human friendships, saves and builds anew; it creates not only new social conditions but also tries to create a new type of human being, one who is free and strong by virtue of being part of a group, by understanding and feeling friendship. There are two powers, two forces of good and evil, which struggle with each other for domination over the world. One—through *egoism*—spreads ignorance and poverty, the other—through *friendship*—spreads freedom and strength.

II

If we understand how important it is to give people the capacity for friendship, if we see that it is mainly on this that not only the good of the individual but also the strength of the nation depends, then we must first of all ask ourselves *how to teach friendship*: by what ways can it be strengthened, spread, and developed among the people?

We will not consider here whether natural man is an egoist or not: it is a barren question. However, we can easily take as a rule what life experience suggests: that there are egoists by birth for whom it is very difficult to feel friendship, just as there are people who are naturally gifted for it. We do not know and we can never know which type is predominant, which are more often born; but we know something else, which concerns us more—that selfishness is inculcated in people throughout their lives, starting from childhood; it is inculcated by upbringing and by social conditions, by competition, by the hard struggle for bread, by the rule of money, by the entire system of slavery. This is a huge farm and school of egoism in which everyone is trained, and not only the egoists from birth but naturally also the opposite types are exposed to these influences, and there needs to be a truly strong natural feeling of friendship for people in order for it not to succumb to these influences, and not to be suppressed and killed.

This cultivation of egoism must be contrasted with the life school of friendship; it is necessary to create such centers as would develop friendship in people from childhood, teach friendship practically, instill it imperceptibly but also strongly, so that this feeling would soak into a person's blood and become his own nature. Just as today's social conditions create a moral atmosphere in which a human being, just by living, learns egoism, cheating, and the causing of harm, often without even knowing it, so institutions must be created—a kind

of great order of people of good will—that would give society a new, reviving atmosphere of friendship and that would train people from childhood, combating that other.

It is indubitable that all cooperatives and charitable societies are such a school of friendship: that people learn in them, often without knowing it, a new moral life, a life in which a person thinks not only about himself but also about others. Nevertheless, these associations are not yet sufficient. After all, economic interest must necessarily play a major role in every kind of cooperative, and very often the moral idea of cooperativism is forgotten. A person joins a cooperative primarily for his own interest, and only a few do more in it than their own interest requires. I do not blame cooperatives for this because as economic institutions they must first of all take care of their material development, their financial power; otherwise they will not fulfill their social task. But besides this, there must also be that moral assembly point at which a human's spiritual rebirth takes place, where the true cooperativist, a new human being, is educated. This is the task of what I would call *friendship unions*.

III

I imagine "friendship unions" as neighborly societies whose task is mutual aid in everything. For a person who belongs to it, the Society should become like a big family. Let us remember that there are many cases in life where the help of people in the surroundings, of neighbors, of even temporary and casual help, may determine the fate of an individual's or family's entire existence: assistance to a household in cases of disease, fire, or other natural disasters; the care of abandoned children; temporary cash support; school fees; moral protection against the addiction of drunkenness; assistance in disputes and conflicts; legal assistance; engagement in the event of harm from an employer; salvation from usury, and so forth. It is difficult even to enumerate all the aims of the Society's defensive and auxiliary activities because human life itself, both in the countryside and in the city, provides the most diverse circumstances in which the help of other people could often be decisive and salutary. Do we not each of us know cases of, for example, a person who died because he had no medical help, or fell into the trap of usury because he found neither advice nor help, or a child who became a cripple or a vagabond because there was no one to look after him, and so many other such things?

But the Friendship Unions would not have to act on their own in every matter. To help them, they should have cooperative and charitable institutions that

would dispose of the appropriate resources. In many cases, a person's salvation by the Society would be based on enabling him to benefit from a credit, food, or agricultural cooperative, or from a charity, or from school, training, or educational institutions. In these cases, the friendship society would mainly play the role of an intermediary, adviser, and initiator. However, in those cases where help must be immediate and temporary, the Society acts on its own, by its own means, as an institution closest to the person needing assistance, and knowing personally his needs, character, and life.

In this way, the Union fulfills a triple task: personal, social, and moral. In the *personal* sense it carries out a fundamental reform in a person's life, making them no longer lonely and defenseless in the difficult days of life and providing a group of friends who give him advice and help, defense against exploitation and harm, moral strength, and faith in tomorrow.

In *social* terms, the Union becomes, by its nature, a promoter of cooperativism in all areas, because in its activities it must constantly use its institutions, persuade people to join them, and even create cooperatives that are not present in a given locality. Finally, in *moral* terms the Union, by accustoming people to acts of disinterested friendship, to sincere and direct neighborly help, to living for others, reforms not only a life itself into a more just and more serene one, but also the human soul; it would create precisely that moral atmosphere in which selfishness, irreligion, careerism, and servility would disappear, and the feelings of friendship and human dignity, of Christ's religion of love and volition, would develop.

IV

I imagine the functioning of Friendship Unions in this way: they should be neighborly Unions, operating within a small area in which people know each other; a village, small town, or factory settlement should each have its own separate local Union; in large cities, they would have to be limited to one district, one trade, or one enterprise with a large number of people (such as workshops, or a factory, etc.), or even one tenement house, which might often be inhabited by several dozen working class families. Each such local society should be as independent as possible, not relying directly on any central management, and only through meetings should it regulate its activities with other societies. There should be no bureaucratism in it—as few clerks as possible, no bureaucracy in general; it should, above all, preserve its pure nature of an association of people of good will, who are doing good selflessly, and helping not in the manner of officials of charitable societies but as friends help.

Each local Union should have its own money: the small monthly or annual fees of members would create a fund from which the Union could draw for emergency aid. In addition to such a fund, the Union should have, as a permanent institution, an arbitration tribunal, elected from time to time by all the members, whose task would be to settle all disputes between its members and to spread among the people the custom of settling their matters amicably, as a custom very useful for the civic and moral development of people.

Because cooperatives and all association institutions in general are necessary for the effective operation of Friendship Unions and because they are a continuation of their work, the Union should at the same time become an initiator and promoter of cooperativism and extend its protection to local associations, constantly caring for their internal improvement and development. In relation to them, the Friendship Union should play the role of the guardian of cooperative ideas and morality and ensure that cooperative institutions do not forget about their important social and reform goals. Where there are no such institutions, the Union should itself engage in the work of bringing them to life. Knowing the state of affairs in a given area and the needs of its inhabitants well, the Union will most easily be able to ensure that the existing gaps in the area's social life are filled. In this respect, the ideal and the social goal of a Friendship Union should be that each neighborhood should have its own agricultural circle to improve the cultivation of the land; its food cooperative, organizing local trade in the hands of the people; its credit union, which protects people from usury and gives funds to associated enterprises; its union of workers defending them against exploitation and harm; and it should also have its own schools, and clear protection for children—in other words, everything that is a protection against poverty and darkness, and that gives the nation power, health, and freedom. We can, therefore, summarize the task of Friendship Unions in two main points: 1) the protection of human beings, by the collective forces of the associated people, against poverty, exploitation, harm, and ignorance, as a friend and brother is protected; and 2) the creation and expansion among people of cooperative life in all forms—on the farm, in trade, industry, finance, and education.

Both these activities, which are closely related to each other, merge into one task of national education, whose aim is to revive both the human being and the Fatherland.

I present these thoughts for general discussion in the hope that there will be people who will take up the idea of "Friendship Unions," find appropriate legal forms for it, and bring it to life. This matter still requires various points to be discussed, the explanation of various practical aspects, and the overcoming of the various obstacles, external and moral, that every new idea that is to come

to life always encounters. But it must come to life. We have been debating the issue of a moral rebirth and of the impotence of the people for quite a long time—it is time to start acting, and the cooperativists are first in line to be called to act, because they have been the first to show what mutual aid is in practice.

Friendship Unions II

1. The only truly valuable component of development is the development of friendship: it is the only measure of the degree of social development. Similarly, individual development, the value of a person, is his capacity for friendship. This is the only thing in which the social good is identified with the individual good.
2. The power of society, its comprehensive development, including the comprehensive development of individuals, is based on associative life, free solidarity, and reducing the functions of the state to a minimum. Associative life stems from within the individual; it requires socialization and voluntary solidarity. In order to have the greatest force, it should result not from utilitarian reasons but from moral needs—for friendship.
3. Friendship, as the starting point, also gives rise to the principles of the politics of freedom, equality, and fraternity; these are the guidelines of historical movements, which expand with the development of social solidarity.
4. Social solidarity must have a soul; it is not enough that it is created under the pressure of life. The soul of solidarity is friendship, which manifests itself without personal interest in all matters of life, both individual and social.
5. The creation of a new race of people: a human being in whom the element of altruism, of fraternity, is the main factor of life, as his deep individuality, independent of any reasons of interest. The development of this breed is an individual, absolute value. As a social value, it is the basis and source of social life: it develops associationism, expands the struggle against exploitation in all forms, destroys violence, preserves freedom, and creates a free culture; that is, everything that gives the nation internal strength, and develops its democratization and capacity for freedom.
6. The task of Friendship Unions is to create *a new human being* and thus to create a new social life. This does not mean that the creation of a new life out of economic and political needs is wrong—these also create it, and to some extent a new human being, but that is not enough. Life created in this way often suppresses the new factors and maintains the old race. The development must be parallel: external and internal. All centers in which a new life is beginning must incorporate, as their vital moral sources, new groups of people, whose presence in politics, social works, and so forth would ensure their development toward the ideals.

7. Activity of the Union: a) internally, the Union forms a network of comprehensive mutual aid; the individual finds in it comprehensive care and assistance in all matters of life; b) outwardly, it acts as a defense against every injury ...

Experimental Metaphysics

v Human Identity. The Ideal of Fraternity

Each of the five kinds of substances¹ we possess (possession of the fifth seems to have only just begun and therefore appears quite rarely) creates its own phenomenality, making use of various properties of human nature: primarily intellect and will, as well as states of agnosia.^{2 3} As we have seen, the final result of the phenomenal changes that occur under the influence of our interaction with a given substance (which has already passed into our subconscious and could come into contact with others there) is always a change of idioplasm,⁴ which strives to intensify and implement patterns of further

1 * The reference is to the substances that compose the universe, permeating each other and permeating the human being, whose deep structure of inheritance—the idioplasm (for more see: note 4, p. 231)—transforms them, changing itself and the nature of these substances. According to Abramowski, reality does not have one ontological nature but is polysubstantial. It includes the substances of nature, substances of the idioplasm, social substances, and divine substances (which are hidden in the idioplasm and the subconscious as the beginning of life in general), substances of other planets and other higher systemic beings (cf. E. Abramowski, “Metafizyka doświadczalna,” in: Idem, *Metafizyka doświadczalna i inne pisma*, Warszawa 1980, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, pp. 577–579). The transformation of substances in an act of the conscious human will is for Abramowski the most important point of his theory of evolution, in which he combines Marxism, an evolutionism similar to Lamarck’s concept, Bergsonism, and a peculiar mystical Nietzscheanism. The connectivity of substances corresponds at the cosmic level to the social connection of beings—it signifies a kind of universal cooperation or fraternity, whose accelerator and transformer, according to Abramowski, is the *Übermensch*. Abramowski’s applied metaphysics, despite the apparent mysticism and idealism, are the culmination of his socialist ideas and weave together ontological and political dimensions. The stateless socialism of the future, which is the implementation of the immanent features of the subject as a transformer of substances—this primal socialism of the human community—is the environment of the *Übermensch*’s life (A. Dziedzic, *Antropologia filozoficzna Edwarda Abramowskiego*, Wrocław 2010, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, p. 207).

2 * In the copy, this sentence is marked out.

3 * Agnosia—Greek, literally unawaredness: a state of cognitive impairment consisting in the inability to recognize an object. For Abramowski, agnosia is the absolute perception, occurring in states of extraordinary rapture, in which human identity is combined with external substances—both with other people and with animals, objects, or ideas. It takes place in states of emotional ecstasy, in mystical or religious experiences, or political activity.

4 * Idioplasm—a kind of germplasm responsible for the feature inheritance process; a hypothetical substance described by one of the pioneers of genetics, August Weismann, who believed that, as an unchanging constituent of cell nucleus matter, it is passed down from generation to generation in an unchanging form.

development of the species—the potential patterns which the idioplasm possesses. It is a striving of all (so-called psycho-physical) nature to create a species of *Übermensch*: a continuous, uninterrupted striving, which is sometimes consciously manifested in the ideals of exceptional individuals—the creators of new religious sects, or new social, political, or moral movements.

All phenomenal changes tend to create this higher species of human being, who will be able to expand his relationship with the beings of the universe, and finally, by embracing them all, absorb the entire universe. The necessary condition is the enrichment and expansion of the subconscious, as well as of the will and intellect, because the ability to encompass a larger part of the universe's substance depends on the state of our spirituality, our whole self. Therefore, people who are incapable of a strong agnostic focus, or weak-willed people, cannot take part in the life realization of whatever is derived from an idioplasmic, social, or divine substance, and consequently they hinder the change of the organism and idioplasm required for the developmental ideal and are a brake on human development, an obstacle to the creation of the *Übermensch*. Conversely, the more the human self is enriched, and the more individuals acquire and consolidate this enrichment, the closer for the universe is the longed-for, long-awaited, great moment in the evolution of life.

From this standpoint, which emerges from the standpoint of the universe, we can understand the nature and essence of the absolute ethics that regulate our behavior. Like the logic regulating thinking, the ethics regulating behavior must have its intuitive certainties, those innate dogmas in which we believe without justification, because we cannot disbelieve, because they are common, absolutely clear, and do not allow for denial, criticism, or evidence, because any criticism, evidence, or denial of the same must be based on certainties. This nature is both logical (the principle of identity and contradiction) and mathematical (axioms of geometry, time, and numbers).

Let us now see what ideal corresponds most closely to these developmental and potential patterns that seek to create a new species—to create an *Übermensch*.

This ideal can only be the ideal of fraternity, as the sole expression of absolute reality, namely that in which the entire human world, or in fact the entire world of living beings, is internally interconnected by a double identity: the identity of the subject and the commonality of biological origin, that is the identity of the idioplasm.

This identity is usually hidden from us, and its intuitive recognition is revelatory in nature.

This ideal is at the same time a metaphysical experience of love and will. The feeling and knowledge of the ethical ideal, however, can only take place

under certain mental conditions, in states of a certain kind of inspiration, during intercourse with people and nature, when we can agnosically and strongly sense those components of our self that constitute the unity of living beings. These are moments of emotional concentration, of being mono-idealized with a certain person or fact.

The conditions for the emergence of such states are different: sexual emotion, love for children, feelings of friendship, the feeling of collective solidarity, the pain of pity, experiencing beauty, coexistence with nature, etc.—these are all conditions in which the awareness of the ideal of fraternity in life can appear as a feeling and as an intuitive certainty.

As an intuitive certainty it does not require any justification; it can itself serve to justify the whole morality of life; therefore it appears as the dogmatic basis of ethics and religion and is always an object of faith for the human being.

As a feeling, it must also be of an active and creative nature; it cannot remain an object of contemplation; it seeks to transform life according to its model, and therefore it strongly stimulates the will. It has in common with sexual love the fact that that it cannot remain passive—that it too seeks to create life, to give birth to a new reality whose development never ends.

The ideal of fraternity is an ideal of this type, which cannot remain an internal phenomenon but must by its nature change into actions, bring about changes in the external world, move from the subjective to the objective realm, and be realized.

In this realization, the will plays a fundamental role, because the ideal is born among contradictions, both internal (egoism) and external (customs and institutions of the social world, developed by the struggle for the existence of individuals and classes). As a result, there must be a decisive subjective factor that fights obstacles and strengthens the vitality of the ideal: a subconscious, intellectual, emotional, and rational vitality.

When transforming the ideal into an act and an objective reality, no substantial difficulty, no ontological obstacle can appear because, as we know, the substance of the subject and the object are the same—they are of a mental nature.

The same is also shown by the importance of the will, which is decisive in this transformation. Since the nature of the will is only subjective and mental, it could not have undergone the transformation if it had been dealing with two different substances. Just as causality cannot occur without a certain identity of cause and effect (since causality is only the knowledge of the commonality hidden in different phenomena, reducing the multiplicity to unity), so the purposeful-creative action of the will cannot be alien to the object on which it acts or which it creates, because in that case we could find no causality

between the two; that is, no element in common. And yet we can always consider all effects of the action of the will from the standpoint of causation and the action of the will as the cause.

The creativity of the will in the realization of the ideal of fraternity will become even more understandable when we take into account that this ideal is realized in the social world and that the creativity of the will is directed toward social phenomenality. Thus, as we shall see, social phenomenology develops on the basis of the identity of the thinking subject and on the basis of the biological commonality of a certain part of the inherited subconscious (idioplasmic commonality, objective identity). The will, on the other hand, is the same thinking subject, only working mainly on the outside, on the objective-human world.

On the other hand, we also recognize the influence of the will on the subconscious mind in the following experiences: (1) the galvanometric phenomenon of the will's obstruction of emotionality—this obstruction is done by the subconscious; (2) the influence of the will on things forgotten—we see it clearly when we examine the resistance of the forgotten in moral emotions; then we see that the influence of the will causes the subconscious states to become stronger, to retain their generic nature more clearly and better, to present greater positive resistance; (3) the influence of the will on the creation of hypnoic (pre-sleep) images;⁵ (4) the influence of the will on dreams by auto-suggestion before falling asleep; (5) the influence of the will on cenesthesia by focusing on certain points of the body; (6) the influence of spontaneous dreams on the subconscious and the functions of the organism, and hence on idioplasm and the improvement of the species.

Since the ideal of fraternity cannot fulfill its task of realizing and creating a new life except through an act of the will, we must regard the question of this ideal as a metaphysical experience of the will. Thus, simultaneously with intuition and feeling, the third coordinate factor of the ideal of fraternity—will—develops and takes shape. All three come into contact in their development with the twofold substance of human identity: the subject and the hereditary subconscious.

Each moral and social ideal has the same essential features as the ideal of fraternity, the highest model for the perfection of life. As long as a certain pattern of further development is still an ideal, that is to say for as long as it has not yet become an acquisition of life, a common feature of the species, it

5 Experimental research on these topics can be found in volumes 1 and 2 of „Prace z psychologii Doświadczalnej,” edited by E. Abramowski, Instytut Psychologiczny w Warszawie, Warszawa 1913–1915, Skład Główny w księgarni E. Wende i S-ka.

always has its apostles who believe in it as an absolute, irrespective good. This belief is not an illusion. The historical changeability of the ideal does not contradict its substantial, absolute nature. It is always the same ideal of fraternity, although expressed in different forms, depending on the spiritual culture of the human being and the phase of social life (its struggles and contradictions). It gradually comes closer, even as a social ideal, to its purest and most perfect form, specifically to the recognition of the basic human identity, which comes from the human self and the commonality of origin.

All ethical and social ideals approaching this intuitive cognition of human identity are of the same type, of absolute value, and individually constitute one and the same metaphysical experience, which is only expressed differently in intellectual consciousness, adapting by necessity to those concepts and institutions existing in a given time and place, especially the more it tries to realize itself and pass into the social world, creating developmental changes in it.

The individual psychology of the ideal is always the same: (1) it always arises in agnostic experiences, (2) as an intuitive certainty and (3) as a feeling; (4) it always causes the most intense action of the will; (5) it is creative by nature and (6) strives to become socialized, to change life; (7) it always absorbs the whole human being—it monoideizes; (8) it creates fanatics, enthusiasts, and heroes; (9) it occupies an exclusive position in the phenomenal world, because it imposes itself as a norm, as a moral, obligatory necessity; (10) it is not overcome by causality, because it itself creates causal series in the field of conduct—it is as though it were the beginning and source of moral causation; (11) it also justifies everything in this area—it is a compulsion voluntarily accepted by the human being, the only one that the human identifies with his love, with the object of the greatest love and beauty; it is a free, desired compulsion, providing happiness and the whole value of life; and (12) all this indicates that the ideal exceeds the scope of phenomenality, that it is a substantial being, but an exclusive kind that does not manifest itself in any other domain of phenomena than in relations between people, and even between living creatures in general, in only those phenomena that are to be acts and that constantly become our concrete, everyday life.

The value of the act is unique, and the experience of the will is the highest metaphysical experience. As soon as our thought becomes an intention, a decision, as soon as it passes to the outside world, to other people, at that moment the conception of an infinite new series of changes is fulfilled, and our own self, our soul, enters the great world of living beings, into all the enormity of the universe. This transition proves that there must be something equal between me and other people, a certain identity, a commonality. Otherwise we would not be able to emerge from our individuality.

On the physical side, this can be defined as the principle of the conservation of energy, the transformation of the same amount of energy from one form to another. However, since the initial fact—the pursuit of the ideal to be realized—is not only a physical but also a mental fact, these changes in energy must be matched by a number of moral changes, which is to say, we have a series of total, concrete facts, both individual and social, physical, and spiritual—a series that never ends. Hence the unique value of the act.

James⁶ is quite right when he argues that the theoretical value of an idea is measured by its life value. What is good, strong, and developmental for life must also be right and true as a theory. Everything that can turn into an act, into a social reality, and is of a substantial nature, is on that side of phenomena, because it creates a new eternity, a new world of phenomena and a new objectivity independent of the human being.

The creativity that transforms subjective dreams into social things is the creation of new absolute beings—because the will, acting on the surface of phenomena, in the *maya*,⁷ solely in the intellect, cannot create anything. And it especially cannot transform the internal, subjective world into the external, objective, social, and physical world. Therefore, it can be said that every creator of new ideals, in beginning to implement them, achieves the same thing that religions consider to be the exclusive privilege of God. Never is the human being so close, so similar to the divine Being, as at the time of creation. Such power and strength emanate from him that the most ordinary people succumb to it, even those who are most ill-disposed toward him, who hate him; with mockery, violent struggle, or the desire to ridicule and depreciate, they try to conceal from themselves that they succumb to his power and that they are beginning to fear the beauty and power of this new world that is approaching—so as not to see too clearly and distinctly the nothingness and ugliness of their own life. Let us only recall, for example, how much Jesus was hated, both by the people and by rich priests, and let us also recall how passionately he is hated now by

6 * William James (1842–1910) was an American philosopher, co-founder of American pragmatism, a precursor of both behaviorism and humanistic psychology, as well as phenomenology. His most famous books are *Principles of Psychology* (1890) and *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking* (1907).

7 * In Advaita vedanta philosophy (the monistic current in Indian philosophy) and in Buddhism, *maya* (in Abramowski, Maja) means an illusion, a veil of matter that distracts living beings from the spiritual reality of the Brahman Absolute, concealing from them the truth about their identity and the universe itself. According to Hinduism, *maya* acts mainly through the so-called false ego (*ahamkara*), or identification with the material body, and by attachment to possessed things (*mameti*).

the Christian nations, which in his name have sanctified everything in human life that he himself tried to destroy and that he challenged.

VI The Question of Will

The nodal point of the human subconscious, where the absolute beings that have penetrated it meet, is the most important center of the subconscious and therefore of its life in general. It is the core of individuality and, at the same time, the root of the dual human identity (through the unity of the subject and the unity of biological origin). The part of the individual center where personal experiences prevail, and its social part, where the influence of the subject operates (mainly in the form of the will), and finally hereditary commonality, where future developmental patterns stored in idioplasm are to be found, all appear in our internal phenomenality.

Thus, the metaphysical experience (through which we enter the field of ethics and social life and whose goal is the most important thing—the creation of a new species, the *Übermensch*) is the experience of the will to live—another, higher form of religious experience, which can be called the Sacrament of Fraternity.

Here we encounter the absolute being differently than do mystics, who are locked in their solitude, and also differently than poets in states of inspiration and revelation. We come into contact not by passive contemplation or by the state of Hindu yoga, which reaches zero thought and almost suspends the biological activities of life but, on the contrary, by entering the world of struggle, the world of so-called human ethics, where two powers clash: egoism and fraternity, harm and justice, freedom and slavery.

The human will is here the only creative element and the only object of experience. The will transforms the internal, individual world into the external, objective, and social world, which means that the will is the element that combines and identifies internal and external, individual and social phenomena, and is therefore an element of absolute being, the identity of differences, i.e., a substance of primary importance in human life. For without it, the transformation of an idea into an objective fact—my feeling into the feeling of others, my desire into its objective, social realization—could not occur.

Therefore, in our will there is the element of human identity; that is to say, to speak in the language of religion, the element of human divinity, just as in the common biological heritage of the subconscious (descent from one Heavenly Father). Intuitive cognition and the direct sense of this human identity is at the same time our contact with the substantial essence of social life and our eternal being. This is the absolute value of the Ideal of fraternity.

The more our will, that is our life and acts, moves away from this pattern the more we deny the essence of our will and the closer we come to its negation, to neglecting its element of identity.

In selfishness, we completely lose the essence of the will; we spend its creative power on its own denial; we commit something like metaphysical suicide. By denying our own inherent fraternity, we distance ourselves from our source and create a barrier between ourselves and what gave and gives us life, which is our eternal Being, our absolute Being. This negation of the will by selfishness is all the more terrible because, as we know, every act of the will is the beginning of a new and infinite series of realities. Thus, negation perpetuates itself in the thousand components of this series, becomes a reality outside of us, and lives its own life as social harm and injustice.

Therefore, this “joyful knowledge” that liberates humankind—that people heard for the first time two thousand years ago in the “Sermon on the Mount”—can only be the sole commandment of love.

The ethical ideal is as much an axiom for action as logical certainties (e.g., *A is A*) are for thinking. As an experience of the will, it belongs to the active side of the self. As an intuitive cognition of what should be, it becomes an object of thought, a passive part of the self. It is the emotional cognition of those potential developmental patterns that our subconscious and idiosyncrasy, that is the organism, inherently stores in its various functions and organs.

Recognition of the ideal, to be precise, the intuitive penetration into the developmental pattern in the subconscious, creates a separate emotionality around this recognition, an emotionality we call conscience, which gives us a certain clairvoyance of the act and its agnostic assessment, which is dogmatically certain and requires no justification. Conscience is the emotional generality of the pattern stored in the subconscious and in the body. It can appear only when our intuition senses and recognizes this pattern. Whoever does not have an ideal of life cannot have a conscience.

Conscience is the same as the generic feeling of the “forgotten,” which manifests itself in the resistance of a memory gap to false or even relatively very similar suggestions. This resistance appears because the exact generic, agnostic pattern of a forgotten thing is stored in the given memory gap. This is also relevant: we are bothered by the inconsistency of our behavior with the known pattern, specifically with the ideal, even when this pattern is not yet conscious or when we cannot define or name it precisely, when it is an agnostic state, and still vague for the intellect.

The same is true of the phenomenon of negation. The negation of the “forgotten” is the result of an emotional disorder. The negation of the developmental pattern is manifested in the fact that there is no remorse that we

cannot recognize right and wrong, and we adopt opposite dogmas rather than a significant pattern. This happens both as a result of a disturbed emotionality in regard to life and people (class position, daily needs, personal interests, passions), and as a result of the influence of the mind (ideas, theories, suggestions from the state, the Church, school, home education, literature)—as in the negation of the forgotten.

In the third case, we have a loss of conscience—pathological moral idiocy: as a model of behavior, we accept everything with equal indifference. This corresponds to the disappearance of the genericness of the “forgotten,” when zero resistance prevails in cognition, just as with a pathological phenomenon: the disappearance of the subconscious, its transformation into an undifferentiated, amorphous mass as a result of mental illness, idiocy, or old age.

We say the absolute ideal is that which corresponds to the developmental pattern of the species preserved by the idioplasm, that is, the pattern from which a higher species is to emerge—the *Übermensch*. This ideal can only be the ideal of fraternity, because only it provides understanding and realizes phenomenally, in life, both substances of the human being, his total self: identity through the will (the subject) and identity through idioplasm (biological heritage). This ideal is the only one that confirms the nature of human substances; thus it allows the species to develop into a higher form, and it gives the human being itself the fullness of life, the experience of absolute beings, the accord of the continuous, normal act with the eternal essence of humankind in its various past and future forms.

Therefore, those who proclaimed the ideal of fraternity raised the value of the human being to the divine value and told people they were sons of God—that the Kingdom of God was within them. The realization of fraternity is the only form of life that is compatible with the eternal essence of the human being and thus enables the further biological development of the species, the creation of the *Übermensch*; therefore, it fulfills not only the need and purpose of humankind, but also the need and purpose of the universe.

Such an understanding of ethics, resulting from the principles of applied metaphysics, agrees in some points with the modern natural-evolutionary ethics of Spencer, Høffding,⁸ and before them, Fichte.⁹

8 * Harald Høffding (1843–1931) was a Danish philosopher and psychologist, professor at the University of Copenhagen, representative of the anti-positivist trend. He called his philosophy “critical monism.” Author of the *Outlines of Psychology* and *Ethics: Ethics: an account of ethical principles and their application to the chief conditions of life*, works through which he had a great impact on Polish modernism.

9 * Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814) was a German philosopher, a student and follower of Immanuel Kant. An anti-materialist and subjective idealist, anti-utilitarian and rationalist

This school defines ethics as practical idealism. Because of its practical nature, it requires an aim, as a normalizing science. The aim is a non-existent thing that is to be achieved. Ethics, therefore, requires a living feeling, a striving, a drive and awareness of what it is aiming for, i.e., the ideal of life. If all aspirations were satisfied with reality, then there would be neither ideals nor ethics.

The ideal must outgrow reality, but at the same time it must have certain points of contact with it. What operates in the conscience is the species instinct (which corresponds to what we call the developmental pattern).¹⁰ This instinct's strength, which is acquired in the evolution of generations, is revealed in the human being as the absoluteness of conscience. Ethical concepts are developed in regard to this instinct. It is also the sole and most serious lawgiver. Conscience is born when a feeling arises that is caused by the difference between the ideal and reality (as with us—conscience is a generic feeling of an absolute ideal, occurring most strongly when dealing with something that contradicts the ideal, just as the generic feeling of the forgotten occurs most strongly in a series of suggestions testing its resistance to the suggestion that is the most contradictory or furthest from it). According to Spencer, ethical feeling is a property only of a certain transitional period in development (that is, in our view, when a higher species is to be created or a change toward it is made). According to Fichte, real life is about sacrificing oneself for the species. There is only one virtue—self-forgetting—and one vice: thinking of oneself. However, such an approach to the problem is not purely natural: the influence of the old philosophy, in which theology was still very dominant, is discernable. Virtue is necessarily a “sacrifice,” an imposed compulsion, a compulsion which is therefore made for some kind of recompense. We also find many similarities—aside from the fundamental differences—in the ethics of Schopenhauer, which is based on the principle of will as the substantial unity of the world, the aim being the destruction of life; that is, liberation from phenomenality, etc.

in his ethics, he exerted a profound influence on the development of nineteenth-century philosophy and on German Romanticism and is considered one of the ideologues of German nationalism.

10 Cf. H. Høffding, *Etyka. Opis zasad etycznych i zastosowania ich do poszczególnych stosunków życiowych*, vol. 1, part 1, transl. L. Wolberg, Warszawa 1902, Wydawnictwo Poradnika dla czytających książki, pp. 71 and 76 et seq.

VII The Life Ethics of Friendship

Practical tasks. Awareness of the task of life ethics, which is directly related to the absolute ideal, is beginning to stir today in the new form of cooperativism and socialism, synthesized as a whole social movement that can be called stateless socialism or a cooperative Republic. This new movement, which is closely related to ideological anarchism, has its own social and ethical tasks, namely it must make a moral revolution that would transform everyday human habits and create not only new ethical concepts but above all new people—people with a new conscience, for whom harming and exploiting others, careerist ambitions, the coercion of others, internal bondage, and the sadness of life will be just as impossible as renouncing one's own nature, happiness, feelings, and desires.

This new conscience cannot be imposed or suggested; it cannot be the human being's new moral police but must be the most essential, free, and natural focus of his self.

The task of this moral revolution is to be assumed by the new institutions of socialist cooperativism, the so-called Friendship Unions. Their goal will be to introduce into life and into everyday relations new habits based on mutual aid—on real, living friendship—enriched with all the varieties that can be created by the changeability of life.

This principle of active friendship, or mutual aid, should cover all human needs as far as possible and appear to be a natural, everyday collective customary act in facing any human harm, poverty, or ailment, in order to eliminate them by the collective forces of the Society, the solidarity of friends.

The activity of the Friendship Union thus covers all the misfortunes of human life, just like the activity of a Charity Society, with the important and fundamental difference, however, that help in an individual case is not charity given to a stranger, a humiliated person belonging to a different, lower social sphere, but is the mutual help of friends who know each other and are equal—so that he who helps today may be the one helped tomorrow, and instead of humiliation there is a joyful act of collective friendship, a manifestation of the strength of the most beautiful human feelings.

The Friendship Unions are therefore the final, necessary complement to the entire cooperative-socialist movement as an adaptation of everyday life, conscience, and all human spirituality to the economic, social, and political changes conducted by cooperative socialism. This adaptation must occur gradually, as these social changes also occur gradually. But without this moral revolution, without this new conscience, new social institutions would not be able to develop and survive. The new social world can never live among the former

people, never breathe their moral atmosphere. New institutions are then artificially imposed and must perish as a utopia of compulsion or a temporary suggestion, as a contradiction bearing the germ of death. And they always perish, benefiting only the opponents of the ideal, as evidence of its unreality or its fundamental errors.

A life ethic of friendship, adapted directly to the main goal, to the absolute ideal, has its commandments and norms, distinguishing only what harms from what helps the improvement of the individual and species. The interests of the individual and the species are closely coordinated here. Hence the definition of sin and virtue, the attitude to social power, to internal compulsion (the suggestions of education, the Church, the state), to property and class—these norms have the following formulations: 1. The only sin is harming humans, because it diminishes human strength. 2. The only virtue is friendship, mutual aid, and community, because they increase the strength of everyone. 3. No authority should be recognized, because any authority seeks to coerce and oppress and thus hinders the development of people and the species. 4. Do not impose any internal yoke on yourself, because it hampers development and the main goal even more. 5. Destroy everything that divides and humiliates people, i.e., property, wealth, and honors, because, as the Sermon on the Mount says, “the sun shines equally for all and all are sons of one God.”¹¹ 6. Spread complete communism in life—customs and institutions from which all exploitation and selfishness are eliminated.¹²

The life ethics of friendship aim to maximize the strength of every human being by liberating him from what in today’s life diminishes his strength the most, such as poverty, exploitation, loneliness, helplessness, and selfishness, and the psychological correspondents of these living conditions, which also reduce strength: depression, sadness, hatred, bitterness, and hopelessness. In such conditions a person is doomed to constant humiliation, to turning to alms; he is forced to lie and to humiliate himself in regard to others. His biological powers weaken; his mind becomes dull; his feelings and conscience deteriorate completely; he becomes incapable of accepting any ideal; he is a complete slave of the suggestions that come from the powerful; he becomes dependent on them both morally and physically. For money, he is always ready to sell his soul, his convictions, will, and deeds.

11 * “That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good” (Matthew 5:45, King James). Abramowski’s quote is presumably a paraphrase.

12 * Added on the margin of point 6, “Nietzsche, Jesus.”

It is obvious that for the evolution of a species this is a type that not only hinders further development but even causes the species to regress in a pathological direction, produces moral and mental idiots, and creates generations of spiritually and biologically damaged, sick people. For the main goal of evolution—the creation of the *Übermensch*—this is a fatal obstacle. It is the bane of humanity and the most shameful pain in the universe, a force that causes regression and collapse, and often prevents the next shift toward major development.

The present-day type of sick and debilitated human is supported by all the social institutions governing contemporary life, for which we use the general term “capitalism” or, more precisely, the “capitalist state,” because political institutions interact in it with economic, educational, etc., as an internally adapted, harmonious social Totality. The venal, egoistic conscience of the individual corresponds perfectly to the social institution and the idea of “personal property,” and this is strictly matched by state civil and criminal codes, institutions of the courts and police, then by prisons and the educational system of state schools, and finally by the principles of the catechism of the ruling religion and all the active and creative morality of the Church, which is closely linked to the state.

Individual conscience is the focal point of life to which the social world adapts and from which it emerges. And vice versa: this social world tries to maintain and preserve what it itself lives by, that is to say the individual heart, the conscience of the individual. We have here mutual causality: an individual cause and a social effect—a social cause and an individual effect, that is a relationship of strict co-ordination.

The transformative, revolutionary tasks of Friendship Unions is now quite clear to us. They must change completely, to the very core, this individual focus of social life; they must create a new conscience from which a new social world will inevitably emerge; they must develop in today’s human being new beliefs which are fundamentally contradictory to present beliefs, those deepest ones that are for oneself and for daily use, those feelings and habits of conduct; they must free the human being’s inner will to live, his feeling of happiness and purpose. In other words, they must liberate the eternal being of humankind.

As this new conscience develops, the hour of death will toll for the entire social world of today. As the new conscience spreads, as it encompasses more and more people, all the institutions that derive from the former type of human being and that live through him, through his individual soul, will also begin gradually to disappear. The social world that is adapted to a human being degraded by egoism and slavery will then begin to decay and perish, and at the same time, a new world will arise, the one dreamed in the eternal dreams of

human geniuses, which is adapted to a free and healthy human, a world compatible with the ideal of friendship, commonality, and absolute freedom, the sole, exclusive one that corresponds to the eternal essence of the human being and his immortal, divine, creative nature—that nature that knows no sorrow, lies, dependence, or ugliness, and must live its own beautiful, free life joyfully, honestly, and strongly. This new, liberated human being will finally remember who he really is—he will remember that he is the essential Son of God, the creator of worlds, the Aeon of the Neoplatonians,¹³ and only then will all his oblivious, semi-conscious, or secret longings, which are as strong as life, come true, and the moment will come for the appearance, awaited throughout the millennia, of the *Übermensch*, the fulfillment of the kingdom of God. It is up to us to begin this moment, to become its first creators in the present day of the history of humankind.

13 * For the ancient Greeks, “Aeon” (Latin *aeon*, Greek αἰών—*aiōn*) meant one’s lifetime, life; generation; a long space of time, an age; a definite space of time, an era, epoch, age, period. Probably Abramowski is referring here to the Gnostic meaning of the term (and also to some extent the Neopythagorean meaning, if we consider such thinkers as Numenius of Apamea), identifying it overwhelmingly with the Neoplatonic school, for whose philosophical or theological system numbers were also extremely significant. In Abramowski’s thinking, it is much easier to find the structure of Gnostic thinking with the figure of the eternal but still personal power of changing reality than Neoplatonism, although these threads, in the most general sense, are present—the soteriology of the human being reconciling with himself in cosmic evolution (cf. A. Dziedzic, *Antropologia filozoficzna*, op. cit., p. 255).

PART III

Politics



Revolution from Below

Edward Abramowski's Stateless Socialism and Possibility of Prefigurative Politics

Kamil Piskala

Edward Abramowski was indubitably an engaged intellectual. The philosophical project he developed over three decades was political *par excellence*, and at a deeper level almost all his texts can be considered political, with the possible exception of his works devoted to the methodology of psychological research.¹ The various layers of Abramowski's worldview are discussed in other parts of this volume. The introduction to this section will focus primarily on his texts that relate to politics in a narrower and more informal sense and address issues of power, political mobilization, and the politics of the workers' movement. The following will be presented: his propaganda brochures from the beginning of the 1890s, which taught an orthodox version of Marxism; the most important elements of his critique of the theory and practice of mainstream socialism in the following years; his concept of stateless socialism; and his program of "a general conspiracy against the government," which he announced during the revolution of 1905. In conclusion, the value of reading his work in connection with contemporary projects of radical politics will be weighed.

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Abramowski published his first articles on broad social issues at the age of fifteen (!) in the peasant weekly *Zorza*.² The mutualist credo that permeates

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- 1 Krzysztof Mazur comments that "[...] Abramowski the scientist was in continual conflict with Abramowski the visionary, whose passion was rather changing the world than simply describing it from the position of an uninvolved researcher. Even in his most methodical works we perceive an overlap of the descriptive and normative levels [...]" (K. Mazur, "Edward Abramowski—człowiek syntezy," in: E. Abramowski, *Zagadnienia socjalizmu: wybór pism*, Kraków 2012, Ośrodek Myśli Politycznej, p. x1x; cf. also B. Cywiński, „Myśl polityczna Edwarda Abramowskiego,” in: *Twórcy polskiej myśli politycznej. Zbiór studiów*, edited by H. Zieliński, Wrocław 1978, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, p. 96).
 - 2 In these youthful texts Abramowski explained to peasant readers, in an accessible fashion, the basic economic categories such as capital, labor, and production; he praised thrift and industry as the most infallible methods for improving a person's situation. He also wrote about the sense of social responsibility, which he understood as an individual's readiness to pay, with his own labor, the debt he owed to society for making use of the goods, knowledge,

all his later works³ and gives them their Kropotkinian spirit⁴ first appeared in these writings. As an eighteen-year-old, he sought contact with Proletariat, the first Polish workers' party, which had been established by Ludwik Waryński, but the organization was destroyed by arrests before he could become involved in its activities. He thus underwent his real political initiation several months later, while studying at the University of Geneva. It was then that he became acquainted with socialist ideas, which were extremely popular at the time among Polish students, and he quickly became involved in the activities of Marxist circles. At the end of 1888, when the socialist emigrant community learned that the Russian police had broken the organization led by Ludwik Kulczycki, Abramowski decided to halt his studies and return to Poland in order to help recreate clandestine working-class groups.⁵ Initially, he was active in the so-called Second Proletariat, which continued the work of Waryński's party, but over time he began to be disturbed the fact that that some of his comrades supported terrorist methods. He himself believed that instead of trying to awaken the working-class conscience with individual acts of terror it would be better to focus on shaping class solidarity and the instinct of self-organization. In his opinion, this goal should be served primarily by "resistance funds," that is, contributory funds collected by workers to provide for their subsistence expenses during future strikes. Due to deepening differences, Abramowski eventually left Proletariat and established his own organization—the Workers' Union.⁶ As its representative, in November 1892 he participated in the congress of Polish socialist activists in Paris, during which it was decided to establish a united Polish Socialist Party (PPS). Apart from the typical postulates of socialism at the time, the program that was developed for it also contained the statement that the working class was heir to the nineteenth-century Polish national uprisings, and that the restitution of an independent Polish state was

or norms of behavior created by it. See: E. Abramowski, "Pogadanki o rzeczach pożytecznych," in: idem, *Pisma. Pierwsze zbiorowe wydanie dzieł treści filozoficznej i społecznej*, vol. 1, Warszawa 1924, Związek Polskich Stowarzyszeń Spożywców, pp. 1–19; idem, "Pogadanki z gospodarstwa społecznego," in: idem, *Pisma*, vol. 1, op. cit., pp. 20–26.

3 A. Mencwel, *Etos lewicy. Esej o narodzinach kulturalizmu polskiego*, Warszawa 2009, Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, pp. 107–108.

4 "Be brothers and friends for each other; help one another. Whoever wants to learn, help him by loaning him books; whoever does not have a bite of bread, chip in and buy it for him—that's my advice, and not only mine but all sensible people advise the same, do the same. Furthermore, I am certain that you too, my brothers, will acknowledge it to be proper, good, and just" (E. Abramowski, "Pogadanki z gospodarstwa społecznego," op. cit., p. 26).

5 K. Krzeczowski, *Dzieje życia i twórczości Edwarda Abramowskiego*, Katowice 2018, Stowarzyszenie „Obywatele Obywatelom,” Redakcja pisma „Nowy Obywatel,” pp. 27–30.

6 Ibidem, p. 33.

the party's main goal. It is worth emphasizing that despite the deep criticism of state institutions that appeared in Abramowski's writings in the following years, he never withdrew his strong support for the idea of an independent Polish state: a "Polish People's Republic," which he imagined in an idealized way, as a radically democratic, decentralized republic.⁷

The postulate of fighting for an independent Polish state was also expressed in the propaganda brochures that Abramowski wrote in the early 1890s for the needs first of Proletariat and then of the PPS.⁸ He believed that such texts, written in simple language and referring to emotions and everyday experiences, could play an important role in informing workers and expanding the influence of the underground socialist movement.⁹ One of these pamphlets was "The Workers' Revolution," which has been reprinted in large part in this section. In such texts Abramowski usually presented the basic categories of political economy. He explained the theory of labor-based value and the

7 In one of the texts, he characterized the future "People's Republic" in this way: "it will be our rule, the rule of the Polish people. The people will rule themselves. No oppressors, no authorities. We will advise on everything ourselves, and only what we pass will become law. We will choose all the officials—from the highest to the lowest—ourselves; and such an official, elected by us, will be responsible to us and, if he misbehaves, we will be able to dismiss him immediately. We will choose the judges and teachers ourselves. In the districts, no one will have the right to interfere in our affairs, and the affairs of the whole country will be consulted with those whom we choose from among ourselves for this purpose. In each district we will choose such a one in whom we will have the most confidence as our representative, that is deputy, and the people's parliament will be composed of these representatives, chosen by us. In this Sejm, the representatives we send will deal with national issues. It will be up to them to see that everything goes well, but even they will not be able to decide more important matters without our permission, without the consent of the majority of the people. Thus before they make any law, they must first ask all of us about it; they will have to ask all the people whether they agree to such a law or not; and only when we ourselves agree that this law will be good will they be able to make it. It is the assembly of our representatives, elected by us, that is, the people's parliament, that will be the only government in the Polish Republic. There will be no emperor, no king, no prince. In the Republic, then, the government will be elected by us, the whole people, and every law will have to be approved by the people" (E. Abramowski, "Czego chcą socjaliści?," in: idem, *Pisma. Pierwsze zbiorowe wydanie dzieł treści filozoficznej i społecznej*, vol. 4, Warszawa 1928, Związek Spółdzielni Spożyców Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, p. 235).

8 In 1891 in Geneva, the brochures *Dzień roboczy* (*The Working Day*) and *Revolucja robotnicza* (*Workers' Revolution*) were published, and in the next year *Sprawa robotnicza* (*The Labor Question*) and *Co nam dają kasy fabryczne* (*What Do Factory Funds Do for Us?*). In addition, Abramowski worked on three brochures that were intended as propaganda for workers in the Kingdom of Poland (in 1893, 1894, and 1896), in connection with the International Workers' Day celebrations, and on the booklet *Czego chcą socjaliści?* (*What Do Socialists Want?*) (1896), containing a popular explanation of the socialist movement's program.

9 K. Mazur, "Edward Abramowski—człowiek syntezy," op. cit., p. XXXIX.

mechanism of exploitation, the process of capital accumulation, and the social consequences of private ownership of the means of production. He argued that strikes and the class solidarity of workers were the most effective tools in the struggle to improve the situation of each individual, and that exploitation would ultimately be stopped by a victorious revolution, whose coming was a historical necessity. He was thus presenting the interpretation of Marxism dominant in the propaganda of socialist parties of the Second International, with the typical conviction that the development of capitalism inevitably creates conditions for a revolution, which will involve the workers' seizure of power and the use of the state apparatus to socialize property.¹⁰

In order to expropriate the capitalists, the workers must begin by overthrowing their government and seizing power in the state itself ... This new workers' government will now easily be able to declare the expropriation of the capitalists and the creation of the collective property of the working people from all the means of production.¹¹

Abramowski's brochures, like other popular explanations of the socialist program of the time, can be considered fairly typical products of the intellectual culture of Marxist orthodoxy in the Second International period.¹² Although they do not offer any serious theoretical innovations, there are two elements that are nevertheless noteworthy in regard to Abramowski's later ideological evolution. First, they were politically uncompromising. Abramowski, contrary to the evolutionist scheme, avoided pointing to possible intermediate stages in the emancipatory struggle of the working class and rarely raised the issue of practical, partial reforms. The revolution and the overthrow of the existing order seemed to be his immediate and imminent goal. Second, his radical understanding of the expected socialist emancipation must be stressed. Abramowski, regardless of possible accusations of utopianism, did not stop at the promise of improving the quality of life; in the spirit of Marx's early writings, he envisioned that individuals would be liberated from the burden of paid labor in a way that would enable them to discover their full potential and build a new and richer civilization.¹³

10 G. Eley, *Forging Democracy. The History of the Left in Europe, 1850–2000*, Oxford 2002, Oxford University Press, pp. 42–45.

11 E. Abramowski, "Rewolucja robotnicza," in: this volume, p. 287.

12 A. Mencwel, *Etos lewicy*, op. cit., p. 105.

13 Cf. E. Abramowski, "Sprawa robotnicza," in: idem, *Pisma*, vol. 4, op. cit., pp. 181–190.

In addition to propaganda brochures, Abramowski at that time also worked on longer dissertations in which he attempted to apply historical materialism to research into social changes. He wrote a dissertation on feudalism (which he ultimately did not finish) and also prepared an outline for a book entitled *Capitalism*, in which he planned to present the basic developmental trends of capitalist production, the process of increasing internal contradictions, and the maturing of conditions for the system's final decay. In line with the premises of Marxist orthodoxy, he intended to devote the first part of his work to the economic "base"—the development of production techniques, the concentration of capital, the functioning of the market in conditions of progressive cartelization, and so forth. It is interesting, however, that in the second part of the book he intended (it would appear from the outline) to make a broad discussion of the changes in mentality occurring at the same time. Modern capitalism revolutionizes not only the sphere of production but, equally importantly, the human mind. Technological progress, in increasing wealth and knowledge, leads to the formation of new needs and the awakening of new desires, beyond the horizon of previous experiences. Simultaneously, due to the inevitable concentration of capital, the pauperization of the social masses is also progressing. Capitalism's inability to satisfy new needs and aspirations is therefore felt ever more keenly. The new "psychic type" finds itself in an antagonistic relationship with the environment in which it must function. Under the pressure of capitalist relations, the need for solidarity and cooperation increases:

The need for connection and association both in the field of production and in the class struggle for living standards—which has been spontaneously triggered and expanded by the development of productive forces—with the social results and coordinate development of needs, is increasingly being transferred to the consciousness of individuals and is producing there relevant concepts, theories, and feelings. In the masses oppressed by the monopoly of great capital the "social" mental current grows: the idea of social connections, social duties, the morality of mutual aid, collective efforts in the struggle for existence, the principle of supporting the other person so that he also helps me, neighborly love in deeds—as a necessary condition for the existence of the individual, as mutual aid.¹⁴

14 Idem, "Kapitalizm," in: idem, *Pisma. Pierwsze zbiorowe wydanie dzieł treści filozoficznej i społecznej*, vol. 3, Warszawa 1927, Związek Spółdzielni Spożyców Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, p. 499.

The premises of socialism, as Abramowski suggested, are therefore not only economic or political, but also moral. The end of capitalism will not be the spontaneous outcome of the abstract logic of economic processes but will occur as a result of the changes they initiate in the human mind. Such an accentuation, which is not typical of Marxist orthodoxy of the time, can be treated as a harbinger of the “ethical shift” (in Cezary Rudnicki’s words)¹⁵ that occurred in Abramowski’s thought in the following years.¹⁶

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Although Abramowski played a significant role in the formation of the Polish Socialist Party, his career as a party activist turned out to be relatively brief. In 1894, after undergoing a long treatment for his health, he settled in Geneva and began serious study of contemporary philosophical and psychological literature, while gradually withdrawing from political activity.¹⁷ The result of these inquiries was a new sociological theory, based on his own understanding of phenomenism, in which the individual consciousness—along with the needs manifested in it—is recognized as the source of social phenomena: “the generator of the social world is the human conscience—the emotional and practical conceptualization living in personal needs.”¹⁸ This was Abramowski’s starting point for critical reflection on the current policy of the socialist movement and an attempt to propose an alternative based on a proper understanding of the mechanism of social change.

His book *Issues of Socialism* appeared in 1899 and was mostly based on texts he had written over the preceding few years to critique the politics of socialist parties in light of the principles of social phenomenism. In the same year, Abramowski also published *Ethics and Revolution*, a long essay in which he argued that a “moral revolution” was a necessary condition for achieving the goals of socialism and proposed practical changes in the political tactics employed to that time. Finally, in 1904, he published an extensive treatise, *Socialism and the State*, in which he distinguished between “state socialism” and “stateless socialism” and presented the proper methods of political action for the latter. Although he developed similar ideas and used similar arguments

15 C. Rudnicki, “An Ethics for Stateless Socialism: An Introduction to Edward Abramowski’s Political Philosophy,” *Praktyka Teoretyczna* 2018, no. 1(27), p. 22.

16 B. Cywiński, „Myśl polityczna Edwarda Abramowskiego,” op. cit., pp. 45–48.

17 Ibidem, pp. 70–71.

18 E. Abramowski, “Pierwiastki indywidualne w socjologii,” in: this volume, p. 123.

in all three of these texts, his criticism of the mainstream socialist movement clearly sharpened.¹⁹ Initially, it was more of an attempt to force a policy correction “from within” in a movement of which he still felt himself to be a part. It was only in the book *Socialism and the State* that he drew his final critical conclusions and openly distanced himself from the politics of the then socialist parties.

Abramowski was formulating his criticisms during the impressive flourishing of the Second International. At the turn of the nineteenth to twentieth centuries, the ranks of workers’ organizations grew almost all over Europe, and subsequent parliamentary elections usually brought new and often spectacular gains. As orthodox Marxists like Karl Kautsky had foretold, the winds of history did indeed seem to be filling the sails of the socialists. However, the greater the political power of socialism, the more the question of when and how to use that power became controversial, as evidenced, for example, by the heated disputes over “ministerialism” initiated by the French socialist Alexandre Millerand’s joining a “bourgeois” government and by Eduard Bernstein’s revisionism. At that time, there were arguments over the role of parliament in socialist policy and the reforms being pushed through in that forum. The tension between the ethical dimension of socialism, which largely determines the dynamics and attractiveness of the entire movement, and the determinism and scientific orientation of Marxist orthodoxy, was also increasingly noticeable.²⁰ The ideological crisis in the socialist movement was significantly influenced by the anti-positivist turn—affirming individualism, vitalism, and a critique of determinism—in the intellectual culture of Europe at the end of the nineteenth century. These reorientations were expressed, among other places, in Sorel’s writings, which were inspired by Bergson’s “philosophy of life,” in the attempts undertaken by young socialist intellectuals in Germany²¹ to reconcile Marxism with Nietzsche’s philosophy, in George Bernard Shaw’s project of ethical socialism, and in Alexander Bogdanov’s ideas.²² The above-mentioned works by Abramowski also fit in this broad trend, but it would seem that—in comparison, for example, with Sorel—his criticism of the politics implemented by the parties of the Second International was highly systematic.

19 K. Krzeczowski, *Dzieje życia*, op. cit., p. 55.

20 S. Pierson, *Leaving Marxism: Studies in the Dissolution of an Ideology*, Stanford 2001, Stanford University Press, pp. 12–13.

21 S. E. Aschheim, “Nietzschean Socialism—Left and Right, 1890–1933,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 1988, vol. 23, no 2, pp. 149–155.

22 See: S. Pierson, *Leaving Marxism*, op. cit., pp. 8–27.

Furthermore, Abramowski's model for a new politics allowing the emancipatory, revolutionary potential of socialism to be regained was characterized by great originality and went beyond the intellectual schemas appearing in most turn-of-the-century debates among socialist theorists.

Before we proceed to a detailed discussion of Abramowski's critique of Marxist orthodoxy, it is worth noting the two features that he thought should determine the specificity of socialism. The first is recognition of communism as a possible and desirable way of organizing social relations in order to ensure the maximum satisfaction of needs and the elimination of antagonism between the individual and society.²³ The frequency with which Abramowski uses the word "communism" in his writings is not accidental and definitely distinguishes him from the majority of socialist theorists of the time. In the era of the Second International, communism had clearly been shifted to the margins of the political language disseminated by socialist parties. It was associated with a certain utopianism, with a distant post-revolutionary future (e.g., communism as a "higher" stage of socialism, according to the popular evolutionist scheme) or with the forms of community characteristic of primitive societies. In reaching for this concept to define the immediate goal of the socialist movement, Abramowski emphasized its radically emancipatory and community-oriented essence. Once deprived of it, socialism is doomed slowly to deteriorate or become its own caricature.²⁴

According to Abramowski, the second feature determining the specificity of socialism is its method of political action, which consists in grassroots mobilization shaping the subjectivity of the participants. In other words, from the perspective of socialism, what matters is not so much the change itself (e.g., a law limiting working hours) but whether the method that brought about the change contributed to strengthening the emancipatory aspirations of the workers involved in the struggle.²⁵ After all, according to the old Marxist aphorism, the liberation of the workers can only be their own deed. Bearing these two elements in mind, Abramowski proceeded to evaluate the political practice of the socialist movement.²⁶

23 E. Abramowski, "Zagadnienia socjalizmu," op. cit., p. 92; cf. S. Borzym, "Abramowski, filozof epoki modernizmu," in: E. Abramowski, *Metafizyka doświadczenia*, Warszawa 1980, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, p. XLIX.

24 Cf. B. Cywiński, „Myśl polityczna Edwarda Abramowskiego,” op. cit., p. 57.

25 E. Abramowski, "Ethics and Revolution," in: this volume, pp. 189–190.

26 Cf. Idem, „Socjalizm a państwo,” in: idem, *Pisma*, vol. 2, op. cit., p. 316.

As mentioned above, the propaganda of socialist groups at the turn of the century—and to some extent the theories developing at the time in orthodox Marxism—contained the strongly rooted concept of the historical necessity of socialism, which was guaranteed by the “objective” laws governing the evolution of the modes of production.²⁷ Socialism was therefore normative in nature, as a political ideology saying what should be, but it also wanted to be “scientific”—to describe and predict social phenomena on the basis of the principle of causality, without allowing for the influence of free human will.²⁸ Abramowski, from the standpoint of his theory of social phenomenalism, strongly rejected this kind of “necessitarian” interpretation of Marxism, with its characteristic schematic division into “base” and “superstructure.” In the historical process, as he explained, ideas, politics, or economic relations form a dialectical weave, interacting with each other through an individual,²⁹ who constitutes a “sociological atom.” Therefore, “the laws of economics are essentially of a psychic nature,”³⁰ as Andrzej Walicki elegantly summarized the position. Only an attempt to describe social facts that have already occurred can be of a scientific nature. Those that are yet to come constitute the field of politics, which is the sphere of non-determined (though limited) human creativity:

In politics [...] we consider social life as a thing that is somehow dependent on our individualism, which we can not only describe faithfully and know but also transform in a certain direction, based on the claim that something can or should be. Politics receives from science only familiarization with the material with which it is to operate and also certain developmental guidelines indicating the direction in which action could occur. But to all this it adds a specific element, its own, which distinguishes it essentially from all methods of science, namely, free and conscious joint action with development. In order for this joint action to have any sense, it must be based on the idea that there are various developmental tendencies in social life that can and should be assessed as human, ethical, and favorable or unfavorable to certain interests and ideals. A politics that would not first decide what is needed for a given

27 A. Walicki, *Marxism and the Leap to the Kingdom of Freedom. The Rise and Fall of the Communist Utopia*, Stanford 1995, Stanford University Press, pp. 207–208.

28 Abramowski considered this problem in detail, especially in the first part of *Zagadnień socjalizmu (Issues of Socialism)*.

29 E. Abramowski, “Zagadnienia socjalizmu,” op. cit., pp. 99–100.

30 A. Walicki, „Filozofia Edwarda Abramowskiego,” in: idem, *Polska, Rosja, marksizm*, Kraków 2011, Towarzystwo Autorów i Wydawców Prac Naukowych Universitas, p. 324.

human or collective interest would lose its basis and direction, and would cease to be politics.³¹

Abramowski admitted, therefore, that the spontaneous development of capitalist relations— for example, through the socialization of work—in fact creates conditions for the possibility of communism, but he argued that they would be insufficient unless supported by deliberate action. This was where the field for socialist politics opened. Contrary to the optimism of the proclaimers of “historical necessity,” without that politics the consequence of decaying capitalism might as likely be some modern form of feudalism as communism.³² In Abramowski’s opinion, economic determinism, which was an idea widespread in the mainstream of socialism, derived from an intellectual error, that is, from striving to formulate abstract laws that irrefutably explain social reality. As a result, theory began to dominate practice, dogma dominated life, and human beings, with their aspirations and needs, were subordinated to rules imposed on them from outside.³³

The main weakness of mainstream socialism, as diagnosed by Abramowski, was the way its political appeal was formulated. In the model Erfurt Program of German Social Democracy, a division was made between a practical “minimum program,” encompassing a number of postulates that could be implemented immediately—for example, those regarding social legislation or political democratization—and a more theoretical “maximum program,” describing the premises for a complete transformation of economic relations and the emergence of a new society.³⁴ Such an approach, although apparently realistic, in effect led to the separation of the communist ideal from practical activity. As Abramowski viewed it, the essential idea of socialism was thus reduced to the rank of mere “theoretical knowledge,” a kind of abstract description of the society of the (distant!) future, which might arouse greater or lesser interest among workers but was not a force directly affecting their lives, evoking strong emotions, or mobilizing them to act.³⁵

31 E. Abramowski, “Socjalizm a państwo,” op. cit., pp. 240–241.

32 Idem, “Zagadnienia socjalizmu,” op. cit., pp. 98–99.

33 Idem, “Socjalizm a państwo,” op. cit., pp. 253–254; cf. A. Walicki, „Filozofia Edwarda Abramowskiego,” op. cit., p. 320.

34 See: M.B. Steger, *The Quest for Evolutionary Socialism: Eduard Bernstein and Social Democracy*, Cambridge 1997, Cambridge University Press, pp. 64–65.

35 E. Abramowski, “Ethics and Revolution,” in: this volume, pp. 197–199. It is worth noting that a similar criticism, in regard to the views of Jules Guesde, the main representative of Marxist orthodoxy in the French context, was expressed by Marcel Sembat (J. Wright,

While motivated by apparent realism, postponing fulfillment of the emancipatory promise of socialism till the distant future necessarily reduced present political commitment to primarily conventional, demonstrative gestures. As Abramowski noticed, a person is usually a socialist solely in the public sphere, for example, during a May Day demonstration, during a speech, or in an election act, while the private sphere, the space of everyday life, is usually beyond the influence of the socialist idea. What distinguishes a socialist, as Abramowski explains, is not the way he acts in his daily life, because in this respect he does not usually differ much from the rest of bourgeois society, but in “festive” public and electoral activities, which through repetition gradually become ritualized. In this situation, what actually drives the socialist movement and keeps workers in the orbit of its ideological influence is only the struggle for the current interests falling within the scope of the “minimum program.” Matters such as the eight-hour working day, higher wages, access to health care, and political rights relate to the satisfaction of the working class’s real, practical needs and hence receive more attention.³⁶ In this case, there is a dialectical relationship between the need and the corresponding idea—they reinforce each other and create a force that can transform social reality. According to Abramowski, this mechanism can be explained using the example of the demand for a shortened working day: on the one hand, workers feel a natural need to limit the exploitation to which they are subject, and on the other hand, with the development of modern capitalism, they have expanding wants and interests that require free time. These aspirations correspond to the “idea” behind the activism of the socialist party, that is, the struggle for an eight-hour working day. This postulate is naturally accepted by the workers as their own and enhances their original need, creating an incentive to act: for example, to participate in a demonstration or strike. However, the struggle of socialist parties to implement the “minimum program” has two sides. The gains achieved may arouse in workers a stronger desire for a completely different life than that which capitalism affords them, and the very struggle for it strengthens the need for solidarity and cooperation. Yet partial reforms do not in themselves contribute in any way to the creation of a communist society. On the contrary, by satisfying the most pressing material needs, they may actually bind the proletariat more strongly to the existing order, especially to the state, which may be seen as the guarantor of those legally sanctioned gains.³⁷

Socialism and the Experience of Time: Idealism and the Present in Modern France, Oxford 2017, Oxford University Press, pp. 179–181).

36 E. Abramowski, “Ethics and Revolution,” in: this volume, pp. 201–202.

37 Ibidem, pp. 203–204; idem, “Socjalizm a państwo,” in: this volume, pp. 163–164.

In other words, such a program is rational only if it involves relinquishing the ambition to achieve real human liberation, which is after all the essence of socialism.³⁸

The question of the role of the state gradually gained weight in Abramowski's deliberations, and finally became the criterion for distinguishing two trends in socialism: the state socialism he criticized and the stateless socialism he affirmed. The first current definitely dominated in the institutionalized socialist movement, regardless of the noticeable tactical differences within it. Abramowski recognized that there was a deep bond connecting even representatives of the extreme wings of the socialist movement of his time, that is, the "Blanquists" who believed that the takeover of power by a revolutionary minority would provide tools for the desired transformation of social relations, and the committed reformists, who believed that the gradual democratization of the state and its regulation of subsequent areas of social life could, in the long run, lead to the implementation of the movement's "maximum program." Both were united by the conviction that it is the state that creates the framework within which a new social order would emerge, and that it is the political power, directly connected with this state, that constitutes the most effective instrument of emancipation politics.³⁹ One hundred years after Abramowski, Immanuel Wallerstein called this approach a "two-step strategy,"⁴⁰ which assumes that power must first be gained before social relations can be transformed.

In the case of both Blanquism and reformism (which can be seen as forerunners of the two most important currents of the workers' movement in the twentieth century—Soviet communism and social democracy), systemic changes were to be made from the top down, through the intervention of the state. The first of these strategies was based on the assumption that the morality of the individual is simply a product of the social system—conditioned by economic relations—in which he or she functions. In other words, in the realities of capitalism it is not possible to popularize the communist moral model and the solution should be sought in a political coup, whose success would allow for a change in economic relations, and thus, in the long term, for the formation of new moral standards. However, could such a scenario truly bring about the desired effects? Faced with this problem, Abramowski proposed an

38 See: R. Szarfenberg, "Niezwyczajna aktualność myśli Edwarda Abramowskiego," *Problemy Polityki Społecznej* 2007, vol. 10, pp. 40–41.

39 E. Abramowski, "Socjalizm a państwo," in: this volume, pp. 140–141.

40 I. Wallerstein, "New Revolts Against the System," *New Left Review* 2002, vol. 18, November–December, p. 30.

intellectual experiment which led to the irresistible conclusion that new economic relations, if they were incompatible with the principles and moral values of the individuals involved in them, would have to be artificially maintained by an extensive system of orders and prohibitions which the state would enforce by means of a growing bureaucracy and police apparatus. Furthermore, maintaining the system would require the preservation of some equivalent of capitalist surplus value, so the phenomenon of exploitation would not disappear and could even intensify, while society would consider the collective form of ownership to be something alien and imposed by force from outside.⁴¹ Despite the noblest intentions of its creators, this kind of “police communism”⁴²—said Abramowski, as if predicting the later experiences of Soviet communism—must necessarily turn into a “social monster,” the opposite of the libertarian promise in the name of which it was created.

However, it was not Blanquism but rather reformism that was slowly becoming dominant in the socialist movement and increasingly undermining the revolutionary identity of socialist parties. It is true that they still used radical rhetoric, but their political practice focused more and more on the struggle for the greatest possible influence in parliament. This deepening gap between the conventional use of revolutionary etiquette and actual activity was, according to Abramowski, an understandable and easily predictable consequence of overestimating the role of the state as a tool for implementing socialist politics.⁴³ The essence of reformism comprised two interrelated postulates: the striving for the continuous expansion of the state’s functions and the fullest possible democratization of the state. A democratic state could—the reformists assumed—become a real exponent of social interests and gradually remove capitalist logic from successive spheres of economic and social life.⁴⁴

41 E. Abramowski, “Zagadnienia socjalizmu,” in: this volume, pp. 297–298.

42 Idem, “Ethics and Revolution,” in: this volume, p. 194.

43 “Socialism, which builds its future on civic obedience to laws enacted by the will of the people, cannot, of course, habituate the people to disregard the law; it cannot with all the ruthlessness of the revolutionary force attack the state of today and undermine the moral foundations of power which live in human souls, because the necessary fear arises that such a weakening of subject-civic feelings and concepts in people may also affect the future revolutionary power, in that a person who is accustomed to criticizing the bourgeois state too independently and to abusing existing laws will not prove sufficiently submissive to the socialist state and the laws of the revolution. Here appears a blind fatalism of the logic of facts, which, in spite of all the revolutionary phraseology, forces socialism to this—that as it has proceeded on the path of its state politics, it has become a more and more reformist socialism, a party of lawful citizens, less and less revolutionary,” Idem, “Socjalizm a państwo,” *op. cit.*, pp. 303–304.

44 Idem, “Socjalizm a państwo,” in: this volume, pp. 143–144.

According to Abramowski, adopting this kind of perspective relegated the socialist movement to the role of a “state reform party,” and would lead to the primacy of political struggle in the narrow sense and to a factual resignation from attempts to have stronger influence on the sphere of morality and everyday life.⁴⁵ At the same time, it also entailed the potential risk of allowing ideological concessions in order to make political use of the superficial discontent of social groups that were essentially alien to the socialist worldview.⁴⁶ From the perspective of reformism, socialism would become in fact the work of politicians and parliamentarians skilled in their craft, while the workers would primarily be required to have organizational discipline and uniform attitudes, and to be obedient—features that are undoubtedly useful in electoral rivalry but that are basically foreign to the libertarian spirit of the future society for which socialism was fighting.⁴⁷

Furthermore, according to Abramowski, the belief that political democratization would allow the state to be a real representative of the interests of the collective did not withstand investigation. First, contrary to the optimistic assumptions of advocates of representative governments, in state jurisprudence, the legislative process, on which society can exert some influence through its representatives, is less important than enforcement of the law by the bureaucracy, which actually interprets the norms and is independent of democratic control.⁴⁸ Moreover, every state system, including parliamentary democracy, in principle entails some form of domination over various minorities, and fosters conformism and the suppression of social creativity: in practice, the path leading to some kind of innovation being approved by the majority and thus “legalized” is usually very long and not necessarily successful.⁴⁹ Abramowski, of course, recognized that democratization of the political system is a change for the better compared to authoritarian or monarchical rule, but democratization did not alter the very nature of the state as a territorial institution based on coercion and the subordination of human individuality in its infinite manifestations to abstract norms. The state, treated not as an abstract concept but as a fact of social life, is characterized by the desire to impose its own norms on an individual—under threat of sanctions—and to eliminate those features that determine the individual’s uniqueness but do not

45 Idem, *Socjalizm a państwo*, op. cit., p. 298.

46 Idem, “Ethics and Revolution,” in: this volume, p. 191.

47 Idem, “Socjalizm a państwo,” in: this volume, p. 142.

48 Idem, “Państwo i prawo,” in: idem, *Pisma*, vol. 3, op. cit., pp. 38–40.

49 Idem, “Socjalizm a państwo,” in: this volume, pp. 328–330.

fit the model enforced by the state.⁵⁰ In his treatise *Socialism and the State* he explained that

The state does not tolerate human diversity, the free development of the multiple tendencies inherent in individuality, just as dogma does not tolerate ideals and needs that can not be classified according to its formulas, and just as doctrine does not allow the perception of other facts than those that fit its logical requirements. Its entire genesis and aim of functioning appear to be the suppression of individual differences, the realization of abstractions, or more precisely, the replacement of various real individuals by an abstract human being, who thinks and behaves according to one socially established pattern.⁵¹

The orientation toward the state in the mainstream of socialism was supposed to be justified by the idea of an objective “historical tendency” toward a widened scope of state activity, as had been confirmed by analysis of the development of capitalism to that date. However, Abramowski considered that such an extrapolation was groundless and the arguments for it were one-sided, as there were numerous examples showing that organized society eliminates state mediation from successive spheres of human activity.⁵² He also stated that although it is difficult to prove the necessity of the state in an irrefutable manner on theoretical grounds, the state would most probably also exist in the future, in a limited form, due to the need to ensure external security and protect against potential attempts to break the most fundamental moral norms. The state should, however, be subjected to the constant pressure of an autonomously organizing society, which would eliminate the state’s institutions, with their compulsion and homogenization, from successive spheres of everyday life. This was the essence of the policy of stateless socialism.⁵³

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In his book *Socialism and the State*, which is an attempt to free socialism from all dogmatism, Abramowski noted that socialism’s essential core and, at the same time, the driving force of history, is the very fact of class struggle, understood as an external manifestation of the contradiction between human needs

50 Idem, “Państwo i prawo,” op. cit., pp. 53–54.

51 Idem, “Socjalizm a państwo,” op. cit., p. 256.

52 Idem, “Socjalizm a państwo,” in: this volume, pp. 156–161; 321–322.

53 Ibidem, pp. 163; 336.

and living conditions.⁵⁴ It should also be emphasized that these needs are not of a purely material nature but arise from the human desire for freedom, dignity, self-development, and fraternity. Their attainment, however, is not possible as long as social life is based on three institutions that subjugate the individual: capitalist exploitation, the utilitarian understanding of work, and the state, where social relations are subject to an abstract norm and individuality is suppressed. In keeping with Abramowski's phenomenalist orientation, however, exploitation, utilitarian labor, and the state, as social facts, are not entirely external to and independent of the individual. On the contrary, their "socialization" essentially occurs in the consciousness of the individual and is then confirmed in that person's practices.⁵⁵

From these premises, Abramowski concluded that the essence of socialist politics should be the pursuit of a moral revolution, understood as a process of transforming individual ethics in such a way that it would correspond to the communist and libertarian ideals of the communist society of the future. Just as the formation of capitalist relations of production would not be possible without the prior dissemination of new needs and ideas, so communism could emerge only on the basis of an already existing new morality. In other words, the politics of socialism should be to shape a new communist subjectivity. Consequently, while mainstream socialism eagerly appealed to resentment and proletarian anger, trying to turn them into an asset in the political struggle,⁵⁶ Abramowski's stateless socialism was to be based primarily on mobilizing and strengthening positive affects, such as empathy.⁵⁷ As Abramowski suggested, socialism's goal and the means used to achieve it must be compatible. Therefore, the essence of the politics of stateless socialism should be influences that would cause the moral model of communist society—in which fraternity, mutual aid, and respect for individuality would be internalized—to become the rule regulating everyday life. When the contradiction between the moral principles shared by the majority of society and the existing order became clearly apparent, a political revolution would be a natural necessity.⁵⁸

54 Idem, "Socjalizm a państwo", op. cit., p. 321.

55 Idem, "Zagadnienia socjalizmu," op. cit., p. 63–64.

56 P. Sloterdijk, *Rage and Time: A Psychopolitical Investigation*, New York 2010, Columbia University Press.

57 On empathy, as a feeling that is socially oriented and stimulates people to activeness and cooperation, see, among others: U. Frevert, *Emotions in History—Lost and Found*, Budapest 2011, Central European University Press, p. 178.

58 E. Abramowski, "Ethics and Revolution," in: this volume, pp. 196–197; cf. also: K. Krzeczowski, *Dzieje życia*, op. cit., pp. 129–130.

A properly understood moral revolution, however, cannot take place through individual contemplation inspired by party propaganda, as then it would not differ much from the reduction of communism to an abstract “economic and legal thesis about the future” in the mainstream of the socialist movement. The sense of the moral revolution was supposed to be the actual practice of forms of social coexistence based on principles of freedom, fraternity, and mutual aid. As a result, the new values would cease to appear solely in ceremonial political declarations and would become part of everyday life, as the internalized needs of individuals, and at the same time as a force reconstructing social reality from within. In practical terms, therefore, the politics of stateless socialism was supposed to create a space for the systematic practice of communist values. According to Abramowski, this function could be fulfilled by associations created voluntarily at the grassroots level, based on the real needs of the working classes. It was they, and not parliamentary halls or ministerial cabinets, who were to constitute “the foci of an unceasing social revolution, the unceasing transformation of relations in the direction of stateless democracy and life communism.”⁵⁹ The practice of associational life would develop the virtues of a communist society: friendship, fraternity, solidarity, cooperation, and stalwartness.

Therefore, it can be said that while the policy of mainstream socialism, in making the emergence of a new society dependent on objective premises and in referring to the laws of social development, was closer—to use the contemporary language of political philosophy—to the “transcendence” pole, Abramowski’s project of stateless socialism, by rejecting a vision of cumulative changes brought about by the state apparatus, could be placed in the “politics of immanence” stream.⁶⁰ Abramowski’s political writings are permeated with the conviction that communism was current and all its necessary conditions already seemed present *in potentia* in social reality:

Stateless socialism requires no historiosophical postulate as a starting point for its politics. [...] Politics cannot depend on any thesis or scientific theory predicting the social future, because it itself defines the future as a matter of contemporary life, as the overnight transformation of people and relationships. As soon as people begin to group themselves

59 E. Abramowski, “Socjalizm a państwo,” in: this volume, p. 337.

60 M. J. Moore, “Immanence, Pluralism, and Politics,” *Theory in Action* 2011, vol. 4, issue 3, pp. 25–56; see also: B. Blesznowski, “Utopia in the Service of Modernity: On the Sources of Cooperativism,” in *Cooperativism and Democracy. Selected Works of Polish Thinkers*, edited by B. Blesznowski, translated by M. Granas, Leiden-Boston 2018, Brill, pp. 28–29.

in order to declare a struggle for some new ideal, for some new need of collective life, at that moment a new fact enters social causation which changes the current direction of development and which the history of the future will have to encompass, regardless of the most precise predictions of theoreticians.⁶¹

In other words, it is not the abstract laws of history but people themselves, through their social practices, who will create the conditions for a new, communist society.

Abramowski first formulated specific guidelines for action on behalf of the future “party of stateless socialism” at the end of *Socialism and the State*. However, it must be admitted, in accord with Bohdan Cywiński, that his program was not particularly extensive and did not go beyond the quite obvious conclusions resulting from his earlier critique of state socialism.⁶² Abramowski indicated three basic tasks to which the adherents of stateless socialism should devote themselves. First, in order to open the field for grassroots initiatives, he postulated restricting the party’s electoral activities and possible parliamentary politics to activities aimed at limiting the scope of the state’s influence on various spheres of social life. Second, he called for the creation of voluntary people’s associations (e.g., food cooperatives, trade unions, mutual aid and insurance societies, educational associations, etc.), and third, for the promotion of a boycott of state institutions in everyday life.⁶³ These last two postulates later became the basis of his most renowned political manifesto, “A General Conspiracy against the Government,” which he wrote in the spring of 1905.



In 1904, Russia became involved in a war with Japan in the Far East. Instead of the expected easy victory, the conflict brought the Russian empire a series of shameful defeats, while exposing the inefficiency of its corrupt administration. In early 1905, after the events of Bloody Sunday in St. Petersburg, the empire was swept by revolution. At the time, Abramowski was collaborating with the

61 E. Abramowski, “Sojalizm a państwo,” op. cit., p. 318; see also: B. Blesznowski, “The self as a multitude: Edward Abramowski’s social philosophy and the politics of cooperativism in Poland at the turn of the 20th century,” *European Journal of Political Theory*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1474885120955147>.

62 B. Cywiński, “Myśl polityczna Edwarda Abramowskiego,” op. cit., p. 65.

63 E. Abramowski, “Sojalizm a państwo,” in: this volume, pp. 336–339.

Polish People's Union (PZL), a radical peasant party operating illegally in the Russian partition. It is worth adding that, while still an activist in the Polish Socialist Party (PPS), he attached great importance to socialist activism in the countryside. In a backward country such as the Kingdom of Poland, the social structure undermined the reasonableness of proletarian exclusivity and meant that other groups needed to be sought for revolutionary politics. The one-sidedness and seeming political naivety of *A General Conspiracy Against the Government* derived from the fact that it was addressed mainly to the peasants and referred primarily to the realities of rural districts.

In "Conspiracy" Abramowski stated that the situation created by the war with Japan and the revolution, which were weakening the autocratic tsarist regime, should be used for an effective fight to establish a free, democratic Polish state. The success of this struggle, however, should not be dependent on spectacular, organized, top-down political gestures, but on the implementation of a tactic similar to the one Leo Tolstoy had preached, that is, a consistent, grassroots denial of the institutions of the Russian state on the level of everyday practices. Abramowski considered state power to be not only a hierarchy of administrative offices or a codified set of abstract legal norms, but above all a kind of social relationship between the individual and specific state institutions. The institutions try to regulate everyday life and to impose their mediation in meeting people's needs. In this way the state becomes naturalized to a certain degree; the conviction is formed that it is the individual who needs the state. This, according to Abramowski, was the source of the peculiar political schizophrenia that Polish society faced under the tsarist regime: on the one hand, at the level of political declarations, it treated the Russian power as foreign and imposed by force; on the other hand, it perceived the usefulness of Russian state institutions and legal norms in everyday life. In fact, as Abramowski explained, the perspective should be reversed: it was rather the state that needed the support of citizens in order to function efficiently, and not the other way round. As he had written a decade earlier, "The life of an institution is also the psychology of the group of people that make use of it."⁶⁴ Those state institutions that were ignored by society would prove ineffective or outright unnecessary.⁶⁵

The "general conspiracy" for which Abramowski called was therefore to consist in a consistently implemented boycott of all those institutions of the Russian state whose practical activity was based on society's voluntary

64 Idem, "Pierwiastki indywidualne w socjologii," in: this volume, p. 116.

65 Idem, "A General Conspiracy Against the Government," in: this volume, p. 350. [*Pisma*, vol. 1].

cooperation, such as courts, the police, schools, and state-owned banks. The functions of these institutions were to be taken over by grassroots associations based on principles of democracy and free accession. In the pamphlet “Our Politics,” published in 1906 under the PZL banner, Abramowski specified that in each district four basic associations should be created: a farm company (an agricultural cooperative), a food cooperative, a people’s savings and loan bank, and a workers’ trade union.⁶⁶ Not only would they satisfy the needs of the inhabitants, but they would also create a space within which a culture of democratic participation, a sense of solidarity and well-understood entrepreneurship, would develop. Thus it was not a one-time insurgency program designed to create new structures of state power, but rather a grassroots project for the revitalization of the nation.⁶⁷ In this view, Polish society’s establishment of its own nation-state appeared to Abramowski to be an almost involuntary consequence of progressive self-organization: the adaptation of political reality to changes that had previously taken place within the social consciousness.⁶⁸ The network of associations developed thanks to the “conspiracy,” and the attitudes shaped by these associations, were also to create “a continuous counterbalance of free human forces against bureaucratic forces,” and would thus provide an effective protection for the freedom of the individual against the domination of the future Polish state apparatus.⁶⁹

Some PZL activists considered the program of “general conspiracy” to be impractical and utopian; conflicts ensued and Abramowski gradually became distanced from the group, which was soon destroyed by police arrests (1906–1907). Although the program of “general conspiracy” was never implemented in practice, it had significant effects—it drew the attention of the left-wing and radical Polish intelligentsia to the role that could be played by plebeian grassroots associations operating on the principle of cooperation and mutual aid.⁷⁰ This had a significant impact on the rapid development of consumer cooperatives in the Russian partition. Abramowski, who saw food cooperatives

66 Idem, “Nasza polityka,” in: idem, *Pisma*, vol. 4, op. cit., pp. 259–262.

67 Bohdan Cywiński also calls attention to this aspect (“Myśl polityczna Edwarda Abramowskiego,” op. cit., p. 77).

68 E. Abramowski, “A General Conspiracy,” in: this volume, pp. 344, 349. “Nasza polityka,” op. cit., p. 265.

69 Idem, “Organizacja kultury polskiej,” in: idem, *Pisma*, vol. 1, op. cit., p. 356.

70 For more on the subject of initiatives and organizations arising under the influence of Abramowski’s ideas during the period of the 1905 revolution and immediately afterward, see: B. Cywiński, “Myśl polityczna Edwarda Abramowskiego,” op. cit., pp. 87–92.

as the most perfect instrument of the politics of stateless socialism, was cooperativism's most important theorist in the following years.⁷¹

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Although Abramowski is remembered primarily as the Polish cooperative movement's most original ideologist and spiritual patron, his intellectual impact on Polish political life in the twentieth century was much wider. In the interwar period, his writings were an important point of reference for PPS politicians, who emphasized not only the economic but also the ethical premises of socialism.⁷² His affirmation of autonomous workers' unions and his firm preference for *action directe* over parliamentary politics caused Polish syndicalists to choose him as their spiritual patron, though it should be emphasized that this was more a case of invented tradition than of searching for deeper inspiration.⁷³ Abramowski's legacy was also an important inspiration for the left-wing democratic opposition in the Polish People's Republic. Opposition leaders such as Jacek Kuroń and Jan Józef Lipski eagerly contrasted Soviet-style bureaucratic dictatorship with the traditions of Poland's humanist left. Abramowski's ideas, with their characteristic emphasis on the grassroots self-organization of society, the creation of zones of autonomy beyond the reach of the state, and emphasis on the relationship between individual ethics and political change, were particularly well suited to the circumstances of the democratic opposition, thus it is not surprising that activists of the Workers' Defense Committee very often referred to the author of "A General Conspiracy against the Government."⁷⁴ Abramowski's spirit—as Wojciech

71 Abramowski wrote in his introduction to *Kooperatywa jako sprawa wyzwolenia ludu pracującego* [*The Cooperative as a Matter of Liberating the Working People*], which constituted a comprehensive lecture on his theory of cooperativism, that the book should be treated as the second volume of his dissertation *Socjalizm a państwo* [*Socialism and the State*]. In it, on the basis of his earlier "philosophical critique," he formulated a practical program of emancipatory politics.

72 See: R. Chwedoruk, „Nurt etyczno-humanistyczny w polskiej tradycji socjalistycznej,” in: *Doktryna i ruch socjaldemokratyczny. Historia i współczesność*, edited by E. Olszewski, Puławy 2001, Puławska Szkoła Wyższa.

73 G. Zackiewicz, *Syndykalizm w polskiej refleksji i rzeczywistości politycznej I połowy XX wieku*, Kraków 2013, Wydawnictwo Avalon, pp. 77–78; Abramowski's pupil, Konstanty Krzeczkowski, also drew attention to the similarity between the project of "stateless socialism" and syndicalism, cf. K. Krzeczkowski, *Dzieje życia*, op. cit., p. 147.

74 P. Żuk, "Edward Abramowski's concept of stateless socialism and its impact on progressive social movements in Poland in the twentieth century," *History of European Ideas* 2019, vol. 45, issue 1, pp. 73–75.

Giełżyński⁷⁵ argued in a passionate essay—also permeated Solidarity, and his views were one of the most important inspirations for the “Self-Governing Republic” program adopted at the union’s first national congress. It is also worth adding that Abramowski was an important figure for the anarchist movement (the Alternative Society Movement) which was born in the 1980s, and he is still treated today as one of the patrons of Polish anarchism.

However, Abramowski’s political writings can also be seen in a broader context, going beyond Polish political traditions, especially since the program of stateless socialism was not a response to particular problems of the Polish workers’ movement but was universal. Pushed to the margins, he could not become a practical challenge to mainstream socialism, which over time split into a reformist-oriented social democracy and the Soviet version of communism. Nevertheless, when the end of the twentieth century brought the decomposition of the two left-wing emancipation formulas that had dominated for decades, Abramowski’s predictions acquired a sort of historical accuracy. The decline over the last half century in the importance of traditional leftist political entities, such as mass parties and trade unions, combined with a drastic decline in the popularity of classical ideologies, has opened a period of intense searching for new forms of radical politics that are better suited to the realities of post-Fordist capitalism. In this context, Abramowski, in raising problems that lie at the heart of contemporary debates, may turn out to be a surprisingly up-to-date thinker, as has been demonstrated, for example, by Bartłomiej Błesznowski and Mikołaj Ratajczak, who have successfully attempted to translate the categories used by Abramowski into the language of post-operative Marxism and the theory of the common.⁷⁶ The common good, in Abramowski’s sense, is less a material object of collective production and management and more a certain space of cooperation where new forms of social coexistence—not based on the hierarchy of authority and differentiation into the subject and object of power—are shaped.⁷⁷ Free associations based on free accession and participatory democracy—which are at the heart of the stateless socialism project—can be seen as a space for the production of the common good and as disruptive of the traditional dichotomy between the public and private, along with the forms of power and social organization associated with both elements:

75 W. Giełżyński, *Edward Abramowski. Zwiastun „Solidarności,”* London 1986, Polonia Book Fund.

76 B. Błesznowski, M. Ratajczak, “Principles of the Common: Towards a Political Philosophy of Polish Cooperativism,” *Praktyka Teoretyczna* 2018, no. 1(27), pp. 98–130.

77 *Ibidem*, p. 105.

The common [...] is not really a *tertium genus*, beyond private property and public property, if that were to mean it is simply a third form of property. The common stands in contrast to property in a more radical way, by eliminating the character of exclusion from the rights of both use and decision-making, instituting instead schema of open, shared use and democratic governance.⁷⁸

In this view, Abramowski's postulated "moral revolution," with its formation of a network of free associations, can be interpreted as the institutionalization of the common that is needed for the success of the anti-capitalist project formulated by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri.

Abramowski also shares similarities with the theorists associated with the post-operaist trend in his belief in the inexhaustible creative potential of socialized labor (which can be activated when it is freed from the capital devouring it), as well as in his way of thinking about possible transitions to communism. Contrary to the views prevailing in the mainstream of the twentieth-century radical left, neither Abramowski nor the post-operaist thinkers base their revolutionary strategy on the belief that only the overthrow of the existing order constitutes the threshold beyond which it will be possible to create a new society but rather think about shaping society "alongside" and "outside" of capitalism, at the level of practices and social relations. In this sense, communism appears as a certain potentiality and not as a complement to a revolutionary teleology receding into the distant future and full of "transitional" forms of social organization. The strategy thus conceived is—to use the language of Hardt and Negri's theory—of a biopolitical nature.⁷⁹ This means that the power constituting the new communist order is not implemented in the political field in the traditional sense but is identified with life itself, with the processes of production and social reproduction. "A worker revolution is no longer sufficient; a revolution in life, of life, is needed,"⁸⁰ write Hardt and Negri, echoing the idea Abramowski formulated a hundred years earlier, when he contrasted the concept of a moral revolution with a political revolution based on a seizure of state power:

For a moral revolution—this core of every social transformation—to take place, communism should take control of people in such a way that it can be known from their very lives, their customs, their private and

78 M. Hardt, A. Negri, *Assembly*, New York 2017, Oxford University Press, p. 100.

79 B. Blesznowski, M. Ratajczak, "Principles of the Common," *op. cit.*, p. 119.

80 M. Hardt, A. Negri, *Commonwealth*, Cambridge 2009, Harvard University Press, p. 239.

everyday matters, that they are communists, people of a new type, of a new revolutionary morality, so that, upon entering among them, it would immediately be felt that this is some other human world, having nothing to do with the bourgeois world, a social life developing on completely different principles and governed by new moral motives and factors.⁸¹

Equally interesting is a parallel reading of Abramowski's political writings and the manifestos of John Holloway, another representative of modern autonomist Marxism and one of the most influential theorists of radical politics of the last two decades. Like Abramowski a hundred years earlier, Holloway criticizes the strategy of the traditional workers' movement and observes that regardless of the degree of radicalism represented, its leaders have considered the takeover of state institutions to be crucial to the transformation of socio-economic relations. Revolutionaries such as Lenin, and reformists, including Western social democrats, have both believed that the state would become the instrument for building a new, just society. However, Holloway believes that this approach contains a twofold contradiction. First, capitalism should be understood not only as the sphere of economic life, which can be regulated by appropriate legislative measures, but above all as a certain logic governing social relations, which cannot easily be changed from above, using the tools available to the state. Second, the goal of radical politics is not so much to change power relations, understood as a kind of hierarchical dependence characteristic of the state, but to completely abolish this type of power. In other words, as Holloway notes, seizure of power can hardly be considered a proper means for the elimination of power.⁸²

In Holloway's view, adopting to this kind of "state" perspective had a decisive effect on the way the twentieth-century workers' movement struggled against capitalism. The goals were prioritized, and the class struggle itself became only an instrument for achieving the most important of them, that is, state power. Creativity, the free expression of the individual, the joy of cooperation—all this was suppressed. The politics of "state socialism," as Abramowski would say, actually contributes to the reproduction of those social relations that it is in principle striving to abolish:

No matter how much lip service is paid to the movement and its importance, the goal of the conquest of power inevitably involves an

81 E. Abramowski, "Ethics and Revolution," in: this volume, p. 205.

82 J. Holloway, *Change the World Without Taking Power*, London-Ann Arbor 2005, Pluto Press, pp. 11–13.

instrumentalization of struggle. The struggle has an aim: to conquer political power. The struggle is a means to achieve that aim. Those elements of struggle which do not contribute to the achievement of that aim are either given a secondary importance or must be suppressed altogether: a hierarchy of struggles is established. The instrumentalisation/hierarchisation is at the same time an impoverishment of struggle. So many struggles, so many ways of expressing our rejection of capitalism, so many ways of fighting for our dream of a different society are simply filtered out, simply remain unseen when the world is seen through the prism of the conquest of power. We learn to suppress them, and thus to suppress ourselves. At the top of the hierarchy we learn to place that part of our activity that contributes to 'building the revolution,' at the bottom come frivolous personal things like affective relations, sensuality, playing, laughing, loving. Class struggle becomes puritanical: frivolity must be suppressed because it does not contribute to the goal. The hierarchisation of struggle is a hierarchisation of our lives and thus a hierarchisation of ourselves.⁸³

According to Holloway, radical politics cannot be based on the separation of means and ends inherited from Machiavelli. On the contrary, it should identify them with each other. Ethics and politics are one. As in the case of the politics of "stateless socialism" proposed by Abramowski, such a program can be considered one of prefigurative politics:

The most liberating struggles, however, are surely those in which the two are consciously linked, as in those struggles which are consciously prefigurative, in which the struggle aims, in its form, not to reproduce the structures and practices of that which is struggled against, but rather to create the sort of social relations which are desired.⁸⁴

In Holloway's opinion, the revolution should not be expected to come as a one-off, spectacular political event leading to the overthrow of the capitalist order. It should be thought of as a kind of "interstitial" process within the capitalist order to create and then expand subsequent breaches in which the seeds of a new society will develop.⁸⁵ Capitalist logic should be negated primarily at the level of social relations or everyday practices and replaced with

83 Ibidem, p. 16.

84 Ibidem, pp. 153–154.

85 Idem, *Crack Capitalism*, London-New York 2010, Pluto Press, p. 11.

an ethics of cooperation, selflessness, fraternity, and free creativity. In accord with Abramowski's reasoning a hundred years earlier, the "crack" capitalism of which Holloway writes is a performative activity, the practice of alternative forms of social coexistence:

That is in the nature of our cracks: they are the acting-out of a world that does not exist, in the hope that by acting it out, we may really breathe it into life; or rather, in the knowledge that this is the only way in which we can bring it into life.⁸⁶

It is also worth adding that Holloway builds his argument on the distinction between two types of power. The first is "power-over," which is hierarchical in nature, alienating, and assumes a kind of control over whoever is the object of its action. "Power-over" is typical not only for the state and its institutions, but in a broader sense it organizes all social relations developed on the basis of capitalism. The second possible type of power—or "anti-power," as Holloway expresses it in many places—is "power-to," understood as the ability to act and create, which is directed not at dominance but toward cooperation.⁸⁷ The distinction proposed by Holloway seems to offer an interesting interpretive framework for the concepts developed by Abramowski. The movement of stateless socialism, which takes the form of free associations governed by the principles of direct democracy, is a movement which, through cooperation, empowers, satisfies needs, and creates, but at the same time does not reproduce structures of power, understood as coercion and domination. In other words, it frees society from power understood in the traditional way ("power-over"), while at the same time producing in its place a kind of collective agency ("power-to") dispersed in a network of free associations, which Abramowski called a "cooperative republic."

It would seem that other similar analogies could easily be identified. For example, Abramowski's intuitions also turn out to be surprisingly close in some respects to the project of "post-capitalist politics" developed by the feminist duo of theorists Katherine Gibson and Julie Graham (who use the pen

86 Ibidem, p. 37. It would be worthwhile in this context to consider the very similar idea expressed by Abramowski in his essay *Ethics and Revolution*: "Hence, the workers' cause inexorably becomes the question of a new social world, and the politics that defend it becomes simultaneously the policy of creating this new world, which, as communism, contradicts all previous factors of human coexistence without exception" ("Ethics and Revolution," in: this volume, p. 192).

87 J. Holloway, *Change the World*, op. cit., pp. 27–28.

name J.-K. Gibson-Graham).⁸⁸ As in the case of the moral revolution and the idea of stateless socialism, the model of post-capitalist politics that they propose is in fact a project of the active and conscious shaping of a new subjectivity,⁸⁹ founded on principles that are fundamentally opposite to the logic of capitalism. Gibson-Graham's considerations are, of course, set in theoretical languages other than those familiar to Abramowski, a writer at the turn of the nineteenth to twentieth century. For them as well, though, the problem of the dialectical relationship between the individual mentality and the process of transforming social relations, which is treated as always current and possible in the "here and now," is of key importance.

If to change ourselves is to change our worlds, and the relation is reciprocal, then the project of history making is never a distant one but always right here, on the borders of our sensing, thinking, feeling, moving bodies.⁹⁰

As Abramowski also premised, post-capitalist politics requires the replacement of the affective repertoire of the traditional, twentieth-century left—which is based on resentment and anger—with a policy of reinforcing positive affects based on pleasure, mutual sympathy, and care resulting from participation in an open community respecting the individuality of its members. Such a politics takes the form of dispersed, local interventions, a kind of "micropolitics" strengthening or creating more or less institutionalized spaces regulated by non-individualist and non-capitalist ethics. Through consolidation in everyday practices and collective action, such a politics could become the foundation for a post-capitalist, community economy.

The examples proposed here seem to prove that Abramowski's writings could be used in a potentially productive dialogue with contemporary concepts of radical, anti-capitalist politics. As his language emerged under the influence of the intellectual culture of modernism at the turn of the century it is archaic from today's perspective, but his thought remains surprisingly fresh. This is due, among other things, to the horizontalism of his project of stateless socialism and his criticism—ahead of his time—of the authoritarian tendencies in the mainstream of the mass labor movement. Abramowski, who slightly anticipated Antonio Gramsci's findings, rejects belief in the autonomy of the

88 J.-K. Gibson-Graham, *A Postcapitalist Politics*, Minneapolis-London 2006, University of Minnesota Press.

89 *Ibidem*, p. xxxvi.

90 *Ibidem*, p. 127.

political sphere, arguing that the practices of everyday life are also *par excellence* political. Thus, he values individuals and their potential agency and in a certain sense enters grounds explored today by proponents of the concept of biopolitics. Unlike many thinkers of the traditional left, Abramowski does not heroize work, and he treats purely materialistic motivations as secondary. From his perspective, the sense of emancipatory politics is that they release social creativity and individual self-development. This radical humanism and the conviction that the creation of a communist society is a current task, which can be implemented “here and now,” meant that Abramowski was long seen as a utopian and dreamer. However, should this really be held against him? The history of the twentieth-century left—despite the pragmatism and realism declared by successive generations of its leaders—is full of failures, unfulfilled promises, and bitter disappointments. Wendy Brown was undoubtedly correct when, in a renowned essay, she pointed to this difficult legacy as the main source of leftist melancholy.⁹¹ Its weight stifled (or in some sense still stifles?) the imagination, preventing the left from finding a new, attractive, and socially viable language—one that would have allowed the left to regain its political dynamism in the era that saw the fall of the Berlin Wall and the decay of the Western welfare state. On the other hand, as Enzo Traverso argues,⁹² this legacy can be seen as a kind of moral obligation, or as a far-from-exhausted source of inspiration. The legacy encompasses not only the spectacular political disasters but also the unchosen paths, the forgotten minority currents, and untapped potential.⁹³ Abramowski’s example seems to indicate that they are still worth seeking.

91 W. Brown, “Resisting Left Melancholy,” *boundary 2* 1999, vol. 26, no 3 (Autumn), pp. 19–27.

92 E. Traverso, *Left-Wing Melancholia. Marxism, History, and Memory*, New York 2016, Columbia University Press.

93 Cf. D. Schecter, *Radical Theories: Paths Beyond Marxism and Social Democracy*, Manchester-New York 1994, Manchester University Press, p. 2.

Edward Abramowski's Writings



Workers' Revolution

IV

The disinherited workers today are completely dependent on the capitalists. They are free people, but what does freedom mean without bread? They sell their labor as the only commodity that belongs to them, and, having no means of subsistence, they must accept the conditions that the capitalist dictates to them. The capitalist, on the other hand, cares only about his own interests, and he can do everything with impunity because all riches are concentrated in his hands, because today the life or hunger of the expropriated population depends solely on him. His business requires the least expenditure; he buys the worker's labor and wishes to make as much profit as possible for himself from that labor, giving in return as little as possible to the worker. Thereby, such a wage has been established that allows the workers to buy the necessary means of subsistence but nothing more. The capitalist pays the worker just enough to keep the worker alive, preserve his labor power, and keep him working for him. He gives him a piece of bread just as he adds oil to the machines so they can run well, and he does it in his own interest, because what would he do if all the workers died of hunger? He must also make sure that the wages allow workers to feed their children, otherwise the old workers would die out and there would be a lack of young ones.

Such a wage, then, which enables the workers to live and feed their children, is indispensable to both the worker and the capitalist; therefore, it is widespread. It goes down when the prices of the means of subsistence fall—the prices of grain, housing, clothing, etc.—and increases with the increase in these prices.

The capitalists, who by means of machinery and large-scale production have managed to produce goods cheaper and thus lowered prices, have gained doubly by it because not only have they found more sales for their goods but they have also been able to lower wages as the price of livelihoods fell. The workers do not gain anything from the general decline in commodity prices, because their wages immediately fall as well; when, for example, in England they abolished the tariff on grain, bread in England fell considerably, and shortly thereafter the wages of English workers also fell.

In today's social order, the wages of workers can never become greater than what it costs for the indispensable maintenance of a working-class family, the most modest maintenance that will save them from starvation.

This wage is so small that it does not even allow the worker to spare a reserve fund for the time of unemployment, old age, or disease, and thus he may at any moment be threatened with complete destitution and remain like a beggar at the mercy of charity.



All the capitalist arrangements that have prevailed in the world today are aimed at keeping this wage low. First, *machines*, instead of being a relief to human labor, fell into the hands of the capitalists and burdened the workers with even greater exploitation. The machine, requiring a lot of capital, could only become the property of the capitalist; today, whoever wants to produce profitably cannot manage without a machine. There are more and more of them in all branches of industry; they render enormous services to capitalists, but deprive workers of wages and lower the price of their labor.

The machine allows the factory owner to use fewer workers; it allows him to use not only skilled craftsmen but also those who have no craft skills—simple laborers: moreover, the machine makes possible the use of women's and children's labor, which is cheaper than men's.

In a word, the machine gives capitalists a superfluity of cheap labor, and therefore the lowness of wages will be kept constant.

However, *it is not the fault of the machine but of its owners—the capitalists and the arrangements they have introduced* to the world.

Pushed constantly to want the greatest profit, capitalists implement newer and newer inventions in their production, keep long working days, and draw women and children into factories to produce as many goods as possible at the lowest possible cost. More and more often this continual production causes *crises* that throw workers out on the street.

In addition, the consequences are such that in the face of great production with machines, a whole mass of small industrialists, craftsmen, and farmers go bankrupt, turn from necessity into wage-earners, and increase the ranks of people seeking income.

The long working days that exist in factories and the use of *women's and children's labor* make it even more difficult to find a job. For all these reasons, *the number of people struggling to earn a living and ready to work for any kind of wages out of fear of hunger is increasing; therefore wages can never rise, and they remain at the lowest level.*

Low wages are a necessity of today's social system. Great production, which replaces human labor with machines, and through dispossession increases the masses seeking earnings, must cause wages to stay at the lowest level and must

ensure that there are a large number of people who cannot find work and have no means of supporting themselves.

On the other hand, the business of the manufacturer requires a long working day in industrial plants, because the longer the worker works, the more he gives the manufacturer his unpaid labor, and the more goods he produces for free. And a long working day, in addition to depriving others of wages, *also destroys the strength of the worker*, makes him sick, and accelerates ageing and death. The long working day and low wages create precisely that terrible poverty which crushes the working class today. And when a time of crisis approaches, which happens more and more often, the workers expelled from factories live from begging or die of typhus, and young girls seek salvation from destitution in houses of prostitution.

Thus, the entire present social order revolves around the profit of the great capitalists. Its main goal is to accumulate capital for the great entrepreneurs—to increase their wealth. For this purpose, small industrialists, craftsmen, and peasants are expropriated through market competition, and the number of people without property increases—the proletariat that lives off wage labor. For this purpose, with the help of machines, the labor of women and children, and an excess of working hands, a low wage is maintained, and by a long working day, the entire life of the worker turns into continuous work until the exhaustion of all forces: it ends in industrial slavery.

Thus, on the one hand, *enormous wealth grows and is concentrated in the hands of a small handful of great entrepreneurs; on the other hand, poverty and exploitation increases.*

In this way the capitalist order prepares its own death.

V

The concentration of capital in the hands of a few rich people, the collapse of small enterprises, and the emergence of large ones have other effects.

In place of small workshops and handicrafts, huge factories are built; the industry is no longer run by small foremen but by millionaire capitalists, banks, and joint-stock companies. Instead of artisans who each work separately and produce all the goods themselves, hundreds of laborers today work together in large factories; the production of each commodity consists of the labor of all of them, for by the division of labor each of them produces only one part of the commodity.

The factories, therefore, not only exploit the workers, and not only add to their ranks with bankrupt craftsmen and peasants, but also gather them and group them together.

Thus, the working class is made stronger and more aware of its interests. The masses of workers gathered in factories, working under the command of the same capital, bearing the burden of the same exploitation, increasingly develop mutual solidarity and increasingly become convinced that they constitute a class completely separate from other classes of society and that *their interests are quite separate and hostile to the interests of capitalists.*

Workers' solidarity makes it possible to resist exploitation and various injustices of the factory owner more effectively; it is produced by factory life itself and by the experience it gives to the workers. Solidarity and a sense of their class separateness, therefore, are developed in the workers by the great production that brings them together and concentrates them; it is formed as a result of the oppression the capitalists have placed them under.

Solidarity and a sense of separateness strengthen the working class; they give it strength to fight against manufacturers, to fight for its rights.

This fight is fought all over the world today; wherever large-scale industry has developed, workers organize themselves into unions, protest vigorously against exploitation, and demand various concessions from the factory owners. In this struggle, they harden their forces, hone their abilities, organize themselves into a powerful working army, and thus prepare a *revolution* that will destroy exploitation and slavery once and for all.

Thus the capitalist order, which has created large-scale machine production, concentrates and accumulates wealth, disinherits a mass of people from property, makes the workers miserable, and together with this *contributes to the growth of the working class, organizes it, strengthens it, trains it for struggle, and makes it unable to bear the yoke of exploitation any longer.*

The capitalist order is digging a grave for itself.

The enrichment of capitalists cannot do without the exploitation of workers, without the expropriation of smallholders, without large-scale production. The dispossessed increase the ranks of the workers; large-scale production brings them together, concentrates and organizes them, and exploitation constantly inspires them to a fierce struggle. A workers' revolution becomes inevitable and necessary. Neither the laws of the capitalists nor the bayonets of their armies can stop it. The abused and exploited proletariat grows, organizes, and becomes more powerful; there must come a time, then, when it will claim ownership and liberty, when it will claim a share of all the riches it has generated, when it will overthrow today's governments and disinherit the capitalists.

VI

To disinherit the capitalists from their present-day property, to deprive them of the enormous wealth and capital they hold in their hands today—this is the task of the workers' revolution, which is imminent.

Doing so is necessary, inevitable.

Capitalists and their rights are an obstacle today to the development and happiness of mankind, so this obstacle must be removed. Neither civilization nor large-scale production will suffer at all. For what is a capitalist in industry today?...

Wage laborers produce goods; hired directors and engineers run the whole enterprise; everything is done by hired people; the capitalist is not needed here at all. Whether he lives or dies, is an idiot or an intelligent man, the company will lose nothing. We see how often the owners of various large industrial companies change, and yet production continues its course; often a business owner sits somewhere on the other side of Europe and has no idea about the whole enterprise, yet the business grows and thrives.

The role of the capitalist in production today is limited to the fact that he takes all the profits for himself and seeks to have as much of these profits as possible flow into his pocket.

For the production of commodities this role is of no benefit, but it creates the exploitation of workers and poverty in the world, creates bizarre conditions such as crises, when there are masses of goods and grains in stock, unable to find buyers, and thousands of people dying of hunger and poverty, who are unable to consume these goods.

The role of capitalists, as owners of enterprises, the role of income collectors, is beneficial and necessary only for themselves, because it gives them wealth and the power to rule the world; but for mankind, for its civilization and development, it is now a disgrace, and for the working class it is a shackle. Therefore, *the working class will not fail to expropriate factories, land, and capital from the capitalists, and at the same time deprive them of power and world domination.*

The workers have every right to expropriate this; it will be no harm, no injustice.

Because what is the property of capitalists?...

Their enormous riches, their capital, arose from exploiting the labor of workers; the factories that belong to them were built by workers; the goods they sell are produced by the workers; the railroads and the ships that deliver them have been built by the workers. In a word, everything that belongs to capitalists today, which is *their legal property, all arose from the labor of the*

workers, and therefore should legally belong to them. The collective labor of the working class produces riches, and these riches, as a result of the vile capitalist laws that rule the world today, bypass their real owners, the workers, and are concentrated in the hands of a small number of idlers who have not added a grain of their labor to them.

The workers' expropriation of the capitalists will therefore only be the taking back of their own property.

Today the capitalists, in bringing the craftsmen and peasants to bankruptcy through competition and usury, are continually expropriating small owners, dispossessing large numbers of those who have acquired their property with their labor, and taking for themselves what does not at all belong to them. *The expropriation* accomplished by the workers' revolution will be quite different. Here, it will not be a handful who will expropriate the masses of wronged people, but the masses of the wronged who will dispossess a handful of exploiters, taking back the property created by their own blood, sweat, and toil.

Thus, the workers' revolution, which is the necessary consequence of great capitalist production, the exploitation of workers and the bankruptcy of small owners, in expropriating today's superfluous capitalists, will hand over their wealth and capital to all working people.

VII

The property of the capitalists, when passed into the hands of the workers, must become *the common, collective* property of the entire working class, as a product of its collective labor. Today, as a result of the enormous division of labor in all production, no commodity can be the product of one person's labor, as its production involves the work of many people.

For instance, no factory worker could indicate a piece of linen that was the product of his work alone, because other workers gather the cotton, others spin it, and others weave it into linen. Even the spinning and weaving themselves involve not only the work of those workers who directly spin and weave, but also those who operate the machines, who supply these machines with the necessary coal, who built them, etc. In this way, every commodity is produced by *social labor*.

Machines, great production, and the great division of labor which it requires have meant that all the wealth of capitalists is the product of the collective labor of workers and therefore can only be their collective property. In addition, today's large-scale production relies on factories and machines which cannot

be divided and therefore workers can only possess them as their collective property. It would be impossible and contrary to the interests of the workers to overthrow a large industry and replace it with a small one, to replace factories with small craft workshops, or to replace machines with manual craftsmanship.

The small-scale production of small workshops would not be enough for humanity today; no artisan could do what laborers do with machines, and there would not be enough labor in the world to supply all the needs of society without machines. With the collapse of big industry all civilization today would collapse, and no further human progress would be possible. Small-scale production would require the laborers' strenuous and long work, while large-scale production, with its machines, with the tremendous development of all technology, could otherwise make the work very light and reduce it to 3 or 4 hours a day. Workers would have to spend a lot of time in small workshops if they wanted to produce such things and in the amount that they produce them today with the help of machines. They would have to kill themselves with work; they would have to spend their entire lives at the workshop as they do today for the profit of the capitalists, and this completely departs from the interests of the workers and the task of the workers' revolution.

Therefore, the workers' revolution, by expropriating capitalists, must make their property the common, collective property of the entire working class.

It does not follow, however, that personal, individual property should be completely abolished. Not at all! *Only what constitutes the means of producing commodities will become common*, that is factories, mines, workshops, machines, tools, land, and all raw materials; in a word, *only capital will become the common property of the workers*; only production will remain under their common management. *But all those items that are used for personal consumption will be the personal and inviolable property* of each individual person.

There will be no property arising from the exploitive labor of others; any property will be the property of one's own labor, and as such will be truly "sacred" and universally respected. All exploitation will be made impossible once and for all, when capital, i.e., everything that is used to create wealth, will become the common property of all workers.

Thus, *the workers, by expropriating the capitalists, will make their property the common property of the entire working class.*

This is the main task of the coming workers' revolution.

Through this one act a new era of life will open to all mankind, an era of true happiness and progress.

VIII

The capitalists' possession of the means of production necessarily entails the exploitation of the workers and the poverty of entire masses of people. The workers' revolution, by expropriating the capitalists and abolishing all personal possession of the means of production, eliminates all its effects simultaneously.

The owners of capital, factories, mines, and land will be everyone, the whole society, so there will be no question of exploiting the work of one by another. Anyone working in any branch of production will be able to use all the goods he needs for his own use; the existence of poverty will therefore be made completely impossible.

From the moment of the abolition of poverty and exploitation by common possession, all the effects that this poverty and exploitation entail, such as diseases, crimes, prostitution, etc., will disappear. Today, most of the diseases that prowl among the people occur as a result of poor and insufficient food, of unhealthy, cramped, and fetid dwellings, as a result of an excess of work destroying people's forces, in a word, are the result of the poverty and exploitation that crush the working population.

It is poverty itself that creates thieves and murderers, forces mothers to abandon or kill their children, drives many to addictive drinking, and many young girls into houses of debauchery.

All this will disappear without a trace after the workers' revolution.

The workers' revolution, in destroying poverty and exploitation, thereby destroys all their consequences.

• • •

Where there is poverty, there can be no freedom. A human being's personal freedom today is a lying farce; the person who has no means of livelihood remains at the mercy of the one who has it; he becomes his slave.

The freedom of the workers today is rather the freedom to starve.

The manufacturer crushes the worker; the great landowner, the agricultural worker; and the government oppresses all with its laws, taxes, army, prison, and police. Today's government is a government of the capitalists, the rich. They pass the laws. They have the army, the police, and the gendarmes at their service. Whether they are headed by an emperor, king, or president does not much change the very content of things. Today capitalists rule, and they rule because the capital is in their hands.

The workers' revolution, in expropriating the capitalists, at the same time overthrows their governments, tears power from their hands, and by making capital the common property of all working people, also gives to all the power to govern. Only then will everyone be free, when each becomes the owner of the means of production and capital equally with everyone else; only then will no one be at the mercy of anyone and under no one's despotism.

Common property will give everyone real freedom and independence.

After the workers' revolution, people will rule themselves and issue the laws they need.

• • •

The abolition of private ownership of capital, the abolition of exploitation, will also free the working class from this excessive labor which today destroys its strength, hinders mental development, and takes away the freedom of life.

The working day in factories, workshops, and mines is now so long because the work is done for the capitalist and is under his supervision. And it is in the interests of the capitalist to use as few workers as possible, to burden each of them with the longest working day, and thus to produce a lot for little expense. It is because of this that the masses of workers have no job at all, and those who work, work excessively.

In addition, there are a huge number of people in the world who are fit for work who take no part in production at all, such as soldiers, all kinds of merchants and speculators, idlers who live off their income, etc.

If only all the workers who have no job today were admitted to the factories, the working day could be reduced to 6 hours without any harm to production; for we can see that even where there is already an 8-hour working day in all factories, such as in some of the American states, there are still many people looking for income, but unable to find it.

If, however, work were to become the duty of all healthy and not-old people, and not of just one class of people, then each working day could be only three or four hours long, and the production of goods would lose nothing. The work would be distributed among a larger number of people and therefore fall to each in a smaller quantity.

By making capital the common property of all working people, the workers' revolution thereby imposes on each person the duty to work in the social production. It thus makes complete welfare for each person possible for a small amount of work.

Let us add that technology makes significant progress with each year and that after the workers' revolution it will develop even more as a result of the

greater education of the people, giving people more and more new machines; machines, on the other hand, replace human labor, and make it possible to produce much with little expenditure of labor.

All this shows us clearly that after a workers' revolution, everyone's work will be reduced to just 3-4 hours a day; thus it will cease to be a burden for people, and will become a pleasant enrichment of their time. In this way the workers will regain freedom of life and the possibility of the full development of their strength and abilities; they will cease to be slaves of factories and machines, and will become their true masters.

The workers' revolution, by reducing working hours and thus enabling all people to benefit from the possessions of science, enabling all to educate their minds, will create such a great civilization in the world—will bring human knowledge and wealth to such a degree—as we can not even dream of today.

Thus the workers' revolution will obtain happiness not only for the working class, but for all mankind; it will give freedom and prosperity to all, and will enable all to develop and progress.

The working class, in breaking its fetters, will not force bondage or poverty on anyone; it will abolish class rule and bring true freedom, equality, and fraternity to the earth. This is where the greatness and sanctity of the workers' revolution will lie.

IX

The workers' revolution will come to expropriate the capitalists.

No one, however, voluntarily surrenders his riches and power; even less do we expect this from the capitalists. We must fight in the factories through a strike or threat for the smallest increase in earnings, the smallest relief at work.

And what then, when it comes to capital and power giving up their privileges?...It will be necessary *to expropriate the capitalists by force, for they will resist by force.*

When it comes to making humanity happy at the expense of a handful of exploiters and oppressors, there is no point in playing with sentiment; we will gain nothing by asking or by any kind of agreement. In England, France, and Germany, it took a series of workers' revolts, often even very bloody, to introduce factory legislation, shorten the working day and give workers some political liberties. Justice can be won from the oppressors and appropriators only by means of a revolution. Their reforms and promises are nothing but a bluff by which they want to hoodwink the workers and save themselves from catastrophe.

It will be of no use, however, as the workers' revolution is fast approaching. In order to *expropriate the capitalists, the workers must begin by overthrowing their government and seizing state power themselves ...*

This new workers' government will now easily be able to declare the expropriation of the capitalists and the creation of the collective property of the working people from all the means of production. Only then will the capitalists yield, because they will have to yield, and the workers' government will be able to tame any turmoil that would favor the old order.

X

The workers in their revolution will have many enemies, but even more allies ...

Their enemies will be *the government, the capitalists*, and the whole pack of their henchmen and paid friends; *the clergy* will also hold with the capitalists, for they have long indicated their hostile disposition toward the cause of labor. They will all defend their "sacred" property, accumulated by exploitation and the poverty of millions of people; having gathered around the tsar, they will defend their privileges of power and riches in the name of the fatherland and religion.

The urban workers will begin the revolution as they are more aware and able to organize themselves better and more easily, and from there it will pass on to the farm workers; it will explode in the cities, and from there it will spread to the villages.

Agricultural workers, as well as urban workers deprived of their property and living from the hire of their labor, will see their own interest in expropriating capitalists and in creating from their property the common property of all workers. The workers' revolution will make the present great estates the common property of the landless peasants, who today constitute in our country half the entire rural population, and in other countries the vast majority of it. The common ownership of the land will bring them the same comforts that joint ownership of the factories brings urban workers; it will enable them to produce a great deal of grain with little labor, because a large farm has the same advantage over a small farm as large industry has over a craftsman's workshop.

As for *the small shopkeepers and small entrepreneurs*, the owners of small workshops, constantly struggling with department stores and factories, and constantly on the brink of bankruptcy, they will favor a revolution that will overthrow the great capitalists, because they consider them their enemies. The common property of the working people announced by the workers' revolution will not be in their interests; they would like to destroy the large industries

that are ruining them, but keep their small businesses. Hence, if they take a hand in expropriating the great capitalists, they will at any rate resist their own expropriation. Their desires, however, will be ineffective; for small industry maintains exploitation and is opposed to the essential principle of the workers' revolution, namely, that the means of production cannot be privately owned. Therefore, the workers' revolution will have to expropriate these petty shopkeepers and entrepreneurs; however, it will not do them much harm, because sooner or later they would have to go bankrupt; it will only free them from the trouble of desperate struggles with the competition and enable them to become co-owners of large collective enterprises. In any event, this entire class of people will, in their own interest, assist the workers to expropriate the great capitalists. So they will be allies rather than enemies of the revolution.

Peasant farmers, the owners of small plots of land, who cultivate them with their own hands, have nothing to lose in a workers' revolution. Burdened with debts, taxes, and constantly threatened with bankruptcy by the competition of large farms, they suffer poverty today and, while working hard, can hardly feed themselves. A workers' revolution will cancel their debts, reduce taxes, and abolish onerous military service and a government that strangles them at every step, and will thus draw them along with it.

Today's government and capitalists are their enemies alike; they oppress them and lead them to utter ruin. Hence the peasant owners will have no interest in defending this government and these capitalists; they will go with the workers' revolution *en masse*, because this revolution will give them freedom, and by abolishing today's debts and taxes, will lift them out of poverty. The peasants are too attached to their land property, and they understand too little the benefits of joint ownership to be persuaded at once into joint ownership of the land ... They will not be interested in common property. The workers' revolution will not expropriate them; it will not deprive them of private ownership of their land, for they will soon be persuaded, by their own eyes, how much better and more convenient it is to have a large collective farm and will voluntarily renounce their personal rights to these small plots of land, which require a lot of work from them and give relatively little in return. Such peasants may relinquish personal property, because this property gives them neither riches nor power, but only causes them hardship and scarcity.

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This is how different classes of society will behave during a workers' revolution; in any case, the great majority will be on the side of the workers.

There are too many people everywhere interested, for various reasons, in the destruction of today's order for the government and capitalists to be able to resist effectively ... Their fall and the victory of the working class are as necessary and inevitable as the appearance of the sun after a dark night.

• • •

From all this it can be inferred what the *army's* behavior will be toward the workers' revolution. The army is not a separate class in society; the people in it change every few years. Soldiers are mostly peasants and workers taken into service; there are few noblemen there; only the officer ranks consist of them. Among those peasants and workers turned into soldiers there will probably be few of the sort who would dare to shoot their fathers and brothers—in the interests of their oppressors. A peasant and laborer, going to the army for a few years, continues still to have the same interests and desires that his family has; returning from the army, he becomes what he was. Their class interests remain the same. Moreover, military tyranny and hard service oppress them. Only ignorance and fear of punishment keep soldiers disciplined and obedient to the authorities. The behavior of the army during the workers' revolution depends to a large extent on the degree of consciousness of the general working-class and peasant population. It is certain, however, that the entire army will not stand in defense of the government and the capitalists, and very possibly it will be reduced to only generals, officers, and uniformed young noblemen, while the rest will follow the workers' banner.

XI

The moment of the outbreak of the workers' revolution is drawing ever nearer.

Industry and the enrichment of the great capitalists go madly forward, and with it exploitation and the number of the proletariat without property increases. Today the workers of all civilized countries are organized into powerful parties. In Germany, England, and France, they are already a force at which the possessive classes and the governments tremble. For a hundred years they have struggled with the capitalists; while obtaining more and more concessions from them, they have developed such class consciousness and such organizational strength that today they can boldly claim all their rights and destroy the entire capitalist order.

In Western Europe, relations between the working class and the ruling classes have come to the last stage of strain: strikes break out incessantly on all

sides; workers' parties are growing in strength and importance; governments are forced to woo the workers and announce newer and newer reforms and factory laws to ease the fate of the exploited. There is not a single city where the workers are not organized and have not fought the factory owners. The concessions gained only whet the workers' appetite; no one thinks of giving up or giving way. Exploitation becomes more and more unbearable; the final battle is inevitable.

Perhaps a decade will not pass before a workers' revolution will break out. It will not stop in one country; it will go wherever there are capitalists and workers. The red workers' banner will cross all of Europe, gathering around it all the exploited and the oppressed. The workers of all countries will unite to crush their enemies eventually.

Nothing can resist their strength then.

XII

The great workers' revolution is drawing near; it is coming.

We Polish workers should not wait for it idly; we should not let it find us weak and unprepared. We need to become as strong as our brothers in the West in order to lead the fight with victory, lest the workers' standard be dishonored.

We are empowered by organization and a clear awareness of our purpose and interests. To organize into workers' unions everywhere, to resist the factory owners everywhere, to demand all concessions from them, to develop great workers' solidarity among ourselves, to gain respect for our strength—this is the task that we must do urgently, necessarily.

A victorious struggle requires a great, strong party that would embrace all workers under its banner ... Such a party becomes a real working-class army, capable of seizing the power of the state in its hands, in order to wage the struggle with full awareness of things ... The "Proletariat"¹

1 * The Social Revolutionary Party "Proletariat" (the so-called Great Proletariat or First Proletariat) was the first workers' party operating on Polish lands. It was established in 1882 at the initiative of Ludwik Waryński. It was inspired by Marxism, popularized a program of class struggle and proletarian internationalism, and also called for the use of economic terror against factory owners. It was based on the activities of clandestine workers' circles in Warsaw and other major industrial centers of the Kingdom of Poland. It was particularly vigorous in the first several months of its existence; later its activity was paralyzed by repeated arrests of the most important activists. It was finally destroyed by the tsarist police in 1886. In the following years, almost all the Polish socialist groups and parties drew upon its tradition.

organization gave us the idea to produce such a work; we must follow in its footsteps.

• • •

The workers' party should first of all ensure that it is always faithful to its cause, that it does not contain any foreign admixtures—no notions distorted and incompatible with the great purpose of the workers' revolution.

The workers' party can have nothing to do with the tsarist government, for it is the government of the possessing classes and, by its very position, completely hostile to the workers' cause—the same as with any government, since the workers' party recognizes only people's self-government, not constrained by any despotism. The workers' party must have nothing to do with the clergy, because today they serve only the rich, recommend humility and obedience to the masters, sanctify their extortion, and consider rebellion against the oppressors to be a sin.

Nor can it have anything to do with those "*patriots*" who, under the word "fatherland," understand their own interests, want to reconcile the workers with the manufacturers, and want to put tribal [*plemiennq*] struggle and the national cause in place of class struggle and the cause of labor, that is, they want the workers, together with the capitalists, as one Polish nation, to fight against the German and Russian peoples. They are supposedly concerned with the fatherland and the Polish cause, but in fact are only concerned with diverting workers from their own cause by this call for national struggle, in order to suppress in them their sense of class separateness, the sense of wrongs suffered, and thus to protect the capitalists from the outbreak of the workers' revolution.

In this way, not only patriots but even governments have tried more than once to stem the labor movement; for example, in France or Germany, when the labor movement was on the rise, government agents quickly appeared who encouraged the French against the Germans or the Germans against the French—in the name of "national honor," "the fame of the fatherland," etc. We should not be fooled by this nonsense. *For us, German and Russian workers, as well as the workers of all countries, are brothers, and Polish capitalists are enemies.* At the heart of the nationalist cause always lie the interests of the capitalists. There cannot be national unity where there is exploitation; where one suffocates another, there can be no fraternity.

The workers' cause should remain pure and undefiled. It is as bright as the sun: *to expropriate capitalists of their property and create the common property of all workers, and thus ensure the happiness, development, and freedom of all*

mankind. This is the task the working class has before it. When workers gain freedom, they give it to everyone—in gaining happiness and prosperity for themselves, they provide it to everyone.

Our cause is too great and sacred to soil it by any compromise with the enemy.

Issues of Socialism

IV Ethical Questions and the Politics of Revolution

§ 38. Thus we come to the *practical* question of socialism. The same mutual conditioning of causal determinism and creative freedom that we considered in the philosophical principle of the phenomenon is also found in the *historical* question, that is, when we study the mutual relations of social phenomena, and their moment of transformation. When examined from the standpoint of *causation*, historical processes appear to us as a series of mutually conditioning facts between which we would seek in vain for a place to insert the creative human will; history, like nature, is afraid of a vacuum, and everything that it brings to life must have its own historical tradition. No idea can penetrate into its domain if it cannot justify itself by its origin—if it does not point to the *historical* causes that gave birth to it. But the very determinism of the mutual conditioning of facts—as a dialectic method—in revealing the continuity of life hidden in differentiated forms reduces social categories to their real element of transformation: to *the human individual* in his relationship with the social environment. Here, however, every fact of collective life finds its *subjective* side, becomes a moral fact in the human consciousness, and thereby opens up a free field for purposeful creativity, without ceasing, however, as an objective fact, to be a determined link in the historical series.

The *practical* problem is therefore only the subjective aspect of the theoretical problem, and just as the existence of the *perceived* object is inconceivable without the *perceiving* entity, likewise, any historical transformation, though thoroughly objective in nature, nevertheless necessitates its conscious and purposeful side to be surmised, because both economic and political processes are found only in *human* reality and only exist as social facts insofar as there are living brains behind them, which *deliberately* produce and fight for their needs.

§ 39. Therefore, in line with the fact that the real element of social transformations has only an individual expression and cannot be sought anywhere outside the human being, the historical problem of socialism—*the liberation of the human being by communism*—becomes at the same time its practical problem: to accomplish that *moral revolution* in human souls from which the social forms of communism will emerge.¹ All other ways of presenting the

¹ “The popular classes,” says E. Ferri, “will come to power only when they will have been prepared by a moral revolution based on an awareness of their rights and on solidarity ...

question, by reducing the purposeful action of socialism to influencing forms of social life, would be transferring the practical postulate to the realm of pure abstractions; the object of action would then be social categories *as such*, having a real existence of their own, with the removal of their human material.

But there are only three ways of understanding such a metaphysical concept: as the revelation of “Reason in itself,” a social genius that stands outside real humanity—and then it passes into the sphere of theology, and the practical problem related to it can only have the meaning of religious practices. Or we transfer the realism of social categories to the realm of nature; we connect their essence with a purely objective, factual world as a further result of the mechanism of the blind forces of matter, and in that case, considering series of phenomena themselves—phenomena in relation to each other, excluding the human being’s thinking essence—we can only evaluate them from the standpoint of the determinism of causality, finding no place for the practical problem, which can only be found where the principle of creative freedom exists, that is, in the human world. Finally, a “social category” can be considered on its proper basis of abstract *intellectualism*—as a reality of a purely conceptual nature, as what it actually, only, is. There is only one way to lead such a conceptual “existence” into the reality of life and to make the object of individual abstraction an object of practice: to reduce an abstract concept to that specific material from which it was separated as a product of reasoning, and in reducing “social categories” as concepts to their real intuitive aspect, we find nothing there but the material of *human* nature. Thus, the “category” itself remains in the spell of the wheel of intellectuality and can never get out of it, because the life reality brought out into the world ceases to be itself, loses its formal nature, transforming immediately into a living human being. Hence, just as in the world of matter it is impossible to influence form without touching a specific material—even though intellectuality allows the form to be considered separately from the material—no sorcery would be able to transfer the transformations of social forms made by legislators on paper into the reality of life other than through human nature. “Peoples,” says Marx, “do not develop by royal orders.” A given system does not impose itself on society from the outside but emerges spontaneously from the transformation of what is *real* in society, that is, the consciousness and feeling of individual persons.

The social revolution will only be possible after the moral revolution that will occur in the proletariat of the civilized world” (Ferri E., “Discoride positiviste sul socialismo,” *Rivista di Sociologia*, Aprile 1895, vol. 2, fasc. IV [Abramowski is probably quoting here an article by Enrico Ferri (1856–1929), an Italian criminologist, socialist and student of Cesare Lombroso]).

§ 40. In presenting the practical problem of socialism as *a moral revolution*, we also express the main principle of its *politics*: *that a historical fact, a reality of social life, is only that which passes as an idea through the consciousness of the popular masses*, a principle which, while starkly opposite to “Jacobinism,” is universally expressed by the motto that “the proletariat can only free itself.” In taking this position, all political action turns into a means of ideological propaganda, revolutionizing the human mind, and insofar as it can be conducted in accordance with the spirit of socialism it is an external symptom of real changes that have taken place in the consciousness of the proletariat, the objective organization of its new needs and conscious aspirations.

Hence, socialist politics rejects all reform measures coming from above and tries to transform any reform that may be demanded by the ruling spheres into the deliberate gains of the proletariat; thus if it sets itself a task of a legislative nature, such as a normal working day, the popular vote, etc., then instead of obtaining it through diplomatic influence on the governing circles, it takes its demands into the street and throws them out as slogans for the collective action of the crowds, so that they return from there demanding to be realized as *an idea* of the popular masses, bound by living roots to thousands of human hearts and brains. Similarly, in an *election* campaign where there has been the greatest accumulation of illusions and Jacobin prejudices, the method of socialist practice requires strict adherence to its rule that any mandate won only has political value for the cause insofar as it represents a real revolution that has taken place in the minds of voters; therefore, it is not the “*Stimmvieh*”² deluded by the skillful bending of the program to its superficial concepts and interests but the very socialist *idea* itself that should send forth socialist deputies; otherwise, a parliamentary representation gained by ideological deception and the flattering of backwardness must function as counterfeit coin, with no real value beyond its nominal appearance: social life will reduce it to what it truly expresses in society; it will draw to its ideological slogans that same real element of human backwardness whose counterfeit sign it has become. History, like nature, does not allow itself to be deceived and only elevates to the dignity of social facts those things that have real foundations in the society itself.

Yet despite such an obvious scientific truth, which is necessarily imposed on the human mind as soon as it becomes accustomed to viewing the phenomena of history as a strictly conditioned object and not as a convergence of randomness where everything can always be found, and despite the long series of

2 * An English equivalent would be “voting cattle”—translator’s note.

experiences which have shown the purely superficial nature of all ideological “coups d’état,” the principle of “Jacobinism” still retains its vitality and even in the socialist camp often entices people to enact political comedies.

This is due to the fact that the human mind is still subject to the metaphysical superstition—which is a modern descendant in a straight line from Jewish Messianism—that apart from the human community of society some force that shapes society may still be found and that forms of collective life imposed from outside, by state coercion, have the capacity to transform and adapt human nature. It is an ennobling theory about the salvational influences of the police knout—if the knout is in hands animated by the idea of freedom and the good of the people. The reasoning on which the theory is based can be summarized as follows: human nature, with its ideology, is the result of a social system; the slave system will always produce moral slavery, the communist system will produce moral communism, and the social system itself results only from the economic forces of society, and if they exist as material conditions enabling given forms of coexistence, then nothing prevents a simple conspiratorial initiative or parliament, in taking over state power, from implementing a given social system in order to form a new type of collective life for the masses of the people without their conscious cooperation and by use of the police. It seems quite logical: if only “factual” conditions allow for a certain transformation of the social system, then any human brain endowed with the executive power of the state, for example, an “enlightened” autocrat, could alone make a revolution and save the people in spite of the people. It must also be admitted that this is a significant simplification of the revolutionary action: instead of thousands of efforts to transform the ideology of the benighted masses of the people and instead of tending the revolution in thousands of focal points and social forms, one coup would be enough—an intelligent plot of revolutionists who could take advantage of the situation to distort history, an elegant parliamentary or palace revolution, or, what comes to the same thing, the concentration of all efforts in accord with the old maxim of the political “utopians” in order to gain some crowned head’s or president’s dictatorial power for a given social ideal.

But it is easy to see where the error of the above reasoning lies: it is the same operation of intellectualism which—artificially extracting certain abstractions from real life—takes its conceptual models for living entities and requires them to function on the basis of their own strengths, which they do not have.

Here, in the theory of Jacobinism, the political factor of social life is considered in an isolated state, as one which, while existing and functioning alongside certain economic relations and a certain human ideology, is nevertheless separated from one and the other by an absolute void, thanks to which it does

not impart anything to these adjoining spheres of social life, and every process of interaction is completely stopped. And so, human nature always adapts to the social system. Thus, having created, through the state authority, collective devices appropriate to the given material conditions, we will, after some time, obtain a communist world. The state thus becomes a purposeful operator which, by means of appropriate social institutions, transforms human nature and creates a new type of collective life. However, the state, with all its attributes, is also an integral part of the social system: political and economic relations not only rub against each other but also interpenetrate each other and adjust their characters to one another, trying, like all historical currents, to achieve a certain balance, a certain synthetic system; hence, in a political organization, the economic relations can be clearly interpreted and from them the essential nature of those facts that occur in the political arena can be known.

In order for the state, as a conscious midwife of communism, to be able to maintain a certain type of coercive economic system, with life relations not yet corresponding to human ideology and thus to human interests and needs—and such would be collectivism in contact with an unrevolutionized human mass still steeped in the spirit of the petty bourgeoisie and peasant conservatism—requires, first of all, the enormous development of the moral and physical attributes of the state. A government is needed that oversees everything, binding people with the thousand ties of its regulations, that is, a whole apparatus of bureaucracy, militarism, and the police, of executive and legislative power independent of the masses of the people. Otherwise, social institutions inconsistent with the ideological nature of these masses would collapse under any pressure on their part. Furthermore, in order for the state to maintain the moral authority of its power, through the necessary support of its material apparatus, all those methods must be put into public life that develop and maintain in crowds a *submissive* morality, respect for police laws and regulations, and recognition of bureaucratic official justice as a decisive factor in relationships between people. Correspondingly, since political and economic relations really only constitute one social life, economic collectivism must adapt; animated by the sole breath of mighty state power, in opposition still to the *old* ideology of the masses, it must in exchange pay its caretaker with a certain concession from its *historical* nature; artificially pushed into the social arena, as a result of coexisting in synthesis with a political system which is developmentally alien to itself, it contradicts itself as an objective process of human liberation. A military and bureaucratic state needs *surplus value* to maintain its ruling organism, and the more aspects of human life it transfers to its police and legal spheres, the greater part of the work of citizens has to

go to the maintenance of its administrative and military army; collectivism—sustained by the “revolutionary” state—shows its proper essence in giving birth to a monster which has been known for centuries: the exploitation of human labor and new social classes; that is, it turns into its own contradiction. On the other hand, this state collectivism misses its conscious goal, its *raison d’être*—the formation of a new communist human soul—as a result of that psychological fatalism, because neither the idea of “freedom” nor of “social fraternity” can be developed with the help of the police, though dressed in the most radical uniforms. On the other hand, it enters into a fundamental opposition to its supposed main task, because the more this factor shaping the state develops, the more its very existence requires that the traits of slavery and the individual’s antagonism to the community—which, as a revolutionary tool, it was supposed to uproot for the salvation of the people—be deeply rooted. Thus, *omnis stultitia laborat fastidio sui*.³

§ 41. In accordance with the above, the more current socialist politics approaches the self-knowledge of its historical task, the more it emphasizes its fundamental antagonism toward *state socialism* and makes its most important task the political awareness of the working classes; it aspires to negate the state by transferring all its attributes to the masses of the people, to comprehensively democratize power, which will ultimately permit a moral revolution to occur in the collective consciousness—organization into a new collective system.⁴ Thus instead of arranging conspiratorial or legal “coups,” instead of counting on some *enlightened*, reformist, or revolutionary government, on

3 * “Folly is truly its own burden”—Seneca.

4 In separate concluding remarks of the Berlin congress in 1892, it is stated that “State socialism and democracy are fundamentally contradictory.” In Liebknecht’s phrase, “State socialism is even more inimical to the essence of socialism than today’s economic stagnation, because it combines economic (state) exploitation with political slavery.” Bebel says that “A state is a necessary organization for a social system based on the advantage of one class over another. As soon as the abolition of private property ends class struggles, the state will lose not only the right to exist but also the possibility of existing. The state matters only in the organization of power to maintain the old social and property relations. With the disappearance of the state, all its representatives will also disappear: ministers, parliaments, the standing army, the police and gendarmes, tribunals and prosecutors, prison guards and customs officials, in brief, the entire political apparatus.” [Karl Paul August Friedrich Liebknecht (1871–1919) was a German socialist politician and theorist, originally of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) and later a co-founder with Rosa Luxemburg of the Spartacist League and the Communist Party of Germany. Ferdinand August Bebel (1840–1913) was a German socialist politician, writer, and orator. One of the founders of the Social Democratic Workers’ Party of Germany (SDAP), which later merged with another organization and finally became the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) in 1890.]

some *messiahs* “to introduce humanity to the promised land of communism,” socialist politics, faithful to its principle that only what passes as an idea through the consciousness of the popular masses will become a historical fact, draws this consciousness into revolutionary action, so that every gain achieved in this way may leave a new moral mark on it (on the consciousness of the people). The point is that “revolutionary ideas” should not remain formal solely for the masses of the people—an abstraction of a purely intellectual nature, sliding over the surface of human souls as ideas that are elementally alien to them—but on the contrary, they should speak to them of real life, turning objectively into new interests and social relations, because the main influence on the moral transformation is the life environment, and the concepts themselves only play a supporting role, formulating and mentally determining what is already felt and desired.

Therefore, in conducting a moral revolution, the politics of socialism is not limited to the propagation of concepts but also conducts actions for gains both in the economic and political sphere: positive actions, contained in minimal programs aimed at a partial but continuous transformation of real-life relations, so that through them new revolutionary elements may be spontaneously released in human souls. This is the purpose and historical sense of all strikes and political movements of the proletariat. However, the socialist critique of the existing system shows the impossibility of a gradual solution to the “labor question” on its basis; the economic gains of strikes, wherever they may be, must ultimately always break down against the antagonisms of the capitalist market, which falls upon them with the full weight of crises and cartel monopolies; the concessions won will always be of a relative and partial prosperity, reflected elsewhere in the gloomy shadow of poverty, until the social forces of production are freed from the yoke of private interests. In addition, all the political gains made by the people in today’s class state cannot be transformed in their further spontaneous development into *the freedom* of a communist society, and as real relations—of a certain social organization—they are of no importance for a revolutionary future that excludes from itself every state that would be its economic and moral negation. Nevertheless, socialist politics develops mainly around these positive, reformist gains of today, precisely because its entire historical task is to make a moral revolution, and every historical gain, though devoid of all value as an *objective* step toward the realization of the ideal, is nevertheless of great importance as a transforming factor of a *moral* nature. If strikes, collective workers’ institutions, and the entire political struggle for the working day and factory legislation are not aimed *directly* at the social welfare, they yet develop the solidarity and fraternity of the oppressed. In contrast to petty family egoisms, they develop in life a certain

sense of communist ideals, the need for free time and a common livelihood—as opposed to the addiction of work and the avarice of property. Although the political rights and various civic attributes that have been gained will disappear along with the class state in which they were created, they will leave an indelible mark on the human soul, the moral ferment of the *ego-archic* future, awakening in it the need for self-government and freedom, the need to look to one's own conscience as the only instance regulating one's conduct, in opposition to the servitude and moral disregard of the self which the state yoke has instilled in human nature for centuries. In this way, the various *components* of the “idea of communism,” in partially objectifying themselves in the positive gains of today, become the needs of life. From the sphere of conceptual abstractions, they pass into the sphere of living feelings and real interests, penetrating deeply into the moral nature of man; each new concession, gained through solidarity or the strength of an acquired right of political freedom, becomes the psychological focus of a radiant new feeling of solidarity and freedom, transforming them into the natural urges of the heart. This is the main basis for the essence of the moral revolution.

It should never be forgotten that what is of paramount importance for social policy is that the entire human mind, which includes all conscious motives for action, ideas, and moral concepts, grows on the *emotional*, intuitive foundation of the soul, and that it is merely a crystallization of the whole of that *unconscious* mass of cenesthesia which is the direct psychic counterpart of life itself. Thus, for each “ideology” it is always possible to find those emotional states that sustain and nourish its vitality while effectively trying to modify and adapt each new concept that enters the mind to its nature, so that very often those concepts leave in the mind only the external skeleton of words and pictures, concealing their essential content, which has been transformed beyond recognition under that influence; such an adaptation can be found in the vast mass of historical facts in considering how one and the same “idea” takes different forms and content in different social *classes*, or in different historical eras when traditionally transmitted.

Hence, it can also be argued that there is no human ideology that is not in feelings and needs, in an elemental and unconscious form—in *nuce*—, an assertion which is only another way of stating that social ideology is a product of the conditions of social life, because the only mediator that exists between the environment and the mind is human *emotionality*, that deep cenesthetic layer which gathers in its amorphous state all human needs, interests and emotions, pain and pleasure, disgust and desires, and which is nothing other than the subjective, individual form of the social environment itself, as well as the psychological form of the environment of nature. In this sense, then,

the moral revolution must also be a continuous transformation of living conditions, because just as diamonds cannot crystallize out of a solution of table salt, the communist ideology and morality cannot develop out of the slavish and egoistical underpinning of the old world.

§ 42. As we can see, the principle of socialist politics we are considering—the principle that directs all action toward revolutionizing the brains of workers⁵ and thereby states that only *from them* can a new social world be born—comprehensively explains the meaning and tactical method of this policy in connection with the historical task of socialism; and if we encounter deviations from it, as happens especially in the fight for parliamentary seats, it can only serve as the most sensitive reagent for the absorption of foreign—and even essentially hostile—elements into the socialist movement, a fact that can be completely explained historically but which can make no claim to have the sense of a proof contrary to the essential principle.

This principle, in declaring that the purposeful creativity of socialism, operating on the basis of today's economic tendencies, can derive the world of the communist ideal only from the brains of the proletariat, is only a further development, on a practical issue, of the principle that states that the only

5 The term “working class” might seem unclear to many, in the sense that it could be translated quite freely: for some it means the “working masses” in general, for others, only factory workers. However, I use it in a purely scientific sense and thus subject to strict definition. It is synonymous with the word “proletariat”: the proletariat, as a historical category, signifies *the human form of the labor force, transformed into commodities and seeking an equivalent of its reproduction in the form of means of sustaining life*. Every human being, therefore, who, in order to survive, must sell his labor wholly or partially and is thereby drawn into the process of producing surplus value, into the heartbeat of capital, belongs as such to the class of the proletariat, even if, as occurs with the masses of peasants and small artisans (and sometimes even in the class of factory workers), he were to possess a certain property which, however, could not satisfy his living needs. The limitation of the term “proletariat” to those who work in large capitalist enterprises, or to those who have *absolutely* nothing, is entirely arbitrary and does not correspond to a strict concept; the artisan who works with his tools for the “small” craft master, or the peasant working in the fields of a medium-sized farm, occupy the same economic position as the worker of the large factory; they are proletarians as real as he is, since the capitalist market equalizes all *surplus value*. Nevertheless, *property* that is not a security from the compulsory role of producer of surplus value does not exist as an economic factor and therefore cannot define a social *class*. Arbitrariness in translating the term “proletariat” is sometimes the source of fatal political errors: due to it, for example, masses of peasants, struggling with poverty and exploitation, have often been omitted from the scope of socialist agitation, only because they turned out to be owners of a cottage, cow, or patch of potatoes. This excommunication, though, always occurs in the name of the fact that class socialism is a matter of *the proletariat* itself, verifying for a thousand times the truth that “Doch eben wo Begriffe fehlen, Da stellt ein Wort zu rechter Zeit sich ein.” [“But where conceptions fail/Just there a word comes in to fill the blank”—Goethe, *Faust*, translator's note].

reality of social life is the human individual, which in the historical question of socialism manifests itself as a matter of human liberation. It could, therefore, rightly be called the principle of *phenomenalism* in politics. On the one hand, it is opposed to that “naturalistic philosophy of laziness” which, in the spirit of the old speculative ontology, claims that social facts occur *by themselves*, outside of human consciousness; on the other hand, it is opposed to the method of “Jacobinism” which, in abstracting the state from social life, seeks to make of it a new Messiah who saves humanity by means of the police. Both these trends—which are indispensable for the oppressing classes and result directly from their social position, which is burdened with so many crimes committed against humanity in the name of its good or out of fatalism—must remain silent as soon as the proletariat enters the historical arena, as a conscious negation of the entire ideology of oppression.

§ 43. This strict conditioning of communism by human moral force, by an act of the conscious will of the proletariat, makes it possible for the goal of liberating the human individual, which is contained in communism, to be considered *an ethical ideal*, without its losing any of its historical determinism. Becoming the object of conscious individual action, it turns out to be not only necessary but also *best*; what is presented from the objective angle as a determined result of historical processes shows its opposite and complementary side in the subjective domain, the only one where a *practical* issue can reside, in transforming itself into *the desired good*. It is here, moreover, that the goal acquires its proper meaning and true value.

Considered from its purely objective side, the matter of *man's liberation* as such cannot be perceived or even comprehended, for the simple reason that whatever is included in the concept of “good” or “happiness” is never found in *the object*; it belongs exclusively to the subjective domain; it is a sense of *one-self*, and by assuming an objective character, it necessarily loses its essential content, its intuitive material, and turns into something completely different. We can perfectly observe the external *facts* of evil and good, delight and pain, but only on the condition that we fill them with *ourselves*, with our own feeling or with moral intuition.

Communism, as an objective fact, reduces itself to certain forms of social life; it is common property, the social organization of work, cultural wealth, in a word, a certain group of economic and legal facts which, as a historically determined result, has only scientific value, the justification of a theoretical proposition. However, it would be of no practical value until we translated it into the language of inner *feeling*—that moral intuition which stubbornly seeks some good and happiness in everything. Both poverty and abundance, as well as oppression and freedom, in all their forms, only have a certain

meaning—a certain real meaning—insofar as they concern individual human suffering or goodness; if we separate this moral factor, all legal and economic forms of human coexistence become completely equal. Objectively, from its external side, communism is in no way better or worse than any system based on exploitation and slavery, because it is simply an area where the moral terms “bad” and “good” lose their content completely and change into incomprehensible sounds.

It is therefore clear that in the form which the social fact of communism takes when, by an operation of the intellect, the moral side of the human being is removed from it, communism cannot be the object of the practical problem that, as conscious human creativity, is socialism’s only *raison d’être*. It cannot be one not only because as a purely objective fact—a form of social life—it must have its sufficient cause in historical determinism and exclude all creativity of the conscious will but also because conscious creativity can appear only on the basis of moral intuition, a craving for good or happiness: its *raison d’être* is only in this and it is completely foreign to everything that is outside this sphere of individual feeling. This fact is the mystery of human nature itself, but it is a mystery of the same type as the mathematical certainties of time and space, which, being inexplicable and unprovable, do not need simultaneous explanations and proofs, because they are *intuitively* certain and clear. No one can explain and reasonably argue the infallibility of the truth that “time cannot stop” and yet it forces us to believe in ourselves absolutely and at the same time serves as an infallible basis for solving a whole host of real problems. Similarly, we intuitively feel that only a subjective category—happiness or unpleasantness, good or bad—can determine a sufficient cause of our purposeful action. Communism would be a matter of pure theory, incapable of summoning anyone to fight for its postulates, if we could not find or sense human *good* in it, in whatever terms it may be expressed but always inseparably connected with the category of happiness and inherently impossible to find elsewhere but in the individual realm of inner feeling.

§ 44. Having completely realized this intuitive truth that the whole value of the communist ideal is contained only in the moral interior of the human being, and that it can only be real and desirable insofar as its objective form—as a certain social system—contains the term of human “happiness,” which is individual *par excellence*, we are forced to recognize what this ethical ideal is based upon. We immediately notice that it cannot be freely defined: being the moral value of a *given* historical issue, it must have an intimate and essential relationship with it. Between the two there is a relationship not of contact or coexistence, but, as we have seen above, of a substantial *unity*, only considered from the two opposite poles of the phenomenon; the practical problem

here arises spontaneously from the very nature of *the real element* that has appeared to us in the process of historical transformation. By the same token, we have already indicated how the exploration of the ethical ideal should take place: the only point here is to be able to reduce to the terms of moral intuition those factors that determine communism as a social phenomenon.

The term "happiness," which, above all, imposes itself on every ethical ideal, does not define anything yet. For it is only a category by which the human mind grasps in anticipation the satisfaction of all conscious needs, before that satisfaction becomes a reality. Hence, when using the term as a concept of "general happiness," we are dealing with an abstract concept which, like any abstraction, contains the most varied realities of life, and to which, therefore, not only socialism, but many other paths of human creativity could lead. In its concrete form, however, it is not felt and does not exist except as a certain moment of the interior life; therefore, it changes all its qualitative content, its essential character, along with the changes of life itself, with which it creates *one* reality. Consequently, the term "happiness" cannot describe the ethical ideal, although it is implicit in it. They can both be regarded as being in the same relation to one another as form and material. We cannot imagine material without form, just as we cannot imagine "good" without some element of happiness permeating it; form, though, can perfectly be imagined without material, even if reality does not know it in this manner, just as "happiness" imagined *in abstracto* meets a lively protest on the part of our intuition, which demands that it be filled with real content. Thus, affirming the fact that "pleasure" is as indispensable to moral intuition as space is a form indispensable to "mental" intuition (Spencer), we see at the same time why this category cannot determine the moral ideal, because the ideal, apart from its conceptual forms, which belong to the sphere of reasoning, is a thing of pure inner intuition which, not belonging to the intellectual sphere, does not allow—similarly to the certainties of time and space—justifications and evidence for itself to be sought and is sufficient reason for itself. Therefore, while correctly not recognizing the existence of "innate" moral concepts, we must nevertheless acknowledge the fact of the existence of a moral intuition inseparable from the essence of a human being, who is capable not only of stating facts, of foreseeing and remembering, but at the same time of judging *what they should be*, of presenting phenomena in ethical categories of *good and evil*, of looking at them from the standpoint of binding standards, of an ideal model, in connection with a certain desire for happiness, with the desire for something better. By defining a certain ideal conceptually, we formulate only our own moral *feeling*, this inner intuition that allows us to break out of reality and desire what is not yet in it and has not been there. "Pleasure" itself is only an artificially excluded attribute of this

whole *feeling* which is indivisible for intuition and which takes the form of an ideal through anticipation and therefore cannot define it, making it necessary to guess the already existing material of intuition from which it has been separated. Accordingly, we generally believe that happiness can exist beyond the ethical ideal, and that it can even be opposed as the happiness of stupidity or vice, but that which is linked to the ethical ideal, inherent in it as its exclusive belonging, has its inborn nature, its special mark which distinguishes it in essence from all other pleasures *abstractly* related to it.

§ 45. The definition of the moral ideal of communism, which in bearing in its interior a specific human happiness unique to itself cannot be defined by the category of "general happiness," should therefore be sought elsewhere; as its roots lie only in internal intuition and could never grow on the soil of pure intellectualism, they should therefore be sought in those conditions of life that communism, as the fact of a certain social system, contains in itself: intuition is in a direct relation of influence only with the life environment and can yield only to it. *The moral ideal of communism must be subjectively the same as the form of communist system it assumes in the social environment.*

The explanation of this postulate has ready-made premises in those theses we have developed throughout this analysis; it will then only be a final synthesis, a conclusion that is forced upon premises already derived and formulated. Hence, having accepted any of the preceding theses, and having cogitated upon it, a person will then be forced to speak these last words which we will now proceed to formulate.

§ 46. The basis of the communist system is the socialization of human labor which results evolutionarily from capitalism. This socialization, as we have seen, transforms the social environment into a kind of additional organism of the individual, taking care to satisfy all his needs, as a result of which the human consciousness, liberated from life interests, is transferred to developmentally higher spheres of activity.

In order for this synthesis of individual and collective interests to occur and to abolish the life antagonism between an individual and his human environment, the mechanism of the social system—its institutions—needs to be permeated with *the social nature* of man, and instead of acting as an oppressive and enemy power opposed to individualism, to identify with it in the entire sphere of life interests; therefore, taking the indispensable *minimum* productive effort of the individual as part of a collective organization, the institutions must return to him the social equivalent of these efforts as the satisfaction of all his cultural needs; it is the principle of *common ownership*, which is only the legal form of the already existing *socialization* of work. It is clear, however, that the historical fulfillment of such a task would be impossible if, as the liberal

theory of the “struggle for existence” would have it, a human being was a self-enclosed whole, individual to the very core of his being, an isolated individual in which only personal instincts play the role of life stimuli; a society regarded as a mechanical set of individuals, as a combination of the free interaction of egoisms, necessitates the supposition that there may be a gulf between the social good and the individual—that the community may have an interest in breaking the individual, and that social justice may involve his harm. If, therefore, socialism recognizes the possibility of *socializing the individual interests of life*, if it believes that, in the state that production technology has reached today, it will be enough to abolish legal forms of economic individualization and class antagonisms so that relations between people may develop without any police pressure or hunger—factors which bourgeois liberalism considers indispensable for the sustenance of the social whole—then this, in itself, expresses the principle that recognizes the human being as a social being by nature, for which cooperation and solidarity are both a natural interest and a purely selfish instinct of self-defense.⁶

Communism, therefore, cannot be understood except as an adaptation of living conditions to the social nature of man. Everything that history creates, it creates only from the social material of the human soul; no collective system could arise without this natural cement by which the individual fuses with his human environment. However, for as long as this dual-form element (productive talents and needs, with which the life of an individual penetrates his social environment) does not obtain that relation in which the minimum of individual labor finds its equivalent in satisfying all needs, then the human being must offer large sacrifices of his work and freedom on the altar of collective civilization; social interests, in the form of exploitation and legal coercion, are opposed to individual interests; communism, on the other hand, by socializing

6 Socialism's view of human criminality is based on this understanding of the human as an inherently social being and ascribes only two sources of origin to crime: mental disease and the corrupting effects of the social system of class antagonisms. With the change of political system, with the advent of the communist era, crime will thus be reduced to pathological instances of insanity; prisons will completely give way to medical institutions, and the criminal will be treated as sick and deserving of the highest sympathy. This view is almost traditionally preserved under socialism. Owen could still write that “[W]ho should act in opposition of the society, individually or generally, could do so only by being afflicted with mental disease, individuals so acting shall be placed within a house of recovery, treated as mildly as the case will permit, and kept no longer within the house and its immediate external enclosures, than is necessary to reproduce a sound state of health” (R. Owen, *Le livre du nouveau monde moral*, translated by T. W. Thornton, Paris 1847, Paulin, 3 parts, chap. xiv [R. Owen, “The Book of the New Moral World,” in: *Selected Works of Robert Owen*, edited by G. Claeys, London 1993, William Pickering, p. 188]).

individual interests, eliminates this antagonism of historical underdevelopment and thus, in its institutions, consciously and deliberately confirms the social nature of the human being.

§ 47. But what is this social nature of the individual? In the above analysis of *the social phenomenon*, we saw that it is the very essence of the human being, the identity of the thinking subject, hidden in the phenomenal individualization, and that wherever any particle of the social world appears, the edge of the “veil of Maya”⁷ is discreetly lifted, revealing the fundamental, essential unity of what we feel directly as our self, in all human beings. If under the external pressure of objectivity we reduce ourselves to just one point of feeling, then we close ourselves in it in a cowardly manner, frightened by the vastness of the “unconscious” that surrounds us everywhere, as a completely strange and unknown power to us; in the other case, however, every social phenomenon becomes like a magic mirror where beyond the differentiated objective forms our own thinking essence appears to us in its naked purity, infinitely extended beyond the narrow scope of individual feeling which nature delimits for it.

The human being—as a specific individual—stands on the edge of two worlds: in him the social world unites with the world of nature. The first extends his individuality to the entire enormity of human diversity, which shows in infinitely variable forms the identity of a thinking being; the other, by narrowing this individuality to the awareness of organic feeling, imposes on it its phenomenal differentiation, its object limitation, conditioned by causality, by changes in time and space.

In the human individual, therefore, two individualities, which are the two inseparable sides of one real existence, are constantly opposed to each other: one is a cowardly and self-insecure individuality, limited by feeling and incapable of exceeding the limits outlined by the skin surface of the individual, as a conditioned link in a phenomenal series; it is of a lying and superficial nature because it searches for itself in a constant flow of change. The other is the thinking subject, elevated above all doubts and arguments, recognizing itself in the entire human environment, in thousands of living mirrors, as an indestructible carrier of phenomena and worlds.

Thus, while satisfying all the needs of life, which, like life itself, belong exclusively to the realm of nature, a human looks at the world from the standpoint of his sensory individuality, and any opposition that he encounters from the outside in satisfying these needs stimulates him and preserves in him even

⁷ Schopenhauer's expression, taken from the Vedas. It means the veil of illusion that phenomenal individualization spreads between ourselves and the essence of things.

more the reduction of the organic sense to the point of nothingness: his enclosing himself within the boundaries of his skin and perceiving everything outside of himself as alien and hostile to himself. And the more difficult the struggle for existence is the more his consciousness is drawn into it, the more powerful dominance this egoistic illusion gains for itself, while at the same time, as it results from the misery of existence, it is the source of all human harm and suffering, a prison around which pain and fear fulfill their vigilant and uninterrupted guard. But for the same reasons, the opposite relation must also occur. If, with the socialization of individual needs, the difficulty in satisfying those needs disappears, the antagonisms that the struggle for existence has developed between people fade away as the consciousness of the individual thereby becomes more and more redundant for the interests in life. Then what remains and develops as a shaping and purposeful factor in the conduct of an individual is his social nature, his individuality, extended beyond the limits of organic feeling and finding itself in the entire human environment.

In this sense, the living conditions created by communist institutions bring about a significant *liberation of the human being*, removing from him this blind sense of individuality which was imposed on him by the struggle for everyday existence. This is completed in a dual manner: on the one hand, the individual interest is socialized in the institutions of *the common*, which objectify in themselves their extension to the entire human community; and at the same time, this socialization *minimizes* the participation of the individual's consciousness in satisfying life needs, as a result of which his true, all-human individuality regains its decisive voice. A person who, drawn into the fight against hunger and poverty and burdened with the yoke of manual labor, is transformed into a poor animal, trembling with fear on the small patch of reality grasped by his organic feeling, on which he is focused, upon the removal of these factors gets to know himself as a thinking being, that is, he gets to know the human identity which the communist system transforms into the objective truth of life.

§ 48. Therefore, if we now recall that the moral ideal of communism must be *subjectively* the same as the form the communist system takes in the social environment and that there must be a significant relationship between the one and the other, since neither the human soul nor living conditions can be considered in artificial separation from each other, then finding the content of this moral ideal becomes an easy and very simple thing. Human identity—which objectively, in the social system, takes the form of communist institutions, which signify the liberation of humans from life's worries—in moral intuition, in our subjective perception, is *goodness*, a natural ethic of fraternity, which does not need any reasoned dogmas as the bases of its support.

Every act of goodness is only an intuitive, unreasoning knowledge of oneself in other beings, an argument in the living language of the feeling hidden in the phenomena of human identity. Similarly, any act of selfishness is a denial of one's thinking essence, a lack of recognition of it in others; it is the voice of that intuition that arises when a person reduces himself to the point of organic feeling, looking at everything outside himself as hostile and essentially alien.⁸ Hence, living conditions that force a person constantly to worry about a piece of bread, to fight for the preservation of his existence, for an economic position,

8 We find a similar concept of selfishness and goodness in Schopenhauer: "Individualization is a real *principium individuationis* and the distinction between individuals proper to it constitutes the order of things in themselves. Each individual is a being essentially different from all others. My »I« only encloses everything that I possess of real being; everything else is non-me and foreign to me.' This is the judgment for which my bones and body argue, which serves as the principle of all egoism and is expressed in fact by every act devoid of goodness, that is unjust or malicious. 'Individualization is pure appearance; it comes from space and time, which are forms created by the cognitive faculties which my brain is endowed with and which it imposes on objects; the multiplicity and differentiation of individuals as well is a pure appearance that exists only in the idea that I create for myself about things. My true inner being is at the bottom of everything that lives; it is there the same as it appears to me on my own within the limits of my consciousness.' In Sanskrit there is a specific term for this truth: 'Tattwamasi,' 'you are it.' It is revealed to us in the form of pity, the compassion which is the basis of every true—that is, unselfish—virtue and finds its faithful translation in every good deed. This is what we ultimately bring about when we turn to gentleness, to goodness, more than to justice; for then we bring our listener to this position from where all beings appear as fused into one. Contrarily, selfishness, jealousy, hatred, a spirit of persecution, severity, resentment, base joys, and cruelty come from and are based on another idea. If we are moved, happy, learning, and even more contemplating a noble deed, and especially doing it ourselves, it is because in fact we find there certainty that beyond the multiplicity, beyond the differentiation of individuals by the *principium individuationis*, there is a real unity, available even to us, because this is what it shows in the facts. Depending on which of these two thoughts prevails in us, there is Empedocles' φίλῖα (friendship) or νεῖκος (hatred) among beings. But he whom νεῖκος moves, if he could, by the effort of his hatred, penetrate into the most hated of his opponents and reach the furthest depths there, would be very surprised to discover there nothing but himself" (A. Schopenhauer. *Le fondement de la morale*, French translation, pp. 189–190 [translated from the Polish—translator's note; cf. A. Schopenhauer, *Prize essay on the basis of moral*, in: idem, *The Two Fundamental Problems in Ethics*, translated by Ch. Janaway, Cambridge 2009, Cambridge University Press, pp. 253–254]). The principle of human identity, however, does not have psychological and social premises in Schopenhauer and does not have the character that we give it here as the strict result of sociological phenomenalism. Included in the concept of the world as will, it is rather closely related to the principle *Ἐν καὶ πᾶν* of the Greek philosophers, and even more so to the idealistic monism of the books of the Vedas, as Schopenhauer himself repeatedly points out; it is the identity of the universal substance, the will and the unconscious life in itself, upon which the knowing subject is only and conditionally grafted here and there. (See: Schopenhauer's *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*).

always develop selfishness as the moral underpinning of human behavior and consequently an enormously complex code of dogmatic morality. Like every fact of nature, egoism, being a denial of the essential nature of man and reducing him to a phenomenal individualization, needs detailed justifications, conditions, and definitions for each act in which it manifests itself; the proof is all those moral codes that the social orders to this time have been unable to do without.

In contrast, goodness, which is a moral expression of man's liberation from the struggles of life—a response to the socialization of individual interests—as an intuitive emotional revelation of human identity, the essential nature of man, is at the same time *a negation* of all moral codes, and it rejects with contempt conditions and justifications of all kinds, because it is itself universally and unconditionally sufficient; no one needs any moral justification for a deed of goodness, just as he needs no special conditions to justify this deed to himself or others; while piles of books of the desperate sophistry of intellectualism and the age-old seriousness of dogmas guarded by the state police must constantly protect and have recourse to the morality of selfishness to which the poverty of life has degraded man.

§ 49. Hence too, goodness, which by its nature opposes all the justifications and conditions of dogmatic morality, is also *a negation* of theological religion—an atheism of its own kind, if it is possible to apply this word, which is so deeply steeped in intellectualism, to what moves completely beyond the intellectual grasp. If goodness is conditioned by anything, be it a reward or a punishment, or a revealed commandment or any external factor of a utilitarian or theological nature, if it seeks its justification anywhere outside of itself, then it ceases to be itself, completely contradicting its character, which can't stand motives. This *self-sufficient* character corresponds perfectly to what it is.

As the emotional intuition of human identity hidden in nature, goodness appears only when the essence of the human finds itself in other individuals, when, having broken the veil of phenomenal individualization, it gets to know itself as the substance of the human world; with every act of goodness, the great mystery that unfolds in it, surrounding it with such a halo of incomprehensible beauty, is based on this: that my individuality, contrary to the sensory bounds of nature, penetrates to other people—that despite the absolute difference between my sensory surface and someone else's surface, I am still able to perceive others' sufferings as my own and to react to them even *organically* at the expense of my *own* suffering. Accordingly, the justification of goodness by anything external to it is just as absurd to moral intuition as the justification of the subject, our self, is an absurdity for reason.

On the other hand, if the intuition of goodness is completely locked in the enchanted circle of human unity, and only finds its sufficient cause in it, so that everything that can be answered to the question “why should I be good to someone?” is reduced to the sole reason “because that someone is a human being,” and if, moreover, it cannot cross this circle, because everywhere else, both in the realm of inanimate nature and in the superhuman realm of metaphysical beings, it completely loses its value and all sense, it is clear that this intuition of goodness—as long as it is considered in its inherent nature as an emotional manifestation of the real unity of human beings—must exclude all theological dogma as superfluous and foreign to it, as it cannot transcend the sphere of humanity, and that, while becoming the basis of the natural *religion of fraternity*, it also becomes the negation of any religion that seeks its foundations outside of it.

The nature of all *dogmatism* is based on the fact that a sufficient cause, both for action in practice and for justification in theory, is sought outside the sphere of *the human being*. It (dogmatism) appears, therefore, as an indispensable intellectual product of limiting human individuality to the point of organic sensation. Then the human consciousness, encountering the incomprehensible and terrifying non-ego, as something completely alien to itself—as sensed by its relative and vain nature, conditioned by a whole multitude of facts in the field of the “unconscious”—must somehow sort this mass of contradictions which constitute the content of existence, and at the same time, being its transitional link, it seeks outside itself, in what terrifies and oppresses it as a foreign spontaneity, some deciding element that would also be a moral justification for everything that does not find such justification in human intuition. This task, in turn, is assumed by intellectualism, giving the products of its own abstraction the value of real entities, in order to then be able to refer to them as premises of an intuitive reality. Living conditions play a primary role in this psychological genesis of dogmatism, because they determine, first of all, the extent to which the individuality of the human being can develop toward his social nature, depending on the relation they place him in with regard to the human environment. For as long as they maintain the antagonism of individual interests, burdening the individual with the entire concern for his existence, the dogma of “Jehovah” will be as necessary to uphold *morality* as the dogma of the “State” is to maintain class exploitation.

§ 50. Correspondingly, it would be a philosophical error to wish to preserve any dogma by taking away its social morality or by transferring it to a human world that would be the contradiction of today’s relations. Between the theoretical and practical side of all dogma there is the closest, most intimate connection: in theory, it is always connected with ontological realism, if by this

name we denote all the currents of thought that ascribe absolute value to the facts of human consciousness and thus transport them beyond the realm of the human being and his experiences; in practice, in line with the above, it seeks a criterion for proceeding in these very abstractions, which in theory it raises to the significance of real and supra-human beings, subordinating the human being to something that is beyond him, as a certain metaphysical power. Both sides must therefore oppose what we have defined as *the negation of dogma*, the moral ideal of socialism.

Goodness, which can only find a sufficient cause in itself, if considered as a conscious moral ideal could only be expressed in *a theory* by that principle which reduces the whole world of metaphysical realism to the phenomenon of human consciousness (as we have seen in the whole course of this work). Therefore, it is in principle completely contrary to the position of dogmatism, and in *practice*—which is always only a kind of mirror for the theoretical expression—it thereby expresses a complete negation of dogmatism and the subordination of everything to the human being.

This antagonism could be illustrated in the following examples, which could easily be filled with facts that illustrate the exclusively *human* nature of the criterion in the practice of socialism. When it comes to economic issues, for example, the dogmatist is always focused on the interests of domestic *production*; he calculates the national wealth and puts the budget of a country or state first, not caring how the human individual appears under the impressive figure of national income and economic burdens. The socialist, on the other hand, looks at the interests of *the producers*; in the deafening progress of great industry, he listens to the complaints of the factory slaves and, in the multi-million riches of the nation, which spreads the fame and power of the fatherland to distant markets, he sees, above all, the human being's labor under the yoke; in the national budget he looks for the family budget as a real economic reality, and through the flowing rivers of gold he sees the dark abyss of human hunger. The same is true for political matters. A dogmatist for a national power is ready at any moment to sacrifice the freedom interest of the individual; neither the strengthening of government authority, or of militarism, or any special rights frighten him when it comes to the interests of the nation-state; for him, *the raison d'état* sanctifies all sacrifices of human welfare. For a dogmatist, the question of "national independence" becomes a question of transforming a geographical map; his "political freedom" is first and foremost the freedom of *the nation* not of man, and what this freedom will be for the human individual—to what extent it will loosen his police and economic bonds—is pushed aside for him as a secondary issue. The socialist, on the other hand, judges all political affairs only from the standpoint of the vital interests and the *historical* interest of

the working class. He compares them to human *poverty* and therefore to what exists only as concrete and individual, and no other criteria, such as “raison d’état” or “national ideal,” can exist for him. In line with this, for example, German social democracy, on behalf of the moral interests of the working people, who are oppressed by militarism, protests against the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine,⁹ and condemns *the festival of Sedan*¹⁰ as a celebration of national hatred and the brutal force of the state; it also behaves similarly in regard to the liberals’ passage of exceptional rights for Jesuits and the police Kulturkampf with Catholicism and Polishness, combating these ideals of progress in order to preserve real human freedom—in order to weaken the police attributes of the state. The same difference is found in other practical matters. For example, non-denominational and Catholic dogmatists—in the interest of *moral principles and the cleanliness of the street*—demand police regulation of prostitution by forcibly registering women in “houses of tolerance.” On behalf of the human dignity of fallen women, the socialists defend them (see Bebel’s and Stadthagen’s¹¹ speeches in the German parliament in December, 1892) against the imposition of a hideous police stamp and do not allow thousands of human beings to be sentenced to a prison of licensed debauchery for the sake of “the cleanliness of the street.”¹² Or, when it comes to “justice,” the dogmatists look for it in a legal code or deduced ethical concepts, while socialists look for it in the interests of the suffering human being. Moralists, who judge killers harshly and in cold blood hand over the heads of criminals to the guillotine, look on with complete indulgence at the slow killing of women and children in factories by the excess of work and by air poisoning, or at explosions in coal mines, which kill hundreds of workers, simply because *the letter of the law* does not condemn these crimes. One typical example is found in the polemic that bourgeois scholars conduct against the idea of nationalizing the land. On this point, socialists do not consider the *legal* side of the expropriation act, whether or not such an act without indemnity is compatible with the spirit of civil law; they are only concerned with whether mankind would gain or lose from it, nothing more. “Scholars” consider the issue of expropriation by law to

9 * Most of Alsace and part of Lorraine were attached to the German Empire in 1871 after Prussia’s victory in the war with France.

10 * Sedantag—a holiday celebrated in the German Empire to commemorate the Prussian army’s victory in the Battle of Sedan (September 2, 1870).

11 * Arthur Stadthagen (1857–1917) was a lawyer and SPD (Social Democratic Party) activist and from 1890 a Reichstag delegate.

12 In reading these parliamentary debates, the Evangelical scene where the Pharisees and Jewish rabbis, people of dogma, bring to Christ a woman condemned to stoning for adultery, comes involuntarily to mind.

be fundamental and, finding no basis for it in the civil code, judge expropriation to be an act of barbarism. Garofalo,¹³ for example, says that “Collective farming would not mean the disappearance of individual property, *for* if the ideas of *justice* that prevail and have always prevailed in human society do not disappear, expropriation cannot take place without indemnity, which would only be replacing one type of property with another.”¹⁴ Similar examples could be multiplied by thousands, marking a strict demarcation line which, in the method of thinking alone, clearly separates dogmatism from socialist ethics.

§ 51. However, in order to understand all the importance that socialism’s ethical ideal has for it, we need to examine more closely the nature of the relationship that exists between theory and practice in general. This is all the more important as socialism, by its very nature, is above all a *practical* issue, and its motto is “not so much to explain the world as to *transform* it,” and any transformation, as a task of conscious human creativity, necessarily requires its own criterion, a certain ethical ideal which would guide it. If, on such a practical problem, there is a theory explaining what always happens, it must only be a mental elaboration of this ethical ideal which is the gravitational point of practice and must not impose foreign elements on it or trade it in the marketplace of intellectual sophistry, where every concept, due to its detachment from the primary source of intuition, acquires the properties of a universally exchangeable commodity.

For what is practice and what is its relation to theory? We will explain this with psychological examples. All our simplest activities, through which the practical sense of life is manifested, take place on the basis of axioms and of the theorems of geometry, mathematics, and physics. The external life of individuals—what is called “coping” in the spatial and material world—would be impossible if their practice and conduct went against, or did not universally and strictly adhere to, such “eternal” truths as that the straightest path between two points is a line, or that where there is one body there cannot be another, or that two quantities equal to a third are equal, and so on. Therefore, some secret, instinctive knowledge must be supposed of all those truths of physics and mathematics to which everyday life practice applies so infallibly, achieving the desired results from these innate premises; yet that practice is by no

13 * Raffaele Garofalo (1851–1934) was an Italian lawyer and criminologist, a student of Cesare Lombroso. He was the author of many works devoted to the sociology and psychology of crime and to criminal proceedings. In 1895 he published a treatise entitled *La Superstizione Socialista*, from which Abramowski quotes here.

14 R. Garofalo, *La Superstizione Socialista*, Rome 1895, Roux Frassati e C., pp. 64–65, italics—EA [translated from the Polish—translator’s note].

means always accompanied by formal knowledge of these truths, much less of their formulation or scientific justification. Having no idea of geometry and mechanics, most people nevertheless apply the most important geometric and mechanical principles and conclusions in their daily habits; moreover, this use has become an indispensable condition of their lives, a characteristic of prime utility, and therefore cannot be regarded as mere randomness. In wishing to look further for similar examples of *intuition* ability, we find it in the arrangement of tones or lines according to the strict laws of musical or architectural harmony, though theoretical knowledge of these rules is lacking, or in the sometimes astonishing deliberate intelligence of sexual selection, for which the human mind has not yet arrived at a conceptual formulation, and in many other facts of everyday life that would take too much space to list—because they can be found in almost all areas of our conduct. In all those cases where a human being, without being formally aware of it, applies as closely as possible the rules of balance, harmony, spatial relations, etc., the practice turns out to objectify the perfect knowledge of these rules, although this knowledge has not yet been translated into concepts, or grasped in formal statements, and is only of a purely intuitive nature, not expressed in thought and its verbal symbols; therefore, it is not “knowledge” in the proper sense of the word but rather a *pre-thought sensation* of a certain reality, a subject’s most direct contact with it, in aiming spontaneously, without the mediation of thought, to project it outside, to reproduce it all the more surely in that it does not pass through the sophisticated snares of a reasoning thought.

Every thought product—representations, concepts, and judgments, that is everything that can be formally expressed in words and sentences, which is subject to reasoning and the rules of logic—is only an organized development of a certain intuitive state, which by itself, *in statu nascendi*, only has the psychological value of a feeling. The action of arbitrary apperception breaks down this state of emotional intuition and reveals the diversity concealed in it in separate members of thought, uniting them at the same time with the homogeneity of a common origin; it performs the role of analysis and synthesis, which are here one and the same function of the thinking subject, the conscious will: what is synthesized is only what is genetically derived from a uniform source, and it is synthesized because it is the product of an analysis by a certain uniformity. The simplest concept of a specific object is only an indefinite feeling that arises under the action of a given stimulus, until a whole galaxy of memories is systematized around it, making from a nameless moment of an emotional nature a defined and named *concept* that can enter into formal judgments and reasoning, that is, into the socialized part of the human soul.

All practice is a direct, objective manifestation of that emotional intuition which has not yet organized itself mentally; it is, equally with thought itself, the product of intuition, because both result from the same source: the wealth of the soul, latent in an unnamed feeling; each, however, translates this concealed wealth in its own way, into the language of theory or practice. Thought develops them into concepts which, in being symbolized as words, seem to separate themselves by means of this artificial shield from the living maternal intuition, while practice, in objectifying them externally, develops a given intuition into a series of *facts*, i.e., into sources of a new intuition.

Therefore, practice, in preceding or accompanying a theory, contains the same intuitive content and, translated precisely into the language of thought, reveals a certain kind of *knowledge* hidden within itself, of which it is the direct and living spokesman. To think something is to consider a given intuitive *reality* in its refraction and reflection, in the conceptual elaboration and word symbols into which it has been transformed and broken down by the analytical and synthetic action of the thinking subject. *To do* something means to come in contact with that same intuitive reality—to have to deal with it itself, not with the concepts in which it is reflected but with what provides the material for the concepts: that which is their living source.¹⁵ Hence too, performance (practice) gives new material for thought, because being a direct external objectification of intuition itself—its expression in real facts—it creates new sources of intuition, new objects of research; thought, on the other hand, cannot provide new material for practice, since it is itself only a symbolistic development of intuition and is incapable of showing a new practical way until it is supported by a new set of experiences. This is confirmed by the great efficiency of the experimental method, when compared to the sterility of the speculative method. Both in our contact with nature and in social life, practice opens up new sources of theory; in the first case, it gathers new insights, brings to light new material phenomena; in the second, it creates historical facts, without which social life would not be accessible to our knowledge. In both cases, it can be said that a human being, as a practical being, itself creates the material for its abilities.

The superiority of practice over theory is most clearly revealed to us in *morality*. A noble act carries a certain invincible charm which commands all skepticism to remain silent; it can only be compared to the effect that beauty

15 Only in this sense is it possible to comprehend Marx's words in his "Remarks on the Materialism of the 18th Century": "A man should prove the truth of his thinking by practice, that is, prove that it has real strength and does not stop on this side of phenomena" [translated from the Polish—translator's note].

has on us. We accept all theories of morality indifferently, but in wanting to assess their value, we turn to their practical application. The suspicion that we usually have in regard to ethical doctrines is only an expression of this instinctive distrust of human intellectualism as a tool of learning the truth, of unbelief, in order that it might faithfully reflect its essence without distorting its complex psycho-social apparatus. Moral practice, on the other hand, satisfies us completely; an act of kindness, a heroic sacrifice, speaks for itself: it does not need any comments or philosophical proofs. On the contrary, even the most subtle sophistry, the richest induction, would be incapable of awakening in us internal recognition for acts of selfishness or of inspiring sincere contempt for heroism and self-denial; even when we mentally give in to one of these intellectual idols, e.g., when we formally convince ourselves that all heroism and sacrifice is a psychological abnormality, a neurosis, a deviation from the "healthy" type of human, we still cannot free ourselves from this intimate spell which, despite the mocking sophistry of thought, penetrates us deeply when encountering the simplest act of self-denial and goodness, and which can reach our soul even through a whole flood of desires and passions, often stopping the brutal hand of anger, commanding respect and silence from the most insolent vanities and selfishness. If, however, we want to translate this moral intuition of deeds into the language of thought, we find a great poverty of concepts that can be applied here, the utter incompetence of intellectualism to express what *goodness* expresses in practice; one simple maxim, accessible to the least trained minds, expresses almost everything that thought can express in moral intuition, showing at the same time to what extent theory and human speech do not rise to the magnitude of the moral task—how they can only grasp a small fraction of the enormity of the intuition latent in acts of goodness, and of which they, these acts, are such a faithful and clear spokesman. We feel in them some wordless, mysteriously silent revelation, which is at the same time such a clear revelation of the essence of things, the highest truth, and struck by its splendor, we are therefore inclined to look with contempt even at human intellectualism, which is imprisoned by expressions, entangled in the web of sophistry, and inherently infirm. Whoever could translate *goodness* into the language of reason—transfer it from the realm of pure intuition into a set of apperceptive tools and make it an object of scientific thinking—would have spoken the highest word of wisdom and arrived at a philosophical concept of the essence of everything.

The perception of these facts of our inner life makes us see the nature of the relationship between practice and theory: on the one hand, practice, as a *direct* expression of intuition, can not only speak for itself but can even correct the sophisticated impostures of thought, as the best guarantee for them and test

of the truth: to make a move is the best way to prove that movement exists. On the other hand—theory and practice, coming from the same source of pre-thought intuition, and being parallel though different in nature and being a more or less perfect development of that nature, remain in a close relationship of correspondence, of genetic cohesiveness, explaining each other: whoever chooses the straight path to cross the finish line sooner—that is, the follower of the appropriate axiom of geometry, regardless of whether he possesses it as a mental formulation or is quite unaware of it, and vice versa—a clear understanding of the formulated physics and mathematical certainties occurs only when we transfer their content to intuition and practice.

Having become fully aware of the relationship between the two great facets of life, in which the same intuition is viewed, taking the different form of facts or concepts, the standpoint of practice or theory can be occupied quite at will, in order precisely to evaluate and express one or the other. If both these ways of manifesting a certain reality are not in a loose and essentially alien relationship with each other, but are, on the contrary, genetically fused with each other, then it is clear that we can make judgments from practice about the theory behind it, and from theory we can draw conclusions about the practice that is potentially contained in it. There where the subject of theory and practice is the life of thinking creatures—that is, our direct intuition, from which only a fraction is available to rational thought, and the enormity of which is sunk in subjective depths—practice, as a direct spokesman of intuition, has a decisive advantage over theory and should serve as a test of its purity.

§ 52. It will now be easy for us to understand why socialism, which, as a primarily *practical* matter, focuses entirely on its ethical ideal, cannot be reduced to a particular economic or political issue, but embraces the whole of the human question, including the aspect of forms of social life such as philosophy, religion, and morality, and consequently it opposes not only the present social system but also its entire ideology, being unfit for any compromises with dogmatism. The antagonism that occurs here is comprehensive and inexorable; it is, in the strict sense of the word, a clash of two whole worlds which, as mutual negations, are essentially and wholly mutually exclusive; the struggle of the old world—dogma—against the new world of the liberated human being.

Just as the ethical ideal of socialism was revealed to be only the final synthesis of its theoretical issues, we could take the opposite path and arrive at its theory from the practical test of socialism. For if socialism appears in its practical problem as a defender of *the human being*, as a swordsman for the liberation of the human individual, by the same means it gives us a testimony to its philosophy, in spite of all the sophistry that tries to connect with its name. Its practical postulate, translated into the language of philosophical theory, is

nothing but the principle of phenomenalism which the human brain considers as the center and support of the entire world of existences available to us. To act in the name of the human being, as in the name of the supreme being, to whose interests everything should be subordinated, means recognizing human thought as a sufficient principle of everything, as the *vis formativa* of the world and life, through which everything exists and breathes the truth of reality.

Dogmatism (both in its spiritualistic and materialistic form), in moving outside the sphere of human thought with its laws of time, space, and causality, necessarily poses the problem of “the first cause and *absolute* laws” and spreads a metaphysical yoke over man, on which he can safely lean a whole hierarchy of calculating or blind “gods,” personal or impersonal, ranging from the biblical Jehovah to the “spirit of the race” and the “state-reason” of the Hegelians. And the phenomenistic method, in killing at its source all “ontological realism” with its requirements of *the Absolute*, liberates man once and for all from the age-old nightmare of unsurpassed, heavenly despots, in whatever guise—a materialistic fate or a theological providence—and in bringing the entire overwhelming vastness of the universe and its laws to the principle of *the phenomenon*, as an attribute of the human brain, it places on the hitherto humiliated and enslaved forehead of the human being the royal diadem of “divinity,” and tells him, “without your thought, there is no existence; the whole world of your experience and your metaphysical delusions—draws all the reality of its being from your own brain.” This is the old mystical principle repeated in a newer form: “You should not seek God outside yourself.”¹⁶

Such a philosophical position corresponds at the same time to the strictly historical task of socialism, which takes upon itself the fulfillment of the ethical ideal by means of the socialization of the life interests of the individual, and is strictly in line with the nature of this ideal, which, as a *sufficient* intuition of goodness, incapable of transcending the human realm, by its nature constitutes *the negation* of religion and morality, that is, the practical side of dogmatism. This also explains why the individual genesis of socialism, in individual persons, usually begins with a protest of feeling against all humiliations of the human being, often even in terms of purely private relations, even though it might superficially seem that socialism—as a matter which has

16 “The critique of religion ends in the doctrine that man is the supreme being for man; thus it ends with the categorical imperative to overthrow all conditions in which man is a debased, enslaved, neglected, contemptible being” (K. Marx, *Einleitung zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie* [K. Marx, “A Contribution to the Critique to the Hegel’s ‘Philosophy of Right,’” in: idem, *Critique of Hegel’s ‘Philosophy of Right’*, translated by A. Jolin and J. O’Malley, Cambridge 2009, Cambridge University Press, p. 131]).

only been conceptually formulated and which appears in our consciousness as a result of judgment—should also have an intellectual beginning. Moreover, instinctively we almost always look to the emotional side of the human being as a test of the psychological value of his socialism, and seeing in someone an intuitive ability to forget all “gods” for a suffering human, we strongly believe that a word of propaganda will suffice to open his mind to the acceptance of a great idea—the destroyer of the old world.

Socialism and State

v The Politics of Stateless Socialism

The politics of stateless socialism finds a point of support in development tendencies quite opposite to those on which the politics of state socialism rests, namely in the tendencies to unite and voluntarily work together which increasingly characterize modern capitalist society.

In declaring as a fact of development that under the influence of capitalism the social role of the state and its omnipotence in questions of human life are continually expanding, we must simultaneously declare that this same capitalism develops within itself an eternal antagonist of the state: cooperativism in various forms, which, in allowing people to satisfy their manifold and ever-newer economic and cultural interests beyond the reach of the state, thereby weakens its social and moral significance. This is a logical contradiction, the juxtaposition of two mutually exclusive concepts, but the dialectic of history often offers this kind of contradiction—to the bafflement of theoreticians who want to resolve the questions of life by way of a rational thesis.

The regulation of social conditions that great capitalist production needs in order to obtain ever newer colonial markets, the customs protectionism, and the increasing police oversight, which the interests of the population require due to the conditions of wage labor and the dependence of consumers on producers, with the resultant, ever newer monopolies of the state and its branches of nationalized production, and the corresponding growing expenditures of the government and growing differentiation of an army of bureaucrats—all these factors converge at one pole of social life, strengthening and democratizing at the same time its organization of coercion: *the state*. On this basis, the politics of socialism has developed.

Simultaneously, however, social life is changing significantly faster than the state; increasingly, new difficulties emerge which the heavily standardized machine of bureaucracy is incapable of managing. In accord with the nature of the economic and class struggle developing on the underside of great production and the great capitalist market, a resolution must be sought in cooperativism. Thus, too, all the needs of the struggle against exploitation and the capitalist monopoly, the struggle with poverty and the stagnation of minor production, and all the interests of general culture, education, and health, find their expression in self-establishing institutions, in associations of various types, and in various tasks, before the state grants a right of existence to those interests and needs and draws them within its legislation. As a result, at the

opposite pole to the state a stateless society is organized, which continually adapts to every change of circumstances, and, by living in direct contact with the individual human being, is capable of expressing the entire free variety of life and types of people, ideas, and interests, in contrast to the state organization, which systematizes and standardizes everything. On the basis of this fact, a new politics of socialism can develop, parallel to the state.

We also see that the striving toward economic collectivism, which the politics of the socialist parties is trying to introduce into the state by means of democratization and the expansion of the state's functions, will come to be realized through the development of free institutions, in workers' trade unions, in consumer and agricultural cooperatives, and in other social self-help associations. This is a natural and necessary phenomenon, independent of ideology, because with today's development of production techniques and the market, any kind of economic task or defense of life interests can only appear in the form of an association. Therefore, the intentional expansion of collectivism through a political party could occur not only by means of the decrees of parliament and socialist ministers, but by preparation of the masses for that final revolution which is continually fleeing into the future and on whose back rests the entire weight of the realization of an ideal—it could also occur as a continual, partial revolution, gradually transforming ever more areas of human relations, squeezing under all the slogans and characters into the very core of social life, while being conducted by those who are the most directly interested and according to models that self-develop during the struggle. In the first case, the question of revolution is presented as a thesis for proletarian governments to implement with the help of the bureaucracy, while trying to deviate as little as possible from the basic schema. It is the work of dictators, who want to make humanity happy by force. In the second case, the revolution grows from the depths of social life; it catches fire in a thousand different places and is a matter not of the future but of this day.

In this evolutionary framework, the creation in socialism of a party that would resist the expansion of the state and would be a conscious representative of self-developing stateless collectivism is a historical necessity. In spite of all the objections that the contemporary socialist school can advance against such a position, it could sooner or later appear on the historical stage as the force behind the liberation interests of the human being, of the still growing diversity of individualisms and social groups. All the cultural and political factors are aiming in this direction.

First, in the very evolution of capitalism and the associated class struggle there are processes that enhance individualism and bring to the forefront the liberation interests of the individual. The development of great production

and the market, the intrusion of industrial forms into agriculture, the cultural and economic dependence of the countryside on urban concentrations of the population—these are factors which in fact homogenize the conditions of existence, conducing all provinces and countries encompassed by modern civilization to one international model, but at the same time *making human life much more complex*. Caught in the great market, the small agricultural producer or artisan must break with the simplicity and uniformity of the former small farm world, where his well-being and his struggle for existence were dependent solely on the climate and the local soil, or on the local market of neighborhood needs. Previously unknown economic and political questions enter his personal life—industrial and agricultural crises, protective tariffs, colonial policy, trusts, disturbances in the grain and money markets—which require an appropriate practical response, and create new needs and new methods of struggle. The struggle is complicated by the proletariat and the bourgeoisie to the degree that various branches of production differentiate and become mutually dependent on each other, while simultaneously adapting to ever more distant markets; it requires continual and ever more varied organization; it takes the interests of the worker beyond the borders of a given factory, and even beyond the entire trade, uniting them with the entirety of social and political phenomena, with the interests of workers in other trades and other countries.

In this way, the needs of the human being *multiply*; what was formerly entirely far away and a matter of indifference, now appears to be essential, individually important, requiring from him a certain action, participation, defense; his personal life is ever more strongly harnessed with the affairs of state policy, with the progress of knowledge and technology, with questions of general culture and the national economy. Yet every new need of individual life becomes a commissure for a new unification of people; it creates suitable associations and institutions, with the result that the same individual, instead of belonging to one social group, as in former societies, becomes simultaneously the member of various associations, the “intersection point” of various organizations, each of which has a different part of his soul and develops from another area of his needs. This intersection in one individual of varying and partial social groups means that his individualism, which is not subject entirely to one collective, is separate from other individualisms by virtue of its own characteristics, because the variety of life relations and social influences among which the individual lives create thousands of combinations and present extensive fields for the development of all kinds of deviations and novelties. In completely homogenous groups the strength of group feeling is so great that it does not allow for any individual departures. Primitive societies,

whose basic trait is the lack of all differentiation and complication, do not recognize the right of the individual, or contractual rights, which regulate voluntary relations between people: "Here a law of repression in its entirety prevails, enforcing the respect of collective beliefs; the individual does not belong here to himself alone. *Agitur non agit.*"¹ However, the originality of individuals grows with the increase in the number of social groups to which they belong. Individuals then become, as Simmel says, exceptional syntheses, which are not repeated twice. Clearly, this impact of the complexity of social circles on diversifying individualisms applies only to free associations, which can change and replace one another, as required by individual needs, beliefs, or feelings; in these conditions, every human difference has a chance to develop according to its inherent value, because the existence and durability of the associations and institutions it creates will depend solely on the strength of the initiative and organizing talents.

Capitalism influences the development of social diversity and the ensuing differentiation of individualisms in yet another manner. Large-scale production and the industrialization of agricultural properties, industrial stagnation and expropriation all result in the continual movement of populations, and the drawing of people from various provinces and countries, various nationalities and religions, culturally and racially different people, toward great cities and industrial regions. In comparison to former movements of populations in pre-capitalist times, today's cities and industrial provinces—and even those that are purely agricultural, in which large-scale production is developing—present an ethnographic and cultural mosaic, a rupture between territory and race and type of civilization, which is further accentuated with every progression of capitalism, every new breakthrough in production techniques and life conditions. The result is a certain natural *divergence in needs and goals developing within the borders of the same territorial society*, a certain resistance in adapting to uniform institutions and organizational forms, which must express itself in the striving to multiply and differentiate associations in order to satisfy differences of culture, belief, temperaments, and feelings, which cannot be reduced to one collective expression. On the other hand, the intersection of different ethnographic elements increasingly tends toward replacing a society with a mix of races with a society of *multiracial individuals* [*mieszkańców*]. The varieties that emerge in this manner, to the degree that they blur racial separations, become less stable, are transmitted with more difficulty to their offspring, and are not

1 See: C. Bouglé, *Idea równości. Studium socjologiczne*, translated by Z. Poznański, Lwów 1903, Nakładem Polskiego Wydawnictwa we Lwowie, p. 137 [C. Bouglé, *De Idées Égalitaires. Étude sociologique*, Paris 1899, Félix Alcan Éditeur, p. 139].

capable of perpetuating themselves as permanently different. A mixed-race society thus breaks races down into a collection of individualities and consequently becomes ever less capable of uniform and permanent models of life. In comparison with the anthropologically pure clan societies [*spółeczeństw rodowych*] of the past, which so easily bore the regulation of life via ancient traditions and customs, leaving no place for deviation or individual freedom, the only things that are homogenized and permanent in today's civilized nations are those that rest on coercion by the police. Wherever the norms of state legislation do not reach, the striving for diversity appears. In artistic creation, religion, morality, philosophy, in the exact sciences, in social ideals, and in the understanding of happiness and the struggle for its realization, we see a still-growing process of the differentiation of human thoughts and feelings, the intersection of an ever greater number of all kinds of schools, directions, and methods, which oppose each other and emerge from that struggle even more differentiated. Politically isolated and independently developing provinces and small feudal states were distinguished from each other by their psychological and cultural diversity—the diversity of their art, beliefs, social ideas and knowledge—but just as with racial diversity, that variety was territorial and caste-based. Nearly every province and social class had its separate culture, but within the borders of the same province and class a uniformity of race and social psychology reigned, leading all individualities to the same collective expressions sanctified by tradition. In lifting territorial and caste separateness, and in disconnecting different races and cultures from territory, capitalism and the political centralization it introduced have created a complex society, a changeable society of hybrids [*mieszkańców*], in which the intersection of the most varied trends and imitative circles means that no collective can entirely and completely control the individual. There thus arises the need to make the individual's life independent of an outside will.

The entire struggle with the dogmatism of thoughts and feelings—which created the great streams of the Renaissance, the Reformation, romanticism, free thought, positivism, and the numerous philosophical and artistic currents of the present day—contains at its basis nothing other than the historical conflict between growing individual diversity and the uniform norm that tries to level and suppress it: between thinking that is alive and variable, and socialized thinking in routine models. In the same way, the struggle for legal and economic *equality*, which drew the masses under the standard of bourgeois revolutions and which today with much greater strength is seeking its resolution in socialism, also derives from that conflict between individualism and social forms that do not acknowledge it. The idea of equality appears primarily as a demand of the excluded, and the stronger the person's personality is, the

stronger *it* is. The first premise of equality—the natural not logical premise—is the demand for acknowledgement of my individuality, *my* human rights, not the rights of an abstract human. The struggle has emerged not from a new theory of natural rights produced by jurists—just as it does not arise today from socialism's theory about the historical task of the proletariat—but from the widening needs and life relations of the human being, from his individualized sense of human value. The equality of individual rights, given the still growing natural diversity of individuals which capitalism is developing, is actually a liberation from standardized and universal state norms. It is the equal ability of everyone to satisfy their own needs and develop their lives according to their own patterns. The same tendency is embedded in the base of *the democratic movement*. All developmental stages of democracy, such as securing freedoms of belief, propaganda, and association, and universal suffrage, the election of officials, the right of referendums and initiatives, and further, responsive representation and the expansion of the people's control over the administrative functions of the state, aim to make the social institutions more moveable, more adaptable to the variable interests of different groups of people, in order to ensure the influence of each separate individuality on legislation and collective life, if only by opposing it. Thereby, too, democracy goes in tandem with the growth of capitalism, which both through its economic and its anthropological influences destroys human homogeneity. It would be unnecessary and devoid of all natural vitality in an undifferentiated society, where all people had the same interests and understood life in the same manner. The despotic monarchies of the East, which have been immobile for centuries, are an example.

That original tendency of democratic movements creates, however, its own contradiction, the same as the state tendency of capitalism does. A dual phenomenon of the historical dialectic occurs. On the one hand, all the factors of economic development that produce the intervention of the state in social life, and that increasingly make politics economic and cultural and combine it thereby through a thousand links with the personal interests of individuals, thus strengthen the power and vitality of the state at its very source—in individual elements. On the other hand, that same economic development and interference in the individual sphere of various socio-political questions makes the life of the human being more complex; it produces the need for various struggles and various associations; it develops his separateness and individual energy. Contemporarily, the process of capitalization, which requires the growth of state forces, with administrative and legal standardization, also causes that modern migration of peoples, that crossing of races and cultures, whose result is also the growth of individualism and social diversity.

Capitalism thus develops statehood, but simultaneously develops its antagonist; at the same moments, the forces of history are preparing the development and destruction of the same thing.

Democracy arises from that contradiction. The fusion of the state with the broader field of personal interests of the human being creates a natural need to participate in state affairs, in legislation, administration, and external policy. That need grows, however, along with the development of factors that are antagonistic to the state—social and individual diversity—and becomes an expression not only of the solidarity of the individual with the state organization but also of the interests of the free individual in opposition to the homogenizing, coercive norms of that organization: an expression of the struggle that individualism and various human groups undertake against the all-leveling social force of the state.

These interests, however—the interests of freedom, which become the more vital the more individualism and social diversity increase—cannot find their satisfaction in the democratization of the state. At the basis of democratic governments lies the principle of the majority, the principle of a number, which requires the assumption of the existence of individuals of equal value, who compose society. Only in a uniform group, in a collective that emerged on its own on the basis of a similarity of certain needs and that functions exclusively within the boundaries of those needs, can the decision of the majority be an expression of the collective will and the shared awareness of the essential interests of individuals. However, if the group is varied and tries to take under its management even the needs of individuals who through social and individual diversification have become increasingly divergent, then the decision of the majority must at the same time be the violation of liberation interests and the stifling of all those natural differences which cannot be reduced to one norm.

It is clear then that democratic governments, which are based on numbers, cannot conduct themselves otherwise in regard to the development of capitalist society—which is becoming increasingly less racially and culturally homogenous and requires an ever greater complexity of social circles and associations, intensifying human individualism—other than by oppressing various minorities, by oppressing and encompassing an ever broader mass of people, as more fields of social life enter into the sphere of the state's functions. To the degree the state expands its attributes and increasingly monopolizes affairs and life questions, it must necessarily meet with an ever larger number of differences, which increase along with civilizational and economic development. The majority in a democracy is changeable; it forms anew for every issue and for every issue attracts other social groups. Consequently, the

oppressed minorities are also not always composed of the same people. Those who introduce resolutions according to their way of thinking and interests in one affair may find themselves in the minority in the next question, and thus the minority whose needs are hindered and constrained under democratic governments do not constitute an absolute minority of the society but rather its *majority*, and this is the more certain the more questions of social life pass into the attributes of the state.

The legal means that are applied in defense of a minority, such as the limitation of the power of parliament by the senate, difficulties presented in changing the constitution and in creating new constitutional laws, the independence of the court system, the organization of local autonomous governments, and responsive representation do not at all work to the benefit of freedom. If the veto of the minority is taken into account, the inevitable consequence must be the immobilization of the constitution and legislation, which might sometimes serve as a certain obstacle to the expansion of the state but more often as a means of the state's hindering all new and unforeseen currents of life which might attempt to break with its legislation. At the same time, it is precisely where the right of the minority is relatively the best secured, as for instance, in the United States, that there is a tendency to place as many legislative and police provisions as possible in the fundamental law, and thus to secure them against easy change, non-application, or being overturned, which with the changeability of democratic governments and the strong influence that public opinion exerts on them is an almost necessary thing. In this manner, many ordinary decrees, such as the prohibition on lottery games, the sale of alcoholic drinks, changes in criminal procedures, the regulation of working days, laws regulating the remuneration of officials, detailed provisions concerning school learning,² and so forth, have entered the constitution of the United States, and their change in this form, thanks to the right of the minority, has become much more difficult and may function not only against a certain social minority but even against a potential absolute majority (insofar as it does not reach the required proportion for the change of the constitution), when such is created by a change of ideas, needs, or life conditions.

The adherents of state democracy usually advance the argument that the oppression of the minority by essentially democratic governments, where the greatest liberty of thought and propaganda is guaranteed, and where every way of thinking can be expressed both at elections and in voting on laws, is only a

² Zob. Jerzy Jellinek, *Prawo mniejszości*, translated by S. Pozner, Warszawa 1900, Druk K. Kowalewskiego [G. Jellinek, *Das Recht der Minoritäten. Vortrag gehalten in der juristischen Gesellschaft zu Wien*, Wien 1898, Alfred Hölder].

temporary phenomenon. The minority—insofar as the interests or principles that it defends present a major developmental force and social value—can become by means of propaganda a majority and can adapt the state institutions to its way of thinking. They even add that the constraint and hindrance that the minority experiences in such cases from the state is a stimulus for it to struggle; it forces a given group to propagate among the masses new ideas or new institutions—which might not happen if acquiring a majority were not the indispensable condition for the realization of those institutions and ideas.

This understanding, which is supposed to make state democracy entirely accord with the interests of freedom and development, does not withstand closer criticism. It is not, moreover, an honest defense of the state position but rather a masking of the truth and a fear of seeing something unwanted. First—the hope of forming a majority on a given affair means as much as consoling oneself with a future revolution when faced with an oppressive present day. In many cases, more than one generation might pass away before the interests or ideas for which a certain minority is struggling penetrate the masses and become so universal that they can be expressed in a parliamentary majority, create the pressure of public opinion, or be victorious in a referendum vote. Propaganda, too, has its natural borders. In all cases that have national or religious separateness as their basis—the separateness of culture, race, tradition, or emotional type—it is almost powerless. A national or religious group finding itself in a minority in a democratic republic (for instance, the Polish population in an all-Russian republic or the Doukhobor sect in any republic) and wanting to adapt the state institutions to its separate interests and thus to obtain freedom for its development, would rather have to think of *coups d'état* and revolutions than about convincing the governing majority. Drawing that majority to its side—which is presented as a condition for the freedom of life and development—would often be the equivalent to Polish conciliators hoping to obtain a favorable course for the national issue in the policy of the partitioning governments—and in reality would produce the same result: the continuation of captivity. At the same time, such a national or religious minority group could not even aspire to have its separateness expressed in democratic state institutions, because for that the majority would have to be de-nationalized or its religious beliefs and conscience would have to be fundamentally transformed. It can only fight to be freed from the state norms in certain matters and to arrange them according to its own patterns, as a completely autonomous association. In such a case, the propaganda it might spread among the governing majority would have the aim of *narrowing* the attributes of the state: the idea of statelessness, *the replacement of a territorial society by a society of associations, a coercive society by a voluntary society*. Issues of this kind would have

to be on the agenda in democratic republics arising among the most racially, culturally, and religiously diverse societies and they would have to multiply and become increasingly frequent and ever more urgent as the state, developing in the direction of socialist politics, would encompass ever newer areas of human life. In these conditions, the possibility of becoming a ruling majority would pass into the category of the entirely ideal, to the purely theoretical postulates of democracy, which social life would pass by indifferently, with irony or indulgence. Furthermore, state socialists themselves do not believe in the strength of propaganda and persuasion, because they imagine the form of the revolutionary government in the transitional period as a dictatorship of the proletariat, capable of suppressing by police force everything that may appear conservative or reactionary.

The second weak point in the defense of state democracy concerns propaganda itself as a weapon available to everyone in a people's republic. If the democratic state is to monopolize education and to place various limitations on the freedom of learning, for instance, for the sake of saving the republic from monarchism and clericalism as in France, and when we see that the leaders of that action and its main champions are socialists, then it is unclear on what grounds the claim about the absolute freedom of propaganda in the socialist republics of the future rests. The abolition of religious congregations and the prohibition against teaching is at any rate a blow against the freedom of association, of belief, and of speech. They are motivated by the necessity of defending the republic against the danger presented by the clergy, but that danger is not radically removed; the clergy and its adherents, Catholics in general, associate in various other forms and have thousands of other ways of propagandizing, teaching, and influencing people, which are guaranteed to them by the constitution of the republic. The politics of "defense" must use ever newer means of repression, must castrate ever more of the once-won freedoms in order to suppress its enemy, which is lively, and rich in ideas and forces. After clericalism, it might be the turn of various other social currents, which a given ruling majority would consider to be dangerous for the republic or civilization. If today's democracy organizes a police crusade against Catholicism, the next might equally well conduct it against anarchism or revolutionary socialism, against decentralization and peasant movements, against the followers of Nietzsche or Buddha. The core of the question does not lie in what tendencies will motivate the ruling majority, to what degree it will be intelligent and tolerant, but namely in that a democratic people's republic *could* oppress by police force the development of whatever movement it considers to be harmful, and that democracy does not contain in itself anything that would entirely secure the freedom of propaganda and development. Thus, if we are not the

adherents of a naïve political sentimentalism—that *vox populi vox Dei*³—if we know how the ruling majority is often formed and what shallow human ideas and narrow interests it represents—then it is truly astonishing to consider in the name of what developmental ideals the “revolution” is to surrender human life to the government of a democratic bureaucracy.

Third, in a democracy that is truly free and adapted not to homogenous tribal societies [*społeczeństw rodowych*] but to modern diverse ones with well-developed individualism and various foci of ideas and feelings, the question of the free development of a certain different group or current *should not be conditioned on obtaining a majority*. It is not a question of whether such an achievement is *possible* or not but of whether it is counter to freedom—that it is obtaining freedom for oneself at the cost of the freedom of others, the setting of one coercive norm in the place of another. Such a method, in judging of human freedom, becomes entirely absurd and a repetition of that same thing that has played out in all tyrannies and oppressions, namely the imposition of one's own gods on other people: remaking them in one's own fashion in the name of rationalism, a revealed truth, or progress.

Every life affair should be judged above all in its natural character, that is, in connection with those people whom it concerns, not in isolation from them, as something important in itself, desirable everywhere and always. This manner of life, this way of approaching human relations and the aim of existence that is important for me, the sole and necessary way, which cannot be replaced by another without violating my very essence, for others could be a matter of indifference or entirely valueless and, imposed on them by force, would bring apathy and conformity instead of the development of natural forces. For instance, for certain mental groups, Catholicism is the sole atmosphere in which they can develop their natural tendencies and abilities, find a goal in life, an inner strength, and a source of creativity and happiness. In becoming a universal system of upbringing and obligatory faith, though, it created moral and intellectual degeneracy. The same with positivism: in the proper mental and physiological ground it creates free and strong kinds of people, capable of living very well without the aid of religious beliefs and mystical feelings. Yet when grafted onto others it brings a moral vacuum, the dulling of all deeper feelings, even all curiosity to know the secrets of existence, and is preserved in those kinds of humans who are unbelievers and atheists by fashion and inner incapacity—who are those things only because the imposed template of conviction killed in them the freedom to feel and the ability to think

3 * *Vox Populi, Vox Dei* (Latin)—“the voice of the people is the voice of God”.

independently. The same can be said of every system of education, every moral and intellectual current. The freedom of the human being is the freedom to be oneself, to develop one's own natural type, not what someone else considers to be higher, better, or more useful. Leaving such a question to the judgment of the electoral masses and the bureaucracy derived from them is to hinder in human life everything that departs from the ordinary—everything that is new, individual, and strong.

The government of a democracy *consists in conditioning the freedom of a given group on its becoming the majority*, that is by hampering the free development of other groups, through the nationalization and propagation of things that need not and should not be either universal or coerced. The interest of human freedom requires a quite opposite thing: not the introduction of new life norms in place of former ones but the *free development of all individual and social differences, insofar as they have a natural internal power to exist and develop*. No democratic republic can make up for it otherwise than by *withdrawing the state* from various spheres of human life, and narrowing its functions to a *minimum*, or, that is, by developing a stateless society, a society of associations.

Between the state, which by its nature strives toward the homogenization of life and the leveling of differences, and the interests of freedom, which gives equal rights to all types of humans and strives to increase the kinds, there is a basic, inexorable antagonism, which is as strong in democracies ruled by the majority as in despotic monarchies. The state, as a territorial organization of coercion, tolerates freedom only where it has not yet encroached with its law; freedom in democracy is the lack of the state in certain human relations. Everything that is nationalized becomes an area wrested from freedom and passes under the exclusive appraisal of the bureaucracy, which in its own manner, or led by the opinion of the so-called majority of the people, models the life of society and of the individual—the life of beliefs and thoughts, of work, conscience, and sentiments. A certain intellectual choice occurs here, whose judge is the official or the voting crowd: among the various given riches of life, some are rejected and condemned to extermination, while others are preserved and earmarked for artificial development on the basis of one or another premise of the good or of progress, conceived according to the fashion of the time. The social rationale of mediocrity fills here that same role as a livestock breeder: for purposes of usefulness unknown to nature, he suppresses certain varieties while selecting and raising others.

The stateless movement, in trying to take from the state everything that can be taken, stands on the side of nature; it defends not a thesis but the human being, not one or another system of life but life itself, on the premise that in

its diverse and variable richness, in its mysterious aimlessness, inaccessible to the templates of the human mind, something more valuable is concealed than what emerges in the discussions of electoral and parliamentary meetings, or to which the intelligence of officials of even the most radical republic might rise.

Democracy's promise to develop humanity through the propagation of new ideas among the masses—when it will only be possible to actualize those ideas freely to the degree that they persuade the masses—also does not argue for state democracy from a position of freedom. First, because there are ideas so strongly connected with the innate type of the human being, with his tendencies, which are embedded deep in the unconscious side of the soul, that they cannot be made universal and can only concentrate around themselves a certain selection of individuals, of approximate similarities of nature; while in being spread in isolation from their natural, individual underpinning, they warp themselves and vitiate the people in whom they are implanted. Second, because there where propaganda is possible, when a new idea might really become the common property of the wide human masses and extend its rays ever further, in such a case, there is no better form of propaganda than showing that idea in practice, in life models. All new systems of upbringing, of education, self-help, defense, creative work, economics, and so forth, can only show their value and acquire human minds—which are most often inclined to misoneism and routine—when they appear not as theories proven by reason but as a thing of life, proven by facts. Statelessness, which allows people to engage in the broadest possible social experimentation, to apply all the new ideas that the unrestrained genius of humanity can produce, creates the best conditions for the struggle with backwardness, routine, and stagnation.

We see then that a state democracy, as a government of the majority, will not in the least secure the free interests of the human being—that as a state like any other it uses the homogenizing norm of coercion to oppose the free variety of life and human natures. It does not depend on the degree of intelligence and culture of the masses, but ensues from the very nature of democracy as a state. If today's democratic republics—Switzerland and the United States—have relatively large degrees of freedom and provide extensive fields for the development of the most varying human currents, we must not forget that they are republics in which the state still encompasses very little, and associations very much, of social life; they are republics in which there is still an innumerable multitude of human relations with which the state has nothing to do other than sanctioning civic freedom. To the degree, however, that those relations will be nationalized, and bureaucracy will replace private initiative and free associations, the conflict and antagonisms between the minority and the majority, between the governing people and emerging groups, will be

ever more frequent, and increasingly often the governments of the people will have to call on the highest argument they possess—the police.

Consequently, the politics of contemporary socialism that aims for nationalization cannot refer to today's republics of the people as an example of the accordance of the interests of freedom with democracy. Just as today the French socialists, in the struggle with clerics, have postulated that defense of the republic is more important than freedom and do not hesitate to restrict previously won freedoms in order to obtain an advantage over currents hostile to themselves, so in all other conflicts the politics of socialism, to the degree that it remains faithful to its principles, does not hesitate to shape society according to a certain model of civilization at the cost of freedom. Moreover, every honest state socialist will admit quite openly that the political guideline should be to restrict freedom in the interests of a culture of collectivism, a restriction that will go as far as the interest of the moment will require and which will not draw back even from a dictatorship of the proletariat, as a form of government of the entire post-revolutionary period, that is, until society is made, in the hard hands of the new police, into material entirely suited to the models that are imposed on it: into a homogenous human mass, reacting in a uniform manner to everything.

Today, when socialism has already clearly made its mark in the politics of European states, when it has managed to nationalize more than one area and to occupy a strong position in governing bodies, when it may already have its ministers, presidents of chambers, and prosecutors, and may pass laws and conduct reforms—it is time to look boldly at the truth, to forget about the phraseology of freedom of frequently naïve ideologues of socialism and become aware of the fact that the politics of contemporary socialism is not the politics of freedom but of strengthening and expanding state control. It does not aim to free the human being, but to nationalize everything that can be nationalized in his life. Such politics do not lie in the interests of the proletariat, nor are they connected of necessity with the development of economic collectivism. The proletariat needs freedom to an equal degree with an ensured living; his historical interests do not lead in the least to state philanthropy, giving everyone bread and work. In the fight the proletariat declared and has been conducting since the last century, through all its slogans and demands, a new idea of freedom comes through, one that no social class has previously brought to the field of battle, *a freedom* not only of the nation, class, or system, but also *of the human being*, who from his nature, as a thoroughly individual entity, cannot be made to accord with any form of state. The very question of economic liberation, aside from the need for better food and more comfortable dwellings, also contains the striving to reject those personal dependencies in which workers

have been kept by poverty and the wage system. Political pressure on the state, on the part of the proletariat, like the entire tradition of its former struggle, has always gone in the direction of taking from the state various human freedoms, with the most individual freedoms in the first order: the freedom of association, thought, and speech. Similarly, all the moral currents and changes that have proceeded from the class struggle of the proletariat have brought with them the primary idea of raising human dignity, of personal independence in regard to all types of dominion, social hierarchies, and dogmas. We also see that the policy of nationalization is not a natural part of economic collectivism, because the latter self-develops in various types of associations, victoriously acquiring in turn ever more branches of production and social economy.

Consequently, a question of first-rate importance has arisen: the reform of the workers' policy in the direction of statelessness. As the proletariat's cause, independently of any schools or ideologies, certain currents or parties must arise within socialism itself with the task of combating nationalization in all things—in politics, ideas, and customs—and of developing among the masses the ability to manage their affairs themselves and to organize in free associations in order thus to make the state socially and individually unnecessary and to prepare the basis for the development of a new stateless society based not on territory but on associations and not on organized coercion but on affinity and a natural commonality of needs. It is not a matter here of any anarchist ideals, or of a postulate defining the peak of the social future as absolutely stateless; these are completely neutral questions for these politics. The struggle with the state should be a struggle of the present moment; its aim is not to lead humanity toward a system understood in the sense of these or other sociological theories but to *develop today's anti-state forces*, to drive the state out of wherever it can be driven. If, however, the future should show that necessarily a certain minimum of the state should remain, as an inseparable attribute of society itself, then at any rate the aim will have been the most completely achieved if the anti-state factors and forces of the masses, thanks to that struggle, keep the state within those *smallest* bounds that the necessity of a given historical era will set out for it, and they will be the guarantee of the essence of democracy, the insurance of independence and the free development of the people.

Moreover, even if the most distant future societies were to belong to a despotic monarchy, encompassing the entire world, it would still not ensue therefrom that in the name of that future today's people should be made into slaves and everything that individualism, internal energy, and the association of natural forces can create in the world should be killed. People, in fighting for certain ideals of life, are not concerned that someday a natural cataclysm might

erase the entire sphere of the earth and bury all its human achievements; they have the blind instinct of faith, without which nothing could be created, that the beauty they bring to life has a value of its own which cannot be measured by the length of time it will survive and without concern for the issue. The creation of a stateless democracy in today's world, the breaking of all ties connecting the state with the human being, the fight for the maximal space for the development of all varieties and novelties emerging from the secret depths of human nature, the actualization of the ideals of independent morality, which has nothing in common with the criminal code and the police—these are matters that have direct value for us, value for today, regardless of how long the earth will survive or whether Europe will become Cossack or republican. In these questions there is something other than the transformation of social forms and systems: the eternal desire of human souls for freedom and inner beauty, that thing that has produced heroes and martyrs, apostles and thinkers, and which surmounts all politics and all social evolutions.

A party that takes upon itself the task of combating nationalization in all its manifestations and forms has clear politics:

- (1) In participating in elections to the representative body, it should aim to *restrict* the rights and attributes of the state, to withdraw the state's ability to legislate in various spheres of human relations, to prevent it from acquiring a monopoly on anything, and to remove all those legal, administrative, and policy elements that hamper the development of associations and private initiative. The struggle to expand state functions or to adapt them to new social interests is not the only political and parliamentary struggle possible. A struggle may be conducted in quite the opposite direction—to reduce the state and to obtain various freedoms. The struggles for the freedom of work, association, propaganda, religion, education, the separation of Church and state, and so forth, are not actually struggles for new state rights but rather the withdrawal of the state from those areas of life. From this same position, even parliamentary politics can be anti-state; the elected representatives are not then the co-creators of new laws and official institutions but, on the contrary, are an element of dissolution for the legislation and bureaucracy. This is a negation within the legislative body—a striving to have it kill those things for whose development it was created. Of the parties that have existed to this time, every one has entered parliament with the aim of transforming the state, of adapting it to its own interests; a stateless party would be the first to enter it with a quite different and entirely new aim—the destruction of the state, the expansion of the terrain for the freedom of the individual and for associations. It would also

have to proceed from the masses, who do not want to use the state as their instrument but want it removed from human relations; the masses should, furthermore, strive at the same time to develop an intense life of associations and should view that development as their main revolutionary action, considering elections and deputies not as the force that is to bring salvation in the form of a new social system but solely as a factor in the struggle to remove the governmental and legal obstacles in the way of the free development of the stateless organization.

- 2) In this connection, the stateless party should be an active initiator of all kinds of *unions and associations* where the forces of the masses, in the broadest sense of the term, can cooperate. Workers' trade unions, consumer and production cooperatives, farmers' agricultural associations, mutual-aid and insurance associations, child-care associations, associations for education, teaching, abstinence, hygiene, and a whole quantity of others that can be predicted and imagined and that are a field for actions with numerous aims, methods, and human milieus, should become the foci of an unceasing social revolution, the unceasing transformation of relations in the direction of stateless democracy and life communism. The principle of that activity is very clear: everywhere that some common need to improve the conditions of life or protection, the need for culture and education, health and public safety, intellectual or moral strivings, exists or appears, there associations should emerge which by taking the conduct of those common interests in their hands would make the actions of the state in this sphere unnecessary. The state can be excluded only with the help of associations; it is killed by cutting the roots on which it grew, that is by breaking the link between human needs and state institutions. A state that becomes *practically* unnecessary and that for the personal interests of the human being begins to be ever more superfluous, having been driven by associations out of the economy and culture, defense and justice, health and education—that state must die. Thus the creation of any kind of association, even one not having any kind of revolutionary goals but fulfilling a certain task of social usefulness, is by that very fact highly transformative and significant for the revolution, as a break in the state and a weakening of its vitality at its very sources. The association, however, has a dual revolutionary significance: it not only drives nationalization out of human life but develops people themselves insofar as it functions on frankly democratic bases. It develops people by teaching them independence in managing their own affairs; it forms the spirit of initiative and personal energy, the spirit of voluntary solidarity and respect for the human

being as a conscious creator of something new in life. In contrast to that “human dust” of the passive mass who has become accustomed to having all his affairs managed in state agencies and who is unable to undertake or manage anything without the aid of the police and decrees, the member of an association, in deciding for himself what concerns him and contributing his ideas and labor to social works, is essentially a new moral type of human, the individualist type, who knows how to be *consciously* solidary and feels like the master of life.

- 3) In the campaign for statelessness, the third task, which directly depends on the preceding one, is to expand the *boycott* of the state, as a matter of the politics of liberation and individual ethics. This is a new form of political struggle discovered by the working classes. The entirely thoughtless claim that a boycott of the state would be a withdrawal from political life and the renunciation of political struggle has become widespread. The case is quite the opposite. A boycott is an attack on the state by hampering and weakening its activity—an attack that is the more effective and more dangerous in that it is directed at the essential source of the state’s power: it is a disruption of those ties that bind the state to the personal lives of people, a destruction of the *individual need* of state institutions. No parliamentary opposition can even compare with what a boycott of the masses could create. Parliament can still be dispersed; but no government in the world has such powers or such means that it can force even part of the population to make use of state institutions if the people do not want to make use of them. The boycotted institution, the right that is not utilized, dies a natural death and there is no way to save it. The boycotted state courts would become a nominal relic of the state as the provider of justice. The boycotted police, to which no one would bring a complaint and no one would aid in its pursuit of criminals, would withdraw from human relations as an element of order, defense, and security; its role would be reduced to executing government decrees. The boycotting of state schools would deprive the state of important functions such as the expansion of education, by which it “rules over souls.” In the same manner, boycotting the inspectorate, state philanthropy, and cultural and economic works would drive the state from the position of defender of the exploited, caretaker of the impoverished, and propagator of civilization and well-being; that is, the boycott would take from it all those social attributes thanks to which it is useful and necessary for people and thanks to which it has natural vitality and strength. In the place of the boycotted state institutions, or rather simultaneously with their being boycotted, free institutions

would have to develop, the organization of associations: instead of state courts—arbitration courts; instead of the police—defense associations; instead of state schools—free schools or private teaching; instead of a government inspectorate—an inspectorate of trade unions; and so with everything.

The negating strength of a boycott is moreover positively creative. It creates a social and individual revolution: a social revolution, because in removing the norms of coercion from collective life a boycott accelerates all the development factors that they stifled; and an individual revolution, because a boycott creates a new type of moral human being—one whose relations with people occur without the intervention of the police, and who can live in his own way, according to his own feelings and beliefs. The force of a boycott has all the traits of a creative force: it must base itself on various moral factors and combat others. It must combat cowardice, habit, the persuasion of public opinion and the state; it overcomes existing social facts (the boycotted institution dies); it creates new social facts (stateless life); it strives to organize people wherever mass boycotts, which are conscious and organized, are possible. In a word, the boycott policy must involve a dual social struggle: with the state and the individual—with the human's internal coercion, the slave psychology created over centuries—and therefore it is not only a policy but also an *ethical movement*.

These are the principles of the new politics for the working classes.

A General Conspiracy Against the Government

I We Declare that We Will Fight!

The moment has come when we must tell ourselves and the world this new and important fact: *we declare that we will fight*. We declare that we will fight the Russian government for the freedom of Poland and for the freedom of every person in Poland. From this moment on, a new life and a new era in our history begins for us. Until now, although we all grumbled at Moscow's oppression and cursed it in our souls, and although the propaganda of the people's revolution, the forbidden words of truth, spread widely among the working people, and although workers' strikes and demonstrations have for years been giving the authorities no rest, yet in general, in a whole quantity of life affairs, we have been obedient to the government.

Yes, we were obedient. We accepted all its laws and regulations without resistance; we used all its arrangements and institutions voluntarily; we assisted in its monetary, educational, and cultural enterprises. Poland merged more and more with the tsarist state, grew accustomed to its laws and administration, succumbed to everything and, despite the nagging rebellious thoughts, was obedient to the hated government. But this could not always be the case, and now is the moment when we renounce this obedience.

Why do we say the moment has come now?

First, because the current Japanese war¹ has weakened the tsarist government and is preparing a whole series of new defeats for it. The ruined naval fleet, 200,000 lost soldiers, hundreds of millions of wasted rubles, state debts growing every day of the war—all this has undermined the moral significance and material power of the government. Until now, the whole world was convinced that Russia is invincible, that it has a strong and valiant army, a trained bureaucratic administration, and enormous financial resources; it was also believed

1 * The Russo-Japanese War erupted in February 1904 and ended with the signing of a peace treaty in Portsmouth on August 5, 1905. The main cause of the war was the rivalry for influence in Manchuria and the Korean peninsula. Japan achieved a series of victories on land and sea (including at the Battle of Tsushima, where Russia's Baltic Fleet was destroyed), and the course of the war revealed the incompetence and corruption of the Russian administrative apparatus. As a result of peace negotiations conducted under the patronage of the president of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt, a treaty was signed by which Japan acquired the Liaodong Peninsula with the Port Arthur base and the southern part of Sakhalin Island, and in addition, Russia bound itself to withdraw its army from Manchuria and recognized Korea as part of the Japanese sphere of influence.

that there was such a strong spiritual unity between the tsarist government and the Russian people that any government policy would find the masses of the nation devoted to it, ready for any sacrifice and effort. Meanwhile, all this turned out to be a fairy tale. From the very beginning of the war to the present day, the Russian army has had only defeats. It has also emerged that almost the entire government administration consists of thieves who steal from the army for their own profit, that there is no order or unity in this administration, and that nothing was properly prepared for the war, although millions were spent on it. It also turned out that the war declared by the tsarist government and the annexation of Manchuria² not only did not produce enthusiasm in the masses of the Russian nation, but, on the contrary, were received with reluctance, complete indifference, or even resistance. At the beginning of the war, patriotic Russian demonstrations were organized almost everywhere by the police themselves; voluntary contributions to the army and the navy flowed in slowly and sparingly, and in many cases under the clear coercion of the authorities. The reservists were sent to war, and even in purely Russian provinces rebellions of despair were organized, which were put down by armed force. The tsarist state turned out to be infirm and weak, morally depraved, a state which even its own people refused to support and believe. It is almost certain now that the Japanese war will end in Russia's complete defeat. The tsarist government will be materially ruined, stripped of the charm of its military power, weakened internally by the scams of its own officials and generals. This is the first thing we need to remember and fully realize.

And now the second thing: the Russian people have now started to fight their government, a fight under the banner of freedom. First, the *zemstvo*,³ that is, members of the nobility and peasants, said clearly and openly that they wanted a *constitution*, an order based on freedom and law enacted by the whole nation. The same demand was made by city councils, lawyers' groups, doctors, students, journalists, technicians, etc. Now there have been great workers' strikes in almost all the major cities of Russia, and their slogan is primarily

2 * Russia invaded Manchuria, which was part of the Chinese Empire, in 1900. After several months of fighting, nearly the entire territory of Manchuria was under Russian occupation. The Russian units withdrew only in 1905 on the basis of the peace treaty signed after losing the war with Japan.

3 * *Ziemstwo*—a self-government body in tsarist Russia, established after the enfranchisement reform in the countryside (the first *ziemstwo* began operating in 1864) throughout the country, with the exception of the Baltic governorates. They were responsible, *inter alia*, for the activities of local educational and health-protection institutions, road maintenance, support for farms, veterinary care, and so forth. A *gubernator* exercised supervision and control (to a very far-reaching extent) over the activities of the *ziemstwo*.

political freedom, the overthrow of today's government. So far the government has been able to suppress these rebellions, just as in our country, by spilling the people's blood; but no one today believes in the possibility of completely suppressing them. The revolutionary movement has become too broad, too strong.

If it cannot yet today overthrow the tsarist government, because of the ignorance of the Russian army and peasants, who are still incapable of understanding the fight for freedom, the struggle will in any case spread and increase. There will be repeated killings of police heads, governors, ministers, and grand dukes; peasants' and workers' revolts, military conspiracies, demonstrations, conventions and rallies calling for a change of government will recur—and the tsarist government is unable to cope with all this. When attacked in its own home, by its own people, it loses ground, loses what it developed and drew strength from.

The present-day situation can therefore be summed up in few words: our enemy, the tsarist government, *is weakening*. It is weakening due to the external war with the Japanese, from which it will emerge beaten and ruined. It is weakening due to a civil war with its own people, the civil war which will constantly harness its forces and incapacitate its activities.

This one thing should decide us finally to break with the previous passivity. We have waited a hundred years for this, enduring the most terrible oppression; we waited for the right moment when our dreams of freedom could turn into action; so when that moment has come it would be our political suicide to wait it out with our arms folded. We would then become a nation unworthy of freedom, a nation that voluntarily condemns itself to endless bondage. For let us not think that anyone will give us freedom without us. Even if the Russian people had won it now from the Tsar, they would have won it for themselves, and not for us, and Poland, if it were still passive today, not trying to exploit the present moment for itself, would remain and continue to be a slave of this new government, as if Russia had created it.

So, we must now take advantage of the weakening tsarist government. But there is another reason, just as important, why we should declare a fight.

For many years in our country we have been talking about the Polish people's revolution, about the revolution that will overthrow today's Moscow oppression and on its ruins build a new world of justice and freedom. There is talk of the barbarism of the Russian state, about the human harm that results from slavery, and at the same time we behave as if this slavery and this Russian state were respected and needed by us. We do it no harm; we tacitly agree to all its decrees; we learn in its schools; we go to its courts; we help its police; we pay whatever they ask of us; we go to the army to shed our blood for its cause.

There is no correspondence between our beliefs and our lives. We hate the Moscow slavery yet live voluntarily as slaves.

Yet there are also other kinds of people in Poland. There are the Uniates, for example, the “recalcitrant” peasants from Podlasie,⁴ who are forced by the government to join the Orthodox Church. They did not want to profess the tsarist god and do not profess it. They did not want to sell their soul to the police—and they did not. They were tortured, tormented, held in prisons, reduced to poverty—nothing helped. They remain free because they live in harmony with their faith; the violence failed to humble them. They are strong people, true freedom fighters, whose conviction, thought, feeling is also their deed, who act as they think and as they believe.

Now, by declaring a fight, we are doing something important for ourselves, for our own strength. We felt ourselves that it could not continue as it is now. What we have only talked about and thought about so far should now become our life. We have been saying for many years that we need freedom—so now we are going to learn *to live as free people* who do not obey the oppressors’ orders and do not want to use their rights or institutions. We have been saying for many years that the great task of destroying the coercion of the Russian government awaits us—now we will destroy that coercion.

However, there will be those who will say that there are still too few people among us who are aware for us to be able to start deeds now. But therein lies the great mistake. For nothing makes people more aware than life itself as well as accomplished deeds. Not everyone can be convinced with words. People listen to many things without believing what they hear. If, on the other hand, they see through example that it is possible not to submit to the government, that you can arrange a life of free people, that you can fight and resist the rulings of the authorities effectively, then they will understand that the freedom that is being talked about is not a matter of talking only, but a matter of life, and they will join it.

4 * After the partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Russian authorities fought the Uniate Church with administrative measures, seeing it as the most important obstacle to the Russification of the Ruthenian population. In 1875, the last diocese of the Uniate Church, with its seat in Chełm, was liquidated, and the faithful were forced to convert to Orthodoxy. However, many inhabitants of Podlasie boycotted the institutions of the Orthodox Church and, despite the repressions, remained with the old religion, with the support of the Roman Catholic clergy. After the announcement of the Edict of Toleration in 1905, a significant percentage of the inhabitants of Podlasie, who formally belonged to the Orthodox Church, decided to move to the Roman Catholic Church.

The fight for freedom, the daily, persistent and persevering fight, will give us, above all, enormous benefits. Our cause will be strengthened, our energies will be strengthened. What is spoken of now covertly and quietly will become clear and loud, a living thing that everyone will have to think about and talk about. By waging a fight we will organize ourselves better; we will unite in large groups that work uniformly; we will learn bravery of character, bravery in accordance with the conscience of a free people; in a word, from a dead nation we will become alive.

Our great idea—the *Polish People's Republic* [*rzeczypospolitej ludowej polskiej*]⁵—will then begin to live a real, true life. We will create this republic day by day, in all our social relations, in all our personal and public affairs—and we will eventually force both the Russian government and the whole world to recognize that Poland is alive and free.

This is therefore a great time for us to declare a fight for freedom. The first shots have already been fired. The fight has begun. The workers of all Polish cities staged a great political strike to show the government the strength of the Polish people hostile to it, and for several weeks kept the tsarist government in fear and confusion. Young people studying in the cities announced that they would not attend Russian schools anymore and that they would only return to Polish schools.⁵

As a result, the government was forced to close all its higher and secondary schools in Poland, and was given a deadline of September this year for these institutions to be converted into Polish schools. This is how the fight began. Now the point is for it to become *universal* in the truest sense of the word, and determined upon victory.

5 * In February 1905, students of schools in the Kingdom of Poland started a strike in protest against the Russification policy of the educational authorities. The most important postulate of the striking students was to restore Polish as the language of instruction. Due to the fact that the protest was of a mass character and, despite the passage of several months, that it did not expire, the Russian authorities were forced to make a number of concessions—some subjects were allowed to be taught in Polish in high schools, teaching the Polish language as an additional subject in secondary schools was allowed, and restrictions were also lifted on access to government schools for Jewish youth. In October 1905, the Russian authorities approved the creation of private schools with Polish as the language of instruction (although they were deprived of the full rights of government schools) and the creation of social educational institutions.

II What Is Freedom?

Now let us remember what we are to fight the Russian government for. We are to fight for the freedom of Poland and the freedom of every human being in Poland. What will it take for this freedom to exist?

The need for a Polish Sejm

convened in Warsaw. Such a Sejm is the whole nation; it is composed of its representatives. These representatives should be elected by all, without exception, by free voting, and each representative should receive instructions from his voters as to what things should be passed in the Sejm. The Polish Sejm should be continuous and be the highest authority in the country, that is, only it will be responsible for issuing laws and regulations, appointing officials, administering the country, and managing national funds.

The need for unlimited freedom of speech, assembly, strikes, and associations, confirmed as the eternal and inviolable right of the people, which no government or parliament can ever take away. Without this, even in the best government people would always be slaves. This freedom means that anyone can say and write what he thinks, that anyone may convene meetings and form any associations he deems necessary, and that everyone can collude with his fellow workers to fight together against exploitation. Only with this freedom can people's lives develop comprehensively.

The importance of freedom of association is easily understood when we realize that associations can deal with all social matters and all human needs a hundred times better, more honestly, and more efficiently than police governments. The strength of the nation and human freedom rests in associations. Where associations are numerous and diverse, human life is free from the police administration, and any attack by the government on freedom is met with unbeatable resistance. Where there are no associations, the police reign supreme, administering and ruling everything on their own, ignoring the various needs and interests of the inhabitants. The unaffiliated people cannot resist any violations of the government; they are at its mercy. Therefore, we need, above all, complete freedom of association.

The need for freedom of conscience

that is, everyone is free to profess and follow his religion. All religious persecution, forced conversion to a foreign faith—the victims of which in Poland are, above all, the Uniates, the peasants of Podlasie—should cease immediately and we will demand this from the Russian government; the Uniates should have the churches that were taken from them returned; their marriages should be recognized as legal and their children as legitimate; all rights are to be restored and complete freedom to profess the Catholic or Greek Catholic religion is

to be granted. Similarly, all those who have converted from Catholicism to Orthodoxy are to be given complete freedom to return to the Catholic religion. The law requiring children from mixed marriages to be brought up in the Orthodox religion should also be abolished immediately. All religious matters, such as the founding of religious associations, fraternities, churches, and the appointment of bishops and priests, should be completely removed from the control of the police and the state.

The need for inviolability of the person and home

that is, the police should not have the right to enter anyone's dwelling, violate the peace of the home, and imprison people arbitrarily without even waiting for a court verdict.

The need for free schools

that is, teaching should not be under the sole authority of either the government or the *gmina*,⁶ but each individual and each association should be able to establish the schools they deem necessary and to teach according to their convictions. We have now begun to fight for Polish *gmina* schools, for schools that depend on the *gmina* and not the government. And this will be our first achievement in the field of educational freedom. But let us remember that in a truly free country, not only the government but even the *gmina* should not have a monopoly on education; the opening of other schools must not be prohibited either to private persons or societies. Everyone should be free to teach, the same as with freedom of thought and speech. Without free schools there is no freedom of the human spirit.

A school molds a person, forms his notions and his character; it is therefore too important a thing for us to hand over to any government. The government school must adhere strictly to the curricula drawn up by the minister of education, and for this reason it instills in the minds of young people only the concepts and beliefs of government officials. And all other notions and feelings are forbidden in the government school; every new thing that human thought creates, everything that is different from the way of seeing of the people at the helm of power—even if they are the most true and beautiful things—all this has no access to the government school. And that is why the school that remains under the exclusive authority of the government distorts the minds of young people and obstructs their development, molds them all

6 * The *gmina* is the principal unit of the administrative division of Poland, similar to a municipality. The *gmina*, which usually consisted of several villages, was headed by a *wójt*, who was elected by the *gmina* assembly, with the help of a clerk who was responsible for running office matters. Administrative—and often factual—control over the activities of the *gmina* self-government was exercised by the head of the *powiat* (see: footnote [123] on p. xx).

in one fashion, and kills the human being's most precious treasure—freedom of thought. Therefore, we need a free school and free education to the fullest extent possible.

The army needs to be abolished

and in its place a *national militia* should be introduced.

A national militia means the general arming of the people. Everyone undergoes military education and training at their place of residence, in their *powiat*;⁷ this training lasts only a few months, then it is repeated every year or every few years. Everyone gets a gun to take home and keep there. Thus the government has no army, but the people are armed enough to repel any invasion of the country. This is the case in the freest country, Switzerland, which no foreign invasion dares to subdue, even though it is a small country.

There is a need for the rural gmina to be completely independent of the government and for all its inhabitants to have equal rights.

No authority, office, or policeman should interfere in elections or in community meetings. Resolutions of the district assembly should be valid without confirmation by the authorities. The *wójt*, scribe, and village administrators should be dependent only on the district and village assembly and should not be dependent on any government authorities. No police-state service, such as collecting taxes and providing recruits, should pertain to them. The *wójt* should only be the executor of the will of the district assembly and should not have any right to punish people. All inhabitants of the *gmina* should be able to participate in the *gmina* elections and assemblies, not solely those who own a *morga*⁸ of land. Only government bureaucrats and the police should not belong to the local government. Only under these conditions can the district be useful to people. It should be that little republic that satisfies all its needs freely, with complete equality of rights for its inhabitants.

Cities need to have self-government

independent of the government and based on the equal rights of all inhabitants. Each city should decide on its own local needs via *city councils*, elected by all residents and having complete freedom of decision and action. The city police should depend solely on the city council, and the council only on its voters.

The need for complete equality

7 * *Powiat*—similar to a “county”; in the Polish legal tradition, a secondary administrative unit, usually created by several or a dozen or more *gminas*.

8 * *Morga*—an ancient measurement of land; in the Polish lands it was .56 of a hectare (5,600 meters square).

of all the inhabitants of the country, irrespective of confession or nationality, both for men and women, so that no inhabitant of Polish lands, whether a Pole or a Ruthenian, Lithuanian, or Jew, would experience any oppression or restriction of their civil and human rights.

III How Should We Fight?

We now come to the most important question: how are we to fight the Russian government for freedom? There will probably come a time and appropriate conditions when we will be able, and have to, fight the Moscow coercion with arms in hand. But the armed movement is not the whole struggle yet; it is just one kind of fight. If we want our fight to be victorious, we must develop all the methods of fighting, attack the tsarist government from all sides, and harm it everywhere, in all its devices and activities. *A universal conspiracy* against it will be such a series of attacks and destruction of the government.

The Russian government should be treated solely as an invasion, as a brutal force with which the Polish nation wants to have nothing to do. It invaded our country after terrible battles, after great bloodshed, and began to rule over us through the dominance of its power, spreading oppression, poverty, and debasement in Poland. None of us need this government of henchmen; we need neither its laws nor its care, nor its administration. None of us recognize this government and will never recognize it as our government, as a government that exists with our consent and will; we endure these governments only because we submit to force.

We will all agree to it because we all think this way. But we act differently. We act as if we recognize it as our own government. Namely, not only do we pay taxes and go to the army, succumbing to coercion, but also in many things we join this government *voluntarily*. We recognize its rights and institutions; we go to its courts to settle our disputes; we avail ourselves of the help and care of its police in our various personal and public matters; we study in its schools, although we know that they give there a poisoned education that stupefies more than enlightens; we accept service in various *government bodies*; we buy *state bonds* and lottery tickets, and deposit our savings in government banks and savings institutions, from which the government draws great profits. In a word, in a multitude of various matters of everyday life, we constantly connect with the invaders' government, helping it and accepting help from it. And in this way, we ourselves voluntarily cause this government really to rule our public and personal life, so that it teaches us, puts our affairs in order, settles our disputes, uses our money, and looks after us.

We have caused it to come into all our relations, even into our family and our house, and it is not as a foreign enemy that it has invaded, but as a guardian and judge, as a teacher and administrator that we ourselves need and summon. By this we helped it to put deep roots into our soil; we ourselves caused this foreign invader, who came to plunder and oppress us, to spread itself out and powerfully organize itself among us, and to expand a whole network of its arrangements and institutions, connected to us by a thousand knots, to rule us even more strongly.

But it should not be like this. Let the invasion be just an invasion, by coercion and nothing more. For as long as we still do not have the strength to drive it out, we have to pay taxes and join the army. But voluntarily, there should be nothing in common between us and the Russian government. We will no longer take advantage of any of its laws, or of the courts, or of the schools, or the police; we will not accept any government service from now on, nor help with supplies for the military, nor buy government bonds and vodka. No communication with the invaders; no drawing closer!

This is what *a universal conspiracy* against the government is, and to this conspiracy we call today all those to whom justice and freedom are dear. From now on, the Moscow government is to be a government which no one recognizes, no one approaches, condemned in Poland. Let its schools be empty; its courts will not judge any of our affairs; its police will not be allowed to interfere in anything and we will not give them any help; no one will buy its bonds, so that they will lose all value; no Pole will voluntarily join its service and *will not voluntarily give a single penny for its needs*; no Pole will help with supplies for the military or any governmental works. The laws of an accursed government will remain a dead letter, for no one will follow them.

What will be the consequences? First of all, the government will be undermined in all its interests. When masses of people break off relations with it, when they will not help it in anything, then neither government offices nor the police will be able to perform their duties properly. In almost every matter, the government has to use the local people to help; whether it is a matter of investigating a crime, or of supplies to the army, or of auctions for government works, or of public sales for unpaid taxes or debts, the government must have help from the local people, otherwise nothing will work. The authorities, officials, and police alone can neither deliver nor perform work, nor buy at auction, or even learn anything exactly without the testimony and accounts of various witnesses. So when we break our relations with the government and refuse all help, then many governmental matters will go very sluggishly and inefficiently. They will have difficulties both in supplying the military and in collecting arrears and in keeping track of our lives and in all the diverse small

things that happen every day where various offices need the help of private people. In addition, the consequence of our conspiracy will be that the tsarist schools and courts will actually disappear from Polish soil, that is, that Poland will cease to rule you with tsarist laws. And although there will be buildings with Russian inscriptions—"court," "school"—these buildings will be empty and the tsarist officials will have nothing to do. Similarly, the police will be condemned to inaction; it is true that they will continue to carry out the orders of their government, but they will not interfere in our private affairs, since we cease to call for their help and protection. They will remain the police of raids and coercion, but not our protector.

This is not all: by conspiracy we will destroy a large proportion of government *revenues*. The government draws millions of rubles from the courts alone; and from various requests to police offices, thousands. When we stop using the police and the courts, this income for the government will also disappear. Likewise, when we stop buying lottery tickets and state bonds, when we stop putting our money in government banks and savings institutions, when we stop buying vodka—then millions of rubles will be lost to the government; its bonds will decrease in value; the state credit will be shaken. And this is serious ruin for any government.

Such a conspiracy is terrible for a government, and no government, however strong it may be, can resist it for long. It is all the more terrible because in every other fight the government can reach its opponent, imprison, kill, punish—but in the case of a universal conspiracy, it can do nothing. Its enemy is everywhere and nowhere; it deals constant blows and is itself elusive. Because how can people be forced to send their children to school if they do not want to send them? How can they be made to go to court with their affairs, to call for police help when they do not want to do so, to buy government bonds or attend an auction? There is no way for the strongest government to do this; it becomes powerless and helpless. It must either yield to the people or die a slow death as it watches its income vanish, its institutions close one after another, its statutes and laws pass into oblivion.

We are starting such a conspiracy now. Before the time comes when we say to the Moscow government: "Get out of our land"—we now stand before it with the words "*Get away from our lives!* We don't want your schools and courts, or your police and laws. We will not voluntarily give you a single penny or an hour of our work."

However, it must be said in advance that such a conspiracy is not a matter of one day, week, or month. It will last until the emergence of freedom. We will never return to the Russian schools, or to the courts or to the police. We will deny all help to the tsarist government once and for all. And when the

time comes when the conspiracy indeed becomes universal, when it covers the entire Polish land, all villages and cities, then we will be able to go even further and say the last word of the conspiracy: to refuse to pay taxes and refuse to serve in the army. For when the whole nation decides to do so, there is no police or army in the world that could make it happen. And then the invaders' government will have to withdraw from Poland.

By means of universal conspiracy, we will make the tsarist government's life hard, difficult, unbearable in Poland; we will lead it into constant troubles, into decay, into the stagnation of all its works. But this is not the sole benefit of conspiracy. There is also a second, no less important.

Having cut off relations with the government, we will have to start *creating our own social life*; we will have to learn to live as free people who walk without the aid of the government. And it will be an advantage to ourselves.

We will stop using government schools—and start creating *our own secret schools*.

We will stop going to state and *gmina* courts with our cases—and our disputes will be settled by *arbitration courts*, chosen by ourselves.

We will stop going to the police in cases of theft and assault, and instead we will organize our own *security guards*, who can protect us better against thieves than the corrupted tsarist police.

We will stop counting on any help from government in the calamities of life, in the prevention of poverty, or in defense against exploitation, and we will instead create various *mutual aid*, labor, and economic unions among ourselves to protect everyone from poverty and exploitation.

In this way, our fight with the government will be a *creative* fight; it will also be the creation of a new social life by us, the life of a free people; it will be a gradual but continuous building of this Polish people's republic which we so desire and which will not be given to us by anyone, until we create it ourselves.

iv How Should the Conspiracy Be Conducted?

For the conspiracy to spread and persist, there must be an organization for that; there must be associations that will lead and spread it. Such a conspiracy cannot arise all over the country at once, but must move gradually from village to village, from city to city, to occupy one neighborhood after another, to spread like a great fire, in which all the laws and institutions of the tsarist government must burn completely. Therefore, in every region of the country, associations should be established in villages and cities, with a dual task: on the one hand, they will be centers of conspiracy; they will spread this conspiracy around the

country, trying to attract as many people as possible to it. On the other hand, they will be involved in creating a new social life, organizing secret schools, arbitration courts, security guards, and any other free institutions that will be needed in life in place of government institutions. Every *gmina*, town, and factory settlement, every factory, mine, and craft should have such an association.

The conspiracy association is to be secret and oath-based. Its foundation will be mutual aid. Those who join it should make a *solemn vow* that they will help each other not only in the struggle they declare against the government, but also in all the personal needs and misfortunes of life. Local associations will stand up for a factory or farm worker harmed by their employer, so that his harm will be rectified. In the event of illness or imprisonment of any one of its members, the association helps him and his family; in the event of death, it takes care of the children. In peasant associations, mutual aid will also extend to all cases of disasters, crop failure, plague, fire, and floods; the neighbors help those who have lost their farm goods to cultivate and sow the fields, to fetch grain, and to rebuild burned-down buildings. A small monthly fee, submitted by everyone, will allow a person to be protected from poverty and to get him back on his feet in the event of misfortune. This fraternity will stand strong as a wall; and united within itself, it will be able to fight the government more effectively.

Those joining the association will also make a vow that they will persist in the conspiracy, that is, they will avoid the Russian schools, courts, police, and any government service; they will not bid on items sold for tax debts, buy vodka, contribute payments for government purposes, or deposit their money in government saving institutions or banks. Such a promise should be made deliberately and seriously, not only in words but also in the heart, not only before one's companions but also before oneself, before one's conscience. For from that moment a new life begins for a person: he renounces complicity with the greatest evil in the world—the coercion of government; he renounces selfishness and the service of oppression; instead of obeying tsarist officials and tsarist law, he decides to obey only his own conscience and divine laws, based on justice and fraternity. It is therefore an important issue not only for our social life, but also for the liberation of our soul from the power of evil and darkness.

It will take a lot of strength and fortitude to persevere in this resolution; let us tell ourselves in advance that we will be exposed to many temptations and persuasions that will try to break our resolution. We will be persuaded to do so by tsarist officials and people bribed by the government, and all those for whom the favor of the government is pleasanter than the freedom of the country, than their own soul. Certain priests, who are on the side of the government,

will also probably try to persuade us against conspiracy, having forgotten the teachings of Christ.

But let us not be corrupted by all these hypocritical and false prophets. They will tell us that Russian schools are better than none, that without the tsarist courts we will not be able to defend ourselves from harm, that the police are needed for our own safety, and that it is safer to deposit money in government banks than in others. They will also say that every power comes from God, and that Christ himself said "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's" and that our conspiracy is therefore against religion.

These lies will be easily answered. The Russian school is unnecessary for our children because it clogs their minds learning a foreign language and does not provide information that will be useful in life; it teaches them neither the history of the country, nor their native language and literature; it does not acquaint them with the world of nature, with the needs of farming and industry. This school stupefies students and does not develop them. There they teach the children allegiance to the government and the tsar; they try to stop them from being Poles; they teach servitude, bribery, and greed, so that later, when they grow up, they value the favor of the government more than the good of their brothers. Therefore, we do not want the Russian school; no school at all is better than one that corrupts minds and hearts. Instead, we will create our own secret school and by the power of this fact we will force the government to withdraw. It will have to recognize Polish schools when it sees that no one is attending its own, and that teaching takes place in secret from it.

We will also do without the tsarist courts. This will be no loss for us. We know, after all, that most cases submitted to a state or *gmina* court are those that can be much better settled in *arbitration courts*, without delays and costs. The parties to a dispute can always choose people known to them, who are honest and trustworthy, and who will settle their dispute with fairness. All disputes over the division of family goods, boundary lines, damage caused, and personal insults can perfectly be settled in such arbitration courts, fairly, without harm to anyone and at no cost. Only various lawyers, secret advisers, clerks, and officials who deliberately incite people to litigation and drag out court cases in order to extort as much money as possible would lose.

If any worker or estate servant is harmed by an employer, then his companions should stand up for him and threaten to quit their jobs if the harm is not rectified. At times, the very threat may be effective. An injured worker rarely receives justice in court, despite even long efforts and costs.

By our solidarity on behalf of the aggrieved party, we would teach the masters that none of us can be harmed with impunity.

However, it may happen that one of the parties does not want to agree to an arbitration court and that someone could lose their land, cottage, or livelihood if they do not go to a state court. Our *association* must take such incidents into account and, having considered them, make *an exception* to the conspiracy to allow a member to defend himself in a state court, so that he does not fall victim to someone who wants to hurt him. However, in all other cases avoiding a state court and settling a dispute in arbitration should become a morally binding practice. In this way, we will eliminate the mediation of tsarist officials from our relations; we will be governed not by tsarist law, but by the free law of justice. Therefore, we will not go to state or *gmina* courts.

The police, they say, are needed for order and for our safety. But can we really not keep order and security on our own? When there is a fire, it is not the police who save people from the fire, but the volunteer fire brigade, a voluntary association of the people. When it is necessary to look after the grain in the field, cattle, or barns, none of the farmers uses guards and policemen for this, but mind them themselves. Could not every village and settlement keep its own security guard against theft, a guard made up of its own people who would be on watch one by one? Such a guard of our own would certainly give us greater security than the tsarist police, who are so often bribed and so often take the side of the villains. Not long ago, the police, during a general workers' strike in Warsaw, helped thieves to rob shops or looked on idly. Preventing a theft, chasing away a thief, searching for him, and retrieving the stolen goods—all this can be done by the inhabitants of a village or town even better than by the police. In this respect, our safety would lose nothing, but it would gain if we used our own security guard instead of the police, just as we use our fire brigade in the case of fires.

But besides this, justice would also benefit, and human harm would be diminished. If we were to consider for a moment how much evil prisons and police punishments do, we would be convinced once and for all that *there is no greater sin than putting a man in the hands of the police*. They steal for various reasons: from poverty, persuasion, or bad instincts. It happens that the stealing is done by a youngster, almost a child yet, who is tricked into it; it happens that someone, out of hunger, steals a piece of bread for himself or for his children. All of these are usually taken to the police. The police imprison them; then they are taken to the court, and from there, after conviction, sent to prison, to penal units, or into exile. Such a convict is already lost for life. In detention and in prison, he will get to know other villains who will ruin him completely. He will learn to hate people for his suffering; he will learn cunning and deception. On leaving prison, he already bears the stigma of the wrong-doer. Everyone will avoid him and suspect him; he will not find any job or friends anywhere; an

honest life will be closed to him. He will have to remain a villain, even without wanting to, to live off theft and fraud, and to join with bad people. And thus a human being is lost; his soul is lost. Instead of correcting him and persuading him into a good life, the police punishment he has undergone destroys all his better feelings, and turns him into a total villain. *Jail is a school of vice.*

A person goes in there with one offense, with one flaw on his conscience, and emerges with a completely dirty conscience, accustomed to all kinds of baseness. And suppose this is a young boy who might have grown up to be a decent man; that it is a father or a mother who, forced by poverty, commits a theft; what are we doing by handing them over to the police? For one mistake, we destroy their whole life; we lose their soul; we force them to remain villains. Is there any greater harm than this? And what does our security gain from it? By handing everyone caught in theft over to the police, *we are increasing the numbers of criminals and thieves*, because even someone who is not yet a professional thief emerges from prison as one; he comes out worse, more cunning, more dangerous; whole settlements of resident thieves are formed, whole bands of robbers and horse thieves; and these are all the wards of the police and prisons. So we breed villains ourselves by the fact that we call the police. For this reason there are more and more thefts and robberies, although the police are everywhere and the prisons are overcrowded.

Meanwhile, for our safety, it is enough to completely *prevent theft*; if the theft has been committed, we can find the thief ourselves and collect what he has stolen, while setting him free. By doing so, many a villain may get better; many a one who steals out of poverty or out of bad persuasion would stop and might become an honest man. Prisons would not then be educating anyone to be rogues—and there would be less theft in the world. And most importantly, we would not have a broken life on our conscience, or a lost soul. That is why we are not going to call the police.

They will tell us that it is safer to deposit money in government banks—that it is to our benefit, not the government's. This is not true. At the present time, which is so bad for the Russian government because of war and rebellions, it is dangerous to put money not only in state banks and bonds, but even in *postal or gmina* savings banks under the authority of the government. Here is how the law on *gmina* savings and loan banks in the Kingdom of Poland has been changed, by such an addition: "excess cash in municipal savings and loan banks, at each request of the local commissioner for rural affairs and with the permission of the *gubernia* office, may be transmitted by the bank management to the State Bank or to treasury savings banks, or deposited in state or treasury-guaranteed public bonds." At the same time, it has emerged that the government has been placing "internal loan" letters for 50 million rubles in

treasury savings banks, that is, it has been taking 50 million rubles from the savings banks and replacing them with newly released securities, whose value will be much lower. This means that savings-book holders, when they want to take their savings, will get a letter concerning this new loan instead of cash, which means they will get less than they put in. The government will take a large part of their savings and, for the millions it has stolen from the people, will continue the war. Ruined now by war and the thefts of its officials, the tsarist government, even abroad, has difficulty getting a loan; no one trusts it anymore; the French capitalists, who lent it large sums several years ago, are now in fear. Should we then, apart from so many taxes and fees, also give our savings up for lost to the government? Everyone already knows that the Japanese war will end in a complete defeat for Russia, that the tsarist government will therefore be ruined with huge financial losses and huge debts—in a word, bankruptcy. Thus prudence itself requires us to withdraw our money as soon as possible, both from state banks and bonds, as well as from all government savings, postal, and *gmina* banks; otherwise, the government's severe bankruptcy will affect us as well. We can place this money with greater certainty and advantage in the banks and bonds of various industrial and commercial societies, or in *savings and loan associations*.

But it is not only foresight that tells us to do so. The interest of our freedom also requires it. We don't want our money to go on sending new regiments to Manchuria; we do not want our money to support an army and police dedicated to oppressing us; we want to ruin the tsarist government, to weaken it—and therefore we will withdraw our money from all government savings institutions and banks.

They will tell us the worst, most brazen lie: that our conspiracy is contrary to religion. But whoever tells us this, a priest or anyone else, we will be able to answer him in all seriousness that he is not a Christian. For only someone who does not know the teaching of Christ or who explains it hypocritically can claim that our conspiracy is against this teaching. *Conspiracy against the government is the true expression of Christ's teaching*; it is the duty of anyone who wants to profess this teaching not only with words but also with his own life.

Christ said, "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive and ye shall be forgiven" (Luke 6:37).

We are also not going to go to court or to hand people over to the police.

Christ said, "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant" (Matthew 20: 25, 26, 27).

We, too, will cease to recognize imposed princes, that is, the tsarist government; we will refuse obedience to it by means of conspiracy; we will become free people, as true followers of Christ.

Christ said, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." (John 13:34). And we will fulfill this commandment by creating our own social life, based on justice and fraternity, on mutual help and respect for the freedom of every human being.

Christ said, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" And we will do it: because we will not give the emperor our conscience, our will, our life and work. Our conscience, will, life, and work are divine things and only belong to God.

v The Fight in *gminas*

The associations promoting universal conspiracy, those that will be formed in the villages, will have another important task to fulfill, namely, the fight against the government in *gminas*. The point is that the Russian government has been trying for a long time to completely suppress our local *gmina* governments and to turn the *gmina*, its assemblies and offices into a purely police institution which approves and does what the governor or the head of the *powiat* orders. The government has managed to achieve this almost completely, thanks to the fact that the peasants did not resist and gave in to everything, enduring the greatest lawlessness. In this way, it has become customary to write *gmina* resolutions in Russian and not in Polish, for the head of the *gmina* to appoint and remove the clerk himself, and for *gmina* elections and councils to take place in the presence of the land guards or head of the *powiat*, under their pressure and control, and thus depriving them of any freedom. The only thing left from our self-government in the villages was a comedy that was painful for us, and it happened against even *the legal act* which so far has been binding on *gmina* life on paper. This law, issued by the Russian government after our last uprising in 1863,⁹ was subsequently violated by that government; all the freedoms of peasant self-government that the Russian government gave us in this law, while still under the fear of an uprising, were cancelled one by one in the following years, completely unlawfully, until we arrived at where we are today—that we do only what the police authority tells us to do.

9 * Rural *gmina* self-government was established in the Kingdom of Poland in 1864 in connection with the land reform of that time.

Against this wrong, we must now proceed to fight firmly and ruthlessly. We must not only defend the *gmina* self-government guaranteed by the act, but also win the extension of self-government. It is certain that this struggle will be successful if we all come to it with unity and stubbornness, without yielding to threats or false promises from the government. It is a very important matter for our lives because everything would go differently and a hundred times better in the *gmina* economy, in all the interests of rural life, if *gminas* had real self-government—if they were free from the oppression and constant interference of the tsarist police.

So in *gminas* we should now stick to the following policy:

We do not allow the resolutions of the meetings to be written in Russian, only in Polish.

We do not allow the head of the *powiat* to appoint or remove the clerk without the consent of the *gmina* assembly.

We will remove clerks appointed by the *powiat* head who are harmful to the *gmina*.

We will not allow the *powiat* head or any of the police to be present at *gmina* assemblies and elections.

We do not recognize any ordinances that have not been approved by a voluntary *gmina* or village assembly.

We refuse any funding for Russian schools.

We refuse to make any voluntary contributions for government purposes.

We consider *wójt*s and village administrators to be only those who have been chosen voluntarily by the assemblies, without pressure from the authorities.

We must now obtain these freedoms in all *gminas*, and the task of the *conspiracy associations* will also involve such a struggle.

VI Thus, Let Us Remember!

We are beginning a conspiracy against the Russian government:

No one sends their children to, or themselves attends, a Russian school.

No one applies to a state or *gmina* court.

No one calls on the police for help or helps the police with anything.

No one accepts any government service.

No one makes purchases at a public auction for unpaid taxes.

No one deposits money in state funds and banks; no one buys vodka or state bonds or lottery tickets.

We begin to create our own social life, based on freedom, justice, and fraternity.

Tsarist laws cease to exist in Poland!

PART IV
Cooperativism



The Free Creators of Life

The Cooperativism of Edward Abramowski

Aleksandra Bilewicz

Edward Abramowski is certainly the most important representative of Polish cooperativist thought. His ideas shaped entire generations of cooperative activists and contributed to the establishment of essential institutions for cooperativism, especially consumer cooperatives. For many Polish cooperativists, he was an expert, authority, and patron. In 1906, Abramowski co-founded the Cooperative Society, which became an educational and propaganda institution supporting the few cooperatives that then existed in the Russian partition. In 1911, the Society established the Warsaw Union of Consumer Associations (Warszawski Związek Stowarzyszeń Spożywczych), the nucleus of the later “Społem” Union,¹ which became the largest commercial organization in Poland, bringing together around 2,000 consumer cooperatives in the 1930s. Abramowski was a theoretician rather than a practitioner. His ideas, however, inspired leaders of the cooperative movement as well as rank-and-file cooperative employees and members.²

Abramowski based his understanding of cooperativism on the ideals of fraternity and cooperation, which were supposed to become possible by a moral revolution in human souls. Cooperatives were to contribute to the development of the democratic culture necessary for the creation of a new system—a cooperative republic—and a new human being who was active, had agency, and lived according to the principle of fraternity. In this introduction to Abramowski’s cooperativist writings, I would like to show that the ideas underlying cooperativism are central to his work in general. Not only are they present in his political and social writings but they also stem from his ontology and epistemology.

In the first part of the chapter, I will present the facts of Abramowski’s life that relate to his path to cooperativism and then attempt to show how

1 This association had various names in different years. It was called the Union of Polish Consumer Associations after Poland obtained its independence; in 1935 it adopted the name “Społem” Union of Polish Consumer Associations of the Republic of Poland. For simplicity, it is commonly referred to as the “Społem” Union.

2 See: A. Bilewicz, „*Społem*” 1906–1939. *Idea, ludzie, organizacja*, vol. 1, Warszawa 2017, Oficyna Naukowa, p. 135–136.

cooperativism derived from his social theory. In the next part, I will discuss his cooperativist writings. Finally, I will outline the importance of Abramowski's ideas for the cooperative movement.

Abramowski's Path to Cooperativism

Abramowski's idealism appeared in his earliest years. It was probably the effect of the atmosphere of his family home—a manor house in Stefanin in the Kiev region, where he spent his childhood and was raised with care. According to Konstanty Krzeczkowski,³ as a child Abramowski read romantic poetry and wrote poems and dramas.⁴ After his mother's death he moved with his father to Warsaw, where his attitudes were influenced by his further education under the direction of the well-known writer and poet Maria Konopnicka,⁵ whose works dealt not only with patriotic topics but also with poverty and the miseries of the lower social classes. In his first articles, written when he was 15 for the journal *Zorza* ("Talks of Useful Things" ["Pogadanki o rzeczach pożytecznych"] in 1883 and "Talks on Social Economy" ["Pogadanki z gospodarstwa społecznego"] in 1884,⁶ Abramowski refers to the ideals that would become the basis of his later doctrine of cooperativism. He supported the idea of Christian inns—institutions that were to help in the struggle against alcoholism and create the seeds of future cooperatives—and tried to transform them into centers of "social work, fraternity, and education."⁷ As Krzeczkowski writes, "In

3 Konstanty Krzeczkowski (1879–1939) was an economist, statistician, publicist, cooperativist, and librarian; from 1916 on he was a professor at the Higher School of Commerce (later SGH, the Main Commerce School). He was one of the co-founders of the Social Economics Institute. Krzeczkowski published the *Writings* of Edward Abramowski (1924) in three volumes and was the author of a short elaboration of his life and work, *Dzieje życia i twórczości Edwarda Abramowskiego* (1933).

4 K. Krzeczkowski *Dzieje życia i twórczości Edwarda Abramowskiego*, Warszawa 1933, Wydawnictwo Spółdzielczego Instytutu Naukowego, p. 12.

5 Maria Konopnicka (1842–1910) was a poet, novelist and literary critic of the positivist period. She debuted in 1871. Her works oscillated between topics of social injustice and patriotism. She also wrote literature for children. Her writings elicited strong controversies, among other reasons, because of the anti-clericalism of some of them. She was the author of the well-known novels *Dym* (*Smoke*), *Nasza Szkapka* (*Our Jade*), and *Mendel Gdański*, and the widely read works for children *O Janku Wędrowniczku* (*Johnny the Traveller*) and *Na jagody* (*Berrypicking*). Her verses and novels were commentaries on current events, for instance, the famous children's strike in Września (the Prussian partition) against Germanization in schools.

6 U. Dobrzycka, *Abramowski*, Warszawa 1991, Wiedza Powszechna, p. 13.

7 M. Dąbrowska, *Życie i dzieło Edwarda Abramowskiego*, Łódź 2014, Redakcja pisma „Nowy obywatel”.

these still naively and childishly formulated postulates and ideas we see the beginning of all of Abramowski's later ideas for creating a moral revolution spreading the principles of solidarity and fraternity. That idea is the most independent, the earliest—the axis, it might be said—of all his concepts that he perfected later.”⁸

At the age of 16, Abramowski had radical social views and was drawing close to socialism. He established contacts with the underground revolutionary movement, in particular with the Proletariat party.⁹ In 1885 he began studying physics and biology at the Faculty of Life Sciences of the Jagiellonian University in Krakow and during his studies, he tried to establish socialist groups among the students and other young people. Then, as a result of the repression of socialist students, he decided to go abroad.¹⁰ He studied in various faculties in Geneva and also taught in workers' clubs. After returning to Poland, he co-founded the Workers' Union, an organization that emerged from the Proletariat after a split caused by the Abramowski's group opposing the use of terrorist methods. Guided by a belief that the most important thing was to empower the workers, Abramowski turned his attention to education and participated in Workers' Education Circles (Koła Oświaty Robotniczej). In his writings from that period, he refers to the ideals of grassroots cooperation and self-organization, which would be very important for his later doctrine of cooperativism. As Krzeczkowski writes, at that time Abramowski “already betrayed a certain disregard” for the state.¹¹ In 1892, he became one of the founders of the Polish Socialist Party (Polska Partia Socjalistyczna)¹² (he was elected to

8 K. Krzeczkowski, „Edward Abramowski 1868–1918,” in: *Pisma. Pierwsze zbiorowe wydanie dzieł treści filozoficznej i społecznej*, vol. 1, Warszawa 1924, Związek Polskich Stowarzyszeń Społyczych, p. xv.

9 Proletariat I, actually the Social-Revolutionary Party Proletariat or the International Social-Revolutionary Proletariat Party, was the first workers' party in the Polish lands, functioning in the Kingdom of Poland in the years 1882–1886. It was founded, among others, by Ludwik Waryński. It ceased to exist as the result of the arrest of its activists by the tsarist authorities (some activists were condemned to death, others to hard labor). From 1888 on the party continued its activities in exile as Proletariat II. It accepted terror as a method of political struggle. It was international in nature and was opposed to the idea of Poland's independence.

10 U. Dobrzycka, *Abramowski*, op. cit., p. 13.

11 K. Krzeczkowski, „Edward Abramowski 1868–1918,” op. cit., p. xx.

12 The Polish Socialist Party was an independence-based socialist party established in 1892 in Paris. Up to 1948, it was one of the most important Polish political groups. Józef Piłsudski, who was for many years a member of its leadership and editor of the journal *Robotnik*, was a leading activist for independence (he joined the party at the beginning of the First World War). After the revolution of 1905 the party split into the PPS-Revolutionary Faction (the pro-independence party), which was connected with the “old faction,” and the PPS-Left, connected with the “young faction” (which opposed the independence of

the leadership of the Union of Polish Socialists Abroad). During his stay in Switzerland, which lasted until 1897, he first began to formulate his doctrine of stateless socialism. This required him to change his views, because earlier, like most socialists, he had given priority to political struggle.¹³ Now the essence of the new system was supposed to be democratic associations. From there, it was only a step to the doctrine of cooperativism. In regard to his publications from the period, Urszula Dobrzycka writes that “Abramowski’s activism and propaganda brochures, which appeared until 1896, share similar ideological and popularization tendencies. They contain a critique of the existing social order, refer to the subjectivity of socially disadvantaged groups, and show the possibilities of resistance and the meaning of symbolic forms of protest against enslavement and exploitation”.¹⁴ In 1890, Abramowski published the treatise *Tribal Societies (Spoleczeństwa rodowe)*, in which he described primitive communism in an idealized manner. Two years later, he wrote *A New Turn among American Farmers (Nowy zwrot wśród farmerów amerykańskich)*, in which he discussed the role of cooperative organizations for farmers. In 1899, he published *Issues of Socialism (Zagadnienia socjalizmu)*, in which he developed the idea of a moral revolution which should precede the social transformations leading to a socialist system. During this period, he also wrote the works *Individual Elements in Sociology (Pierwiastki indywidualne w socjologii)*, *A Program of Lectures on New Ethics (Program wykładów nowej etyki)*, and *Ethics and the Revolution (Etyka i rewolucja)*, in which he clarified the idea of individual freedom and the necessary moral transformation of human beings.

The ethical circles founded by Abramowski in 1898–1902 were a practical result of the new doctrine. The circles, which were loose associations of

Poland). After Poland obtained its independence in 1918, the PPS became the basis of the first government: the Temporary Government of the Republic of Poland. In the next government the prime minister was a PPS member, Jędrzej Moraczewski. At that time the 8-hour working day was introduced. From 1928 on, the PPS was the main formation of “Centrolew,” a coalition of leftist, liberal, and popular groups opposed to the so-called Sanation government (the government introduced after Piłsudski’s coup d’état in 1926). During the Second World War the PPS operated underground as the PPS WRN (Liberty, Equality, Independence). In 1948, the PPS was combined with the communist Polish Workers’ Party, and before long absorbed by the Polish United Workers’ Party. In 1987 the PPS was reactivated as an independent party. A number of different factions arose, which were united at the party congress in 1991. Since the systemic transformation in Poland the party has been marginal.

13 R. Okraska, „Posłowie: braterstwo ponad wszystko. Edward Abramowski jako wizjoner spółdzielczości,” in: E. Abramowski, *Braterstwo, solidarność, współdziałanie. Pisma spółdzielcze i stowarzyszeniowe*, Łódź, Sopot, Warszawa 2009, Biblioteka Obywatela.

14 U. Dobrzycka, *Abramowski*, op. cit., p. 16.

people who recognized the idea of a moral revolution, became an important center of opposition to the terror methods of the revolutionary movement. Among the youth in Geneva, Abramowski established communes aimed at “developing moral culture by shaping feelings, sensitivity, imagination, and self-knowledge, and at the same time teaching an insightful view of social life”.¹⁵ Abramowski’s *Socialism and the State* (*Socjalizm a państwo*) was published in 1904. In it, Abramowski developed the idea of stateless socialism, emphasized the necessity of individual freedom, and criticized the statism of the then current socialist doctrine, which in his opinion led to bureaucratization and enslavement.

During the revolution of 1905, the anti-state elements in Abramowski’s thought fell on fertile ground. At that time, he published an influential pamphlet, *A General Conspiracy against the Government* (*Zmowa powszechna przeciw rządowi*), in which he outlined a program of resistance to the partitioning government through grassroots self-organization and sabotage of state institutions. He was also active in the Polish People’s Union, an illegal organization founded by rural educational activists, for which he wrote a draft program based on the idea of cooperation: the creation of free associations which were to join into federations and replace the state authorities. It was at this time that cooperatives first appeared in Abramowski’s writings—in *Our Politics* (*Nasza polityka*), for instance—as one of the foundations of the new system. As Krzeczowski writes, “He promoted the establishment of agricultural cooperatives, consumer associations, savings associations, and unions of workers and services”.¹⁶

At that time, Abramowski began his practical and theoretical work in the field of cooperation, having joined the cooperative movement that had existed in the Russian partition since the 1860s but had not thus far gained much publicity. The cooperativist movement expanded shortly before and during the revolution of 1905, when various cooperatives began to emerge spontaneously both in the city and in the countryside. The milieu that was led, ideologically, by Abramowski contributed to the spread of this movement among the masses and shaped its ideas. In the words of Zbigniew Świtalski:

Edward Abramowski and his associates’ contribution was not the creation of the movement, because it arose spontaneously; their real merit

15 Ibidem, p. 22.

16 K. Krzeczowski, „Edward Abramowski 1868–1918,” op. cit., p. xxxi.

was to shape this movement, to prevent it from straying into petty difficulties, as happened with the shops of agricultural circles in Galicia. The fascinating philosophy of fraternity advocated by Abramowski—though sharply criticized by Marxists from the revolutionary wing of the labor movement for being just a dream—meant that the Polish cooperative movement emphasized ideological aspects more than did most cooperative unions in the world. It attracted the ideological working-class and peasant youth organized in youth organizations.¹⁷

As Oskar Lange stated, cooperativism was “the most fruitful part of his [Abramowski’s] social activity”¹⁸ In 1905, on Abramowski’s initiative, the Union of Social Mutual-Aid Societies was established, bringing together various social organizations that could start operating legally after the liberalization resulting from the revolution. A year later, the cooperative section of the Union became the nucleus of the Cooperative Society. Its co-founders were, among others, Stanisław Wojciechowski,¹⁹ Romuald Mielczarski,²⁰ and Antoni

17 Z. Świtalski, “Wstęp,” in: *Wspomnienia działaczy spółdzielczych*, vol. v, *Spółdzielczość spożywców 1869–1969*, Warszawa 1973, Zakład Wydawnictw CRS, p. 5–16.

18 O. Lange, *Socjologia i idee społeczne Edwarda Abramowskiego*, Kraków 1928, Krakowska Spółka Wydawnicza.

19 Stanisław Wojciechowski (1869–1953) was an outstanding cooperative activist, politician, editor, and lecturer. He was one of the co-founders of the PPS in Paris in 1892 (he left it in 1905). After being arrested by the tsarist authorities he emigrated to England. After his return to Poland he was engaged in cooperative activities. He was the author of many works on the history and theory of cooperativism, and in the years 1928–1929 he was director of the Cooperative Scientific Institute. In 1919–1929 he was Poland’s minister of internal affairs, and in the years 1922–1926 president of the Republic of Poland. He left his position as the result of Piłsudski’s coup in 1926. In 1937 he was a joint founder of the anti-Sanation Labor Party. After the war he refused to legitimize the new communist authorities.

20 Romuald Mielczarski (1871–1926) was a cooperative activist, co-founder of the Cooperativists’ Society and then of the Warsaw Union of Consumer Associations, which was transformed into the “Społem” union. After being arrested for socialist activism he went into exile, first in Berlin and then in Zurich, where he studied the natural sciences, economy, and history. He was active in PPS structures. In 1894 he moved to Belgium, where he finished his studies in the Commerce Institute in Antwerp. In 1900 he returned to Poland but he was at once arrested and sent to the Caucasus. He came back to Poland on the basis of an amnesty in 1905 and joined in cooperative activism. During the First World War he was director of the Warsaw Union of Consumer Associations. In 1925 he brought about the unification of Polish consumer cooperatives in one organization.

Natanson.²¹ It was a key organization for cooperativism in the Russian partition and for the ideology of the movement.

Stanisław Wojciechowski, the co-founder and main organizer of the Society and of the *Spółem* journal (and later president of the Republic of Poland), writes in his memoirs about the beginnings of his cooperative work:

Thanks to Abramowski, the reflections that I had had while living abroad, under the influence of my own experiences and observation of the life of the English, crystallized into a decision to engage fully in the work of promoting cooperativism. This would be the most effective way to transform people and life through minor reforms, to remove the artificial division between everyday and ceremonial matters, and raise a more perfect type of Pole—neither crawling on the ground, nor with his head in the clouds.²²

The Society became the patron of the still emerging consumer-cooperative movement, for which it engaged in propaganda and instructional activities. It organized lectures and discussion meetings, published books, manuals, and brochures and created the Information Office to support new cooperatives. In 1907, the Society joined the International Cooperative Alliance and established a commercial agency. From 1908 on, it was involved not only in educational activities but also began to vet cooperatives, thereby becoming the seed of the first Warsaw Union of Consumer Associations, later commonly known as “*Spółem*”.²³

In 1906, Abramowski also co-founded the *Spółem* journal, which promoted cooperative ideas and provided practical knowledge. The editor was the co-founder of the Cooperative Society, Stanisław Wojciechowski. Abramowski wrote many articles anonymously for the magazine in the first years of its existence. It is in *Spółem* that the *Social Ideas of Cooperativism* and *The Cooperative as a Matter of the Liberation of the Working People* appeared. Later, in 1924, they were included in the collection edited by K. Krzeczkowski.

21 Antoni Natanson (1862–1933) was a gynecologist, social activist, and one of the pioneers of free masonry in Poland; he was, among other things, vice-president of the Polish Gynecological Society and master of the “Liberation” lodge.

22 S. Wojciechowski, „W ruchu spółdzielczym (1906–1914),” in: „*Spółem*” 1906–1939. *Idea, ludzie, organizacja*, vol. 2: *Wybór źródeł*, edited by Aleksandra Bilewicz, Warszawa 2017, Oficyna Naukowa, p. 45–46.

23 A. Bilewicz, „*Spółem*” 1900–1939. *Idea, ludzie, organizacja*, vol. 1, op. cit., p. 37–43.

In the following years, Abramowski limited his activity in the cooperative movement and became more involved with psychology than before, conducting experiments and writing many essays and articles on the subject.²⁴ However, he continued his social activity in areas close to cooperativism, for instance, in establishing Friendship Societies, which put the ideas of fraternity into practice.

Cooperativism in Edward Abramowski's Philosophy and Sociology

In Abramowski's thought, epistemological and social issues constitute a complementary whole, as is visible in many of his writings and perhaps best in *Issues of Socialism*, in which sociology, politics, and a theory of cognition are intertwined. Below I will try to show that Abramowski's cooperativism is related to his ontology and epistemology. Maria Dąbrowska²⁵ wrote about these relationships that "No one has shown as strongly as he did that consideration of the life of societies results in cooperativism and only cooperativism. It contains the solution of social problems and consequently—perhaps also existential problems in general".²⁶ "In fact, cooperativism singularly fit all his thoughts," she concluded.²⁷

The basis of Abramowski's sociological and philosophical thinking is the individual. His sociological phenomenalism reduces the phenomena of social life to the facts of individual consciousness (although at the same time individual consciousness becomes social due to the process of apperception.²⁸

24 U. Dobrzycka, *Abramowski*, op. cit., p. 25.

25 Maria Dąbrowska (1889–1965) was an outstanding Polish story writer, novelist, essayist, playwright, and translator. In 1907–1914 she studied at the universities in Lausanne and Brussels. She met Edward Abramowski at that time and became interested in his social concepts, especially in cooperativist thinking. She became involved in the cooperative movement and devoted many texts to the subject. She was also a stipendist of the Cooperativists' Society, which made it possible for her to go to London to study the cooperative movement there. She also wrote about Belgium and Finnish cooperativism. She was interested in rural questions and worked for a time in the Ministry of Agriculture. She was the author of a collection of stories and the two-volume *Noce i dnie* (*Days and Nights*), which was one of the most popular interwar novels and is currently on the school reading list. She also wrote multi-volume *Dzienniki* (*Journals*).

26 M. Dąbrowska, *Życie i dzieło Edwarda Abramowskiego*, op. cit., p. 23.

27 Ibidem, p. 31.

28 See Z. Krawczyk, *Socjologia Edwarda Abramowskiego*, Warszawa 1965, Książka i Wiedza, p. 213.

Abramowski opposes materialism,²⁹ considering economic processes to be psychosocial.³⁰ What is social reveals itself in the process of apperception, that is, the action of the will and thinking that organizes and objectifies the data coming from intuitive cognition, from “agnosic states.” Abramowski writes about apperception that it transforms “this vague, nameless, undefined flow of feeling that awakens in us through contact with the essence of the ‘unconscious’ into ideas, concepts and thoughts, into specific and named phenomena; it fulfills the role of a creative force that provides the raw material with shape and builds a whole world of things and relations out of the chaos of the emotional nebula”.³¹ In the process of apperception, ethical categories also emerge. “Apperception moralizes phenomena” claims Abramowski. “[...] for wherever a human being finds himself, next to causality there is always purposefulness, duty, the ideal—the area of *freedom* belonging to the subject”.³² Thus, what is ethical is social *par excellence*.

Abramowski’s new socialist ethics involved the idea of solidarity and fraternity, which is realized in cooperatives and other associations. In his work, fraternity is not only a political postulate but in a sense one form of the functioning of the human mind. He describes it as one of the phenomena appearing in a state of agnosia—the highest form of intuitive cognition, in which the human being encounters the noumen, the Kantian thing-in-itself.³³ Abramowski distinguishes several types of agnosia (or nameless states): those caused by emotion, by religious or sexual experience, or by chemical agents.³⁴

29 Abramowski wrote: “Yet we will easily see that economic factors, like all others, cannot be separated from the totality of social life as its determining cause and that if politics and the whole ideology of society can be considered as the ‘superstructure’ of economic relations, as a direct result of their implicit influence on human thought, it is nevertheless also true that all economic relations have their causes in social life and must thereby be considered the result of the politics and ideology of the preceding period” (E. Abramowski, “Zagadnienia socjalizmu,” in: Edward Abramowski, *Pisma*, vol. 2, Warszawa 1924, Związek Polskich Stowarzyszeń Spożywców, p. 86). Elsewhere, in the same text, he wrote about the transition from capitalism to socialism: “For capitalism, just as it arose from the interaction of ideas and things, must also perish through a new interaction of ideas and things” (Ibidem, p. 105).

30 U. Dobrzycka, *Abramowski*, op. cit., p. 86.

31 E. Abramowski, „Zagadnienia socjalizmu,” op. cit., p. 52.

32 Idem, “Issues of Socialism,” in: this volume: p. 85. Abramowski explains that the “ethical category is the most sensitive factor by which the cooperativism of a phenomenon is recognized and wherever it appears the objectification of the thinking being begins—the social world” (E. Abramowski, „Zagadnienia socjalizmu,” op. cit., p. 62).

33 E. Abramowski, „Metafizyka doświadczalna,” in: Idem, *Metafizyka doświadczalna i inne pisma*, Warszawa 1980, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, p. 540.

34 Ibidem, p. 539–542.

He also mentions “ethical agnosia (fraternity–goodness).” This state, which develops under the influence of various emotional stimuli,

manifests itself as a special movement of the heart at the sight of human misery and harm, real and individual harm. The agnostic nature of this state manifests itself even in its intellectual development: in ethics or religion, as certainties of good and evil which we can never justify and for which we do not need justification. It is a state we call faith, so neglectful of the intellect that it even adopts the formula ‘*quia absurdum*’.³⁵

It is this ethical state of agnosia that becomes the basis of the “most beautiful” social movements.

From it comes the original Christianity [...], the Albigensian sects, peasant revolts, the Hussites, the Russian sects of the Doukhobors, finally socialism in its original utopian era, anarchism, syndicalism, that is, the cooperative Republic, stateless socialism and its newest varieties, Friendship Societies, which strive to renew human life on the basis of fraternity, i.e., to make the teachings and dreams of Jesus, which have been killed for centuries, the dreams of beauty and the soul of life, come true in our lives.³⁶

The leaders of these social movements, “the creators of new life, new human worlds” are a special type “in whom the focus of their spiritual life is a vivid feeling of the wrongs of others and an involuntarily strong need to repair these wrongs, to give at least some happiness and serenity [...] It is an interior beauty which is self-sufficient, which no intelligence, no knowledge, can ever attain”.³⁷ As Abramowski writes in *Individual Elements in Sociology*, at the basis of what is social is cooperation, which is fundamental for a human being functioning in the world. The ideal of fraternity is inscribed in human psychology as one of the kinds of cognition. Agnostic states, in which intuition comes to the fore, are its highest form. Therefore, according to Abramowski, the disposition for fraternity, which is necessary to form cooperatives, is a constitutional feature of human beings.

35 Ibidem, p. 542.

36 Ibidem, p. 542.

37 Ibidem, p. 543.

As Abramowski argues in the first parts of *Issues of Socialism* in regard to the individual origin of social phenomena, the leading issue in the practice of socialism is the moral transformation of the individual. This was his major thesis, and it went against the then understanding of socialism. In an oft-quoted passage, Abramowski speaks of the consequences for the practice of socialism:

In posing the question of the practice of socialism as a moral revolution, we are stating at the same time the main principle of its politics: only that thing will become a historical fact, a reality of social life, that has passed as an idea through the consciousness of the popular masses, a principle which, being the stark opposite to "Jacobinism," is expressed in the motto "the proletariat can free itself only on its own".³⁸

Therefore, he writes, socialism must reject all attempts to introduce revolutionary reforms "from above." He defines such tendencies as "Jacobinism," and prophetically portrays attempts to impose the socialist system in this manner:

It is a theory about the ennobling, salvational influences of the police knout if this knout is in the hands animated by the idea of freedom and the good of the people. The reasoning on which it is based can be summarized as follows: human nature, with its ideology, is the result of a social system; [...] the social system itself results only from the economic forces of society, and if these exist as a material condition enabling given forms of coexistence, then there is nothing to prevent a simple initiative of the conspirators or the parliament from taking over the state power in order to implement a given social system without the conscious cooperation of the popular masses, and by means of the police, to shape a new type of collective life.³⁹

According to Abramowski, the path to socialism leads not through government overthrow and the nationalization of property but through a grassroots revolution against the state:

the closer current socialist politics is to self-knowledge of its historical task the more strongly it will be marked by its antagonism to state socialism, and it will have as one of its tasks the political enlightenment of the

38 E. Abramowski, „Zagadnienia socjalizmu,” op. cit., p. 110–111.

39 Ibidem, p. 112.

working classes, with the aim of negating the state by transferring all its attributes to the popular masses—a comprehensive democratization of power allowing the moral revolution which has ultimately happened in the collective consciousness to organize into a new collective system.⁴⁰

This democratization also involves economic democracy, and thus, as we will see shortly, a system based primarily on grassroots cooperatives.

Abramowski makes fraternity, as the basis of cooperativism, into an element of the proper politics of socialism. This is probably best seen in his work *Socialism and the State* (*Socjalizm a państwo*) which is a critique of those socialist doctrines that rely on belief in the state as a factor of social change.

Abramowski argues that focusing on reform of the state reduces the issue of socialism to a political struggle. He shows that workers' institutions such as trade unions and cooperatives are considered by contemporary socialism only as an instrument of struggle, and not as a path to the moral transformation of the people. The proletariat thus becomes only a tool for the transformation of the state. He contrasts the activities of grassroots organizations such as trade unions or educational associations, which democratize knowledge, with the socialism whose aim is to change state politics (e.g., the introduction of general education, labor legislation, insurance). In contemporary socialism, therefore, there are

two factors, two methods, two policies which are essentially different—*state* and *stateless*—coexist side by side as *a social fact*. The former is contained in party programs and confined in the rigors of a reasoned ideology; the latter is manifested in spontaneous movements of free association, unrestrained by any ideology and not yet aware of its existence as a *revolutionary political force*.⁴¹

Abramowski argues that contemporary socialism does not strive to transform the moral human, and the individual morality of a socialist is no different from that of bourgeois morality. As a result, socialism is also unable to define the moral ideal of the future. He criticizes the socialist parties that support the politics of “bourgeois governments” or even place their representatives in them. The people's revolution, in his opinion, must take place without state aid. The ideas of stateless socialism are implemented by institutions created by

40 Ibidem, p. 115.

41 E. Abramowski, „Socialism and the State,” in: this volume, p. 162.

workers: independent trade unions, as well as consumer cooperatives, which, as he writes, are mostly proletarian institutions, stemming from the class struggle. He analyzes how cooperatives could cause real harm to capitalism:

Assuming that cooperatives develop to such an extent that they take into their hands only that market that meets the needs of the life of the proletariat and the popular classes in general [...] what would be its social outcome, how would it effect the capitalist economy? Capitalist enterprises would find themselves completely dependent on an organized market consciously led by the people's democratic associations, and imposing on it their needs and requirements, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Production would have to adhere strictly to the size of these wholesale orders, which would come from cooperatives, and correspond to the real needs of consumers, as a result of which the possibility of market crises, the flooding of markets with unnecessary goods, and the creation of fashion by speculators would be reduced to a minimum. Thus we get the same result whose ideal form we have in the demands of state collectivism: production that is organized, planned, and consciously adapted to the needs of the population.⁴²

Abramowski describes the impressive development of cooperatives and their unions in various countries, showing how they create an organized force that opposes capitalism. In his opinion, this occurs spontaneously, in a completely grassroots manner. Free associations—that is, what Abramowski considers the practice of stateless socialism—are ubiquitous “in every area of life and consequently, they are the beginnings of a new type of human relations, based on commonality and voluntary joining together.” Capitalism itself, says Abramowski, produces forces that are able to oppose both capital and the state. He writes that

In declaring as a fact of development that under the influence of capitalism the social role of the state and its omnipotence in questions of human life are continually expanding, we must simultaneously declare that this same capitalism develops within itself an eternal antagonist of the state: cooperativism in various forms, which, in allowing people to satisfy their

42 Idem, „Socjalizm a państwo,” in: Idem, *Pisma*, vol. 2, Warszawa 1924, Związek Polskich Stowarzyszeń Spożywców, p. 328.

manifold and ever-newer economic and cultural interests beyond the reach of the state, thereby weakens its social and moral significance.⁴³

Capitalism raises within itself forces capable of resisting both capital and the state. This, Abramowski claims, is a historical necessity. He shows that only associative democracy is capable of creating an environment in which the development of human individuality is possible without the imposition of worldviews or beliefs by the majority:

The government of a democracy *consists in conditioning the freedom of a given group on its becoming the majority*, that is by hampering the free development of other groups, through the nationalization and propagation of things that need not and should not be either universal or coerced. The interest of human freedom requires a quite opposite thing: not the introduction of new life norms in place of former ones but the *free development of all individual and social differences, insofar as they have a natural internal power to exist and develop*.⁴⁴

The party of stateless socialism has the task of eliminating the state from successive spheres of human life, regardless of the existing system. Abramowski recommends a comprehensive boycott of state institutions in the hope that they will simply disappear as a result. The function of associations in the order he postulates is twofold: on the one hand, they remove the state from a specific field of human needs, and on the other, they educate people to a truly democratic culture. Thanks to associations, a new person appears: an individualist who is able to be solidary at the same time. These themes reappear in Abramowski's cooperativist writings.

Cooperativist Writings

Abramowski wrote most often on cooperativism. His writings on the subject appeared in *Spółem* and were also published as separate brochures and reissued several times. As Krzeczkowski wrote in 1933, two of these, *Social Ideas of Cooperativism (Idee społeczne kooperatyizmu)* from 1907 and *The Cooperative as*

43 E. Abramowski, „Socialism and the State,” in: this volume, p. 321.

44 Ibidem, p. 332.

a Matter of Liberating the Working People (*Kooperatywa jako sprawa wyzwolenia ludu pracującego*) from 1912 (which have been reprinted in this collection) “are today considered to be the gospel of Polish cooperativism”.⁴⁵

Contrary to other works that mention cooperatives, Abramowski’s cooperative writings contain a relatively large amount of information about the functioning of cooperative associations in Poland and the world. Abramowski devotes considerable space to the way consumer cooperatives, credit and housing cooperatives, and agricultural companies operate. His cooperative writings were intended to popularize the subject and were read as such. At the same time, they contain the theory of cooperativism; I will try to reconstruct its most important elements below.

The fundamental issue that Abramowski addresses in his writings on cooperatives (most of which are published in this collection) is the distinction between cooperativism and mainstream socialism. In *The Cooperative as a Matter of Liberating the Working people*, Abramowski points out that the two have much in common. He writes that

Cooperativism, like socialism, considers that the evils of the world—the evils of poverty, injury, exploitation, and ignorance—largely derive from a defective economic system, from private business, which gives one class predominance over others and allows anyone who has capital to oppress and exploit the crowds of the disinherited. And like socialism, cooperativism claims that *the socialization* of production and trade is the sole means of destroying that evil.⁴⁶

As in *Socialism and the State*, Abramowski criticizes state collectivism—the idea of nationalizing the economy and the state’s taking the initiative in all areas of life, such as education and health. State socialism, which Abramowski called a “people’s labor state” in his *Social Ideas of Cooperativism* (in accord with Anton Menger, whom he criticized), is a bureaucratic state, striving to control all areas of life, including education and culture. An inevitable trait of this state is the growth of an administrative class. Although the state is managed democratically, state democracy, as Abramowski recognized, leads to the violation of minority rights. He concluded that

45 K. Krzeczowski, *Dzieje życia i twórczości Edwarda Abramowskiego*, op. cit., p. 120.

46 E. Abramowski, “The Cooperative as a Matter of Liberating the Working People,” in: this volume, p. 428.

It is clear that when presented in this manner the question of “liberating” the working classes becomes ironic, a slap to that class by falsifying their ideals and historical aspirations. In becoming the handwork of the police state, economic commonality—the commonality of riches and cultural attainments—becomes at the same time an extension of slavery, which is so discordant with the needs and development of today’s human being.⁴⁷

Abramowski, however, does not advocate the abolition of private property, for example, in agriculture, but rather “its socialization by association”.⁴⁸

How can the goal of socializing the economy and ending exploitation be achieved? The path involves a slow, peaceful transformation of the system through free association. The ultimate goal is the creation of a cooperative republic, a “non-territorial state” based on a federation of free associations. In such a country, its functions are limited to a minimum (defense against external enemies, public order). Abramowski writes:

That commonwealth resolves the most important problems that have troubled humanity for centuries: it makes the freedom of the individual accord with the commonality of ownership. In socializing production, trade, and agriculture, it simultaneously puts in place permanent bases for the people’s self-government and for the independence of the human being; it protects against exploitation and at the same time protects against enslavement.⁴⁹

Significantly, the cooperative republic is not a distant goal but is being created here and now, even if slowly, through the growth of associations and their taking control of subsequent areas of life. Abramowski writes in *The Cooperative as a Matter of Liberating the Working People* that:

A person must relate to the socialist ideal as to something very distant, which today can only be dreamed about, as future worlds are dreamed of

47 E. Abramowski, „Social Ideas of Cooperativism,” in: *Cooperativism and Democracy. Selected Works of Polish Thinkers*, edited by B. Blesznowski, translated by M. Granas, Leiden-Boston, 2018, Brill, p. 98.

48 Idem, „The Cooperative as a Matter of Liberating the Working People,” in: this volume, p. 378.

49 Ibidem, p. 434.

in general: as the triumph of good that is sometime to occur. At the same time, the partisans and proponents of socialism must satisfy themselves with a struggle adapted to today's world and can only expand among the people the idea itself of a future system, without being able to make it real in anything. [...] A cooperativist on the contrary not only speaks of a new social system, of a better and more just world, but he is building that world; without waiting for a revolution, he is creating that new system today already by removing capitalism from new sectors of trade, industry, and agriculture one after another.⁵⁰

What is characteristic of Abramowski's concept and fundamentally different from Marxist orthodoxy is the conviction that capitalism should be fought first and foremost on the fronts of consumption and exchange, and not of changes in the relations of production. In his cooperativist writings, Abramowski described many types of cooperative associations, but he especially focused on consumer cooperatives, which were created first and constituted the basis for developing further forms of cooperation, including production. Abramowski probably adopted this idea from the French economist Charles Gide, the creator of pan-cooperativism, which is identical with the idea of a cooperative republic.⁵¹

According to Gide and Abramowski, capitalism primarily exploits consumers, thanks to intermediaries taking a margin from each transaction. For this reason, cooperation is aimed against intermediaries. As Krzeczkowski writes, "In this way, alongside the capitalist economy, new economic organizations are formed, in which there are no exploiters and exploited, owners and proletarians, rulers and ruled, where the owner is a free people's association, open to everyone, respecting the equality of rights and obligations".⁵² Capitalism, according to pan-cooperativist doctrine, was expected slowly to regress—to give way to organized consumers who would gradually take over production.

Already during Abramowski's lifetime, a dispute arose between the "class cooperativists" and the "neutralists." The neutralists were faithful to Abramowski's conviction that cooperatives could transform the system by a slow and peaceful method. This idea was related to the principle of the universality of cooperation, i.e., its being open to all the social classes except

50 Ibidem, p. 430–431.

51 See: K. Gide, *Kooperatyzm*, Warszawa 1937, „Społem”.

52 K. Krzeczkowski, *Dzieje życia i twórczości Edwarda Abramowskiego*, op. cit., p. 122.

capitalists, in accord with the principle that every citizen is a consumer. Class cooperativists, on the other hand, were convinced that the cooperative was only one of the proletariat's tools of struggle and must be subordinated to the general political goals of the socialist movement (revolution) and also associated with a socialist or communist party. The first, neutral position was consistently represented by the "Społem" union, and the second by the socialist cooperativists who were connected in the years 1919–1925 with the Workers' Union of Cooperative Associations, which merged with "Społem" in 1925. It seems that in this context Abramowski would have opted for neutralism—understood as the independence of the cooperative from the party—even though, as Oskar Lange argues, the cooperative for him was class-oriented, as it was intended mainly for workers and all those affected by the capitalist system.⁵³

Hard work was necessary in order to gradually create this new world—the cooperative republic. Abramowski emphasized that implementing the principles of a cooperative republic required "new people," with a new disposition and morality. Meanwhile, the current state system inclined people to be passive.

Democracy and freedom, though, begin only when the citizens of the country, instead of demanding reforms from the state in economic and cultural relations, themselves introduce these reforms through voluntary solidarity, in which instead of the human being as "a vote" for parliament, instead of a pawn in the hands of bureaucracy or in the hands of party leaders, the human being appears as a free creator of life, knowing how to act without coercion, in solidarity with others, and how to perfect life.⁵⁴

It is precisely these qualities that require the moral revolution that Abramowski repeatedly mentions.

We learn that poverty and all the cares of life come from the fact that each person thinks only of himself and looks out for himself, without concern for the other; and at the same time we know that by mutual aid, from being fearful and weak we become pillars of strength in regard to all evil and masters of life. And then we understand what fraternity is; we understand that this is the one true life; we understand that joy, that internal strength, that clarity, that it gives to the human being.⁵⁵

53 O. Lange, *Socjologia i idee społeczne Edwarda Abramowskiego*, op. cit., p. 50.

54 E. Abramowski, „The Significance of Cooperativism for Democracy,” in: this volume, p. 443.

55 Idem, „The Cooperative as a Matter of Liberating the Working People,” in: this volume, p. 436.

Abramowski emphasizes that the transformation of morality must take place not only on the level of social relations but also on a personal level. “If, in your social convictions, you disapprove of exploitation and coercion, of ownership at the cost of the hungry, and the codices that support it, then let your personal life proclaim the same.” he writes in *Social Ideas of Cooperativism*.⁵⁶

The postulate of moral change applies in particular to the Polish nation, which was living under the yoke of the partitioning powers. Therefore, in *The Cooperative as a Matter of Liberating the Working People*, Abramowski lists the moral revival of the nation as among the functions and advantages of the cooperativist system. Poles, as Abramowski writes, must free themselves from foreign capital, but to do so, they must get rid of their slave morality. Independence, which is a condition of freedom, plays a key role in the association system.

Building independence is a necessary step in creating a democratic culture through associations and cooperatives. These associations are the school of democracy, preparing the foundations for the new system: “A democratic constitution is only a legal form that favors the development of freedom, but the entire content of democracy—its real strength and real protection of human liberties—must come from society itself, from its democratic *culture*,” writes Abramowski.⁵⁷ It is in a truly democratic society that other people are genuinely respected, a dogma that becomes unconsciously rooted in people’s habits and feelings as the democracy of associations grows and develops, we read in “The Significance of Cooperatives for Democracy”.⁵⁸ This is the culture that was lacking in Poland then, and probably still is.

Abramowski’s Cooperative Legacy

Abramowski can safely be considered the main theorist of cooperatives in Poland—and perhaps not only in Poland. His philosophy accorded with associationism, which was an important trend in European socialism at the turn of the nineteenth to twentieth century.⁵⁹ The Polish consumer-cooperative movement was a direct translation of Abramowski’s ideas into practice. Over time,

56 E. Abramowski, „Social Ideas of Cooperativism,” op. cit., p. 105.

57 E. Abramowski, „The Cooperative as a Matter of Liberating the Working People,” in: this volume, p. 415–416.

58 E. Abramowski, Znaczenie spółdzielczości dla demokracji, op.cit.

59 B. Blesznowski, “The self as the multitude. Edward Abramowski’s social philosophy and the politics of cooperativism in Poland at the turn of the 20th century,” *European Journal of Political Theory* 2020, no. 4 (21), pp. 692–714.

the “Społem” union became the largest Polish trade organization. In accord with the doctrine of a cooperative republic, it not only united consumer shops but was also involved in production. With time, it acquired its own factories and engaged in international trade.⁶⁰ Consumer cooperatives became centers of social and cultural life, including in the countryside, where consumer cooperatives were one of the few public institutions to exist and created space for informal meetings and discussions, often on political issues.⁶¹ Such cooperatives encouraged their members, who were often illiterate peasants or workers, to educate themselves and develop a cooperative ideology. Initially established and managed by representatives of the elite (the local intelligentsia or the clergy), with time cooperatives turned into truly democratic institutions (if not without problems and setbacks). Along with the work of pioneers such as Romuald Mielczarski, Abramowski’s writings also played an important role in the process of forming and educating cooperativists.⁶² However, Abramowski’s ideas had a wider impact than on just the consumer cooperative movement itself. The popular movement also drew on his ideas, especially agrarian ideology, which had been developing since the end of the 1920s. As the journalist Wojciech Giełżyński wrote in a book about Abramowski, “[...] the later agrarianism of the peasant parties was based on Abramowski’s ideas: insistence on the cooperative movement, the belief that the path of progress leads not through revolution but through the improvement of moral attitudes, and on humanism and the priority given to the goodness of the individual”.⁶³

Other types of cooperatives, such as labor cooperatives, which belonged to Społem before the war and also developed during the period of the Polish People’s Republic, can also be considered part of the legacy from Abramowski. This period, however, in which the cooperative movement was subject to state control and its autonomy was significantly limited, was a denial of the essence of that heritage.

Reference to Abramowski has only recently resumed. In the intentions of their creators, the consumer cooperatives that have begun to appear in Poland since 2010 draw inspiration from Abramowski’s cooperativism. These are usually informal, democratically managed grassroots associations (the first

60 A. Bilewicz, „Społem” 1906–1939. *Idea, ludzie, organizacja*, vol. 1, op. cit., pp. 77–80.

61 See: A. Bilewicz, „Wiejska spółdzielczość spożywców. Zapomniana karta z dziejów samoorganizacji wsi polskiej,” *Wiś i rolnictwo* 2019, no. 4 (185), pp. 45–66.

62 Cf A. Bilewicz, *Społem 1906–1939. Idea, ludzie, organizacja*, vol. 1, op. cit., pp. 135–136.

63 W. Giełżyński, *Edward Abramowski. Zwiastun „Solidarności”*, London 1986, Polonia Book Fund.

cooperatives used the consensus method, a radical form of democracy); in accord with Abramowski's instructions, they have a community fund. They differ significantly from classic consumer cooperatives. Their informal character and flat structure have made some of them ephemeral and fragile associations. They have also been exclusive in nature, bringing together mainly members of the middle class who wish to have access to healthy, high-quality food.⁶⁴ Perhaps, however, these are difficulties and limitations related to the beginnings of the movement, as with the first cooperatives in the Polish lands.

Abramowski's cooperativist legacy can be understood more broadly, however, as an idea that encourages the establishment of all kinds of grassroots associations. In this sense, as Wojciech Giełżyński writes, Abramowski was a patron or herald of the Solidarity trade union and social movement, and other institutions of the Polish democratic opposition, such as the Workers' Defense Committee.⁶⁵ "There are millions of people in Poland," he wrote in 1986, "who have recently experienced that moment of collective solidarity which liberated them—without intellectual analysis but irreversibly—the ideal of fraternity as an intuitive certainty, exactly as Abramowski predicted and under the identical stimulus of a strike"⁶⁶ He continued, "Abramowski was the herald of Solidarity, its precursor not only in 'A General Conspiracy,' the political manifesto of boycott and self-organization, but also in his psychological and philosophical concepts".⁶⁷

In this broader sense, Abramowski's heritage can be considered pioneering given the various grassroots movements and initiatives that refer to the idea of solidarity and the common good, in line with "commoning" philosophy.⁶⁸

64 A. Bilewicz, "Kooperatywy spożywcze w polskich miastach—między enklawą stylu życia a zmianą społeczną," in: *Aktywizmy miejskie*, edited by B. Lewenstein, A. Gójska, E. Zielińska, Warszawa 2020, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar.

65 The Workers' Defense Committee (KOR) was a Polish opposition organization functioning in the years 1976–1977. It was one of the most important opposition groups in the Polish People's Republic and was formed out of the need to help workers who were persecuted in connection with the strikes in industrial factories in Radom, Ursus, and Płock (the "June Events"). KOR brought together persons with varying political pedigrees. It operated in three areas: financial aid, legal and medical aid, and informing society about the repressions. The authorities attempted to repress the members of KOR through arrests, loss of employment, beatings, and threats. In 1977, the organization was turned into the KOR Social Self-Defense Committee.

66 W. Giełżyński, *Edward Abramowski. Zwiastun „Solidarności”*, op. cit., p. 111.

67 Ibidem, p. 114.

68 B. Blesznowski, "The self as the multitude," op. cit., p. 15.

Conclusion

Abramowski's legacy of cooperativism is quite ambivalent. His idea of stateless socialism and a cooperative republic can be considered both utopian and to some degree realistic. In hindsight, his criticism of state socialism seems prophetic—he died a year after the October Revolution and never knew of its far-reaching consequences, but he had described the violence, bureaucratization, and enslaving power of the “people's state” many years earlier. On the other hand, it seems that he did not foresee that similar processes, albeit on a smaller scale, might take place in associations as they grew. As Kazimierz Sowa (1988) wrote,⁶⁹ cooperatives and other associations are subject to institutionalization in the course of their expansion, that is, they begin to serve external purposes, not their members. This happened in the Soviet Union and in communist Poland, where cooperatives were reorganized and subject to strict state control. However, institutionalization also occurred in the cooperatives of the Western world, where expanding cooperatives began to require professional management and became similar to capitalist enterprises, marginalizing the importance of association members (e.g., the large cooperative supermarket chains). Thus, it is possible that a cooperative republic, even if it were established and maintained its independence, would gradually become a state-like organism with a similar degree of bureaucratization, and perhaps oppression, as the state described by Abramowski. It should be remembered, however, that Abramowski's attitude to the state had a special context. The oppressiveness of the tsarist regime, including repressions against socialist activists, such as Abramowski and his milieu, certainly contributed to his views on the essence of statehood. The period of the revolution of 1905, when Abramowski engaged in underground activities and published “A General Conspiracy against the Government,” is also of particular importance.

However, the “realistic” aspects of Abramowski's cooperativist doctrine should be emphasized. These, I believe, include his emphasis on self-reliance, the grassroots nature and independence of cooperative associations, and the necessity to develop a democratic culture, which he contrasted with the culture of “slave-natured” people who can only demand protection and reforms from the state. This latter description is certainly a sad and true diagnosis of Polish society under Russian occupation.

69 K. Sowa, *Wstęp do socjologicznej teorii zrzeszeń*, Warszawa 1988, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe.

Moreover, Abramowski's conceptualization of the road to the cooperative republic as a slow, arduous evolution, with associations taking over subsequent spheres of human needs, means that the implementation of cooperativist ideals is based on current work in associations. As Abramowski emphasized, the cooperative republic begins here and now, in everyday work for the growth of cooperatives, the moral improvement of their members, the members' work on themselves, on their talent for self-government and building a democratic culture. The cooperativist revolution, therefore, does not require waiting for a future coup and assumption of full power by the socialists. In this sense, the cooperative ideal is both far-reaching—which helps to develop idealistic attitudes—and close, everyday. Thanks to this, as Świtalski wrote in the passage quoted above, the Polish cooperative movement was characterized by a particular kind of idealism.

At the same time, it should be stated that a certain paradox can be seen in the theory of cooperativism thus outlined. Cooperatives serve to shape a democratic culture, develop talents for self-government, fraternity, and solidarity, and at the same time require a certain amount of such skills at the outset in order to exist and survive. Therefore, as I wrote in *"Społem" 1906–1939. Idea, Ludzie, Organizacja* (vol. 1), real cooperatives struggled with many problems, such as lack of management skills, the dishonesty of management of shops, the willingness of political parties to take control of cooperatives, and the passivity of members and their reluctance to educate themselves and increase their skills.⁷⁰ These problems were widely described in the cooperative press, which, however, also gave many examples of overcoming the problems faced by cooperatives: laziness, passivity, selfishness, and dishonesty. The struggle for true cooperative democracy and for honest, prospering cooperative enterprises was hard work. The cooperativist ideas instilled by Abramowski and his associates, Stanisław Wojciechowski and Romuald Mielczarski (founders of the Cooperativists' Society and "Społem"), were certainly useful in building the consumer-cooperative movement in Poland.

Abramowski himself, as already mentioned, was a theorist rather than an organizer. This is how Saturnin Dąbrowski, a "Społem" employee, describes him in his memoir of a cooperative:

He was an amazing figure. Of slender stature, he had an immense inner vitality. His ardent eyes did not seem to notice what was happening around him but reached to some distant world. He spoke about the

⁷⁰ A. Bilewicz, *"Społem" 1906–1939. Idea, ludzie, organizacja*, vol. 1, op. cit., p. 133–150.

power of human individuality, about its unrestrained drive to penetrate beyond material reality.⁷¹

Dąbrowski noticed and condemned the elitism of Abramowski's circles:

Abramowski's arguments stimulated the imagination, and encouraged a person to freely follow the most diverse combinations of thoughts. This too was how they were received by young listeners, who were mostly female students. The excitement they and some of their colleagues exhibited showed that the company came from a sphere which, being detached from the mainstream of real life based on direct effort, was looking for strong impressions.⁷²

At the same time, as mentioned above by Świtalski, Abramowski's influence reached beyond this elite group and formed a movement ideologically composed mostly of rural and workers' cooperatives. Tadeusz Janczyk wrote of this influence in *Spółem* on the twentieth anniversary of Abramowski's death:

All the most popular slogans, the ones most appealing to human feelings and reason, derive from his thoughts. Not only that but also the general atmosphere of the movement, [...] everything that is called in journalistic publications "the ideology of *Spółem*" comes from Abramowski. If the consumer cooperative movement is now burgeoning in the countryside—and it is known how important a role in it is played by young people, who are eager to seek the ideal of freedom—it is not only because the consumer cooperative is one of the easiest and most purposeful forms of economic activity but also because our movement has a specific ideology, capable of attracting to it all those who do not limit the meaning of life to tearing the bread out of each other's hands.⁷³

Abramowski's role in regard to the cooperative movement, in particular the consumer cooperative movement, is therefore difficult to overestimate. It can be said that his cooperative thinking is still valid. Although he addressed Polish

71 S. Dąbrowski, „Spółdzielczość spożywców w latach 1917–1925 we wspomnieniach lustratora,” in: *Wspomnienia działaczy spółdzielczych. Spółdzielczość spożywców 1869–1969*, vol. 5: *Spółdzielczość spożywców 1869–1969*, op. cit., p. 38–116.

72 Ibidem, p. 66.

73 T. Janczyk, *Realizowana utopia (w dwudziestą rocznicę śmierci Edwarda Abramowskiego)*, in: *Spółem 1906–1939. Idea, ludzie, organizacja*, vol. 2: *Wybór źródeł*, op. cit., pp. 40–43.

topics and considered that cooperatives would be a school of democracy and self-government for a nation under partition, his ideas have a universal dimension. They could prove useful to contemporary creators of cooperatives and related initiatives not only in Poland but also internationally (thanks to this translation into English). In 1925 Maria Dąbrowska wrote—perhaps with a touch of exaggeration—that “nothing really great, wise, and good is happening in Poland that is not consciously or subconsciously penetrated by Abramowski’s ideas”.⁷⁴ The topicality of Abramowski’s thoughts means they can inspire us once again.

74 M. Dąbrowska, *Życie i dzieło Edwarda Abramowskiego*, op. cit., p. 45.

Edward Abramowski's Writings



The Cooperative as a Matter of Liberating the Working People

Hey, arm to arm! by chains
Let's bind the earth around;
To one focus bring each sound,
To one focus spirits bring and brains!

ADAM MICKIEWICZ, *Ode to Youth*
translated by JAREK ZAWADZKI

Introduction

I am publishing this work as the second volume of the book entitled *Socialism and the State*, which I released some years ago. The same question of social life—the question of *total liberation*—which I considered then from the position of philosophical criticism in connection with many theoretical problems of sociology and cognitive theory, I will try to present here from the position of life practice: not solely as an imagined “liberation” but as one that is happening now; as a real-life image of the same idea that in the previous work I contrasted with *doctrine and dogma* in all their manifestations—intellectual, moral, and social. If in that book I was able to convince readers that the old enslavement, deceptively masked, is concealed under many of today’s fashionable ideas of “freedom” and that the emancipation movement of the working classes, under state socialism, is unconsciously heading toward the contradiction of its deepest ideals, at present, in this second work, I would like to convince those who are dreaming and working for an idea that the question of liberation is not waiting for barricades, or pedestals, or future saviors of the people, but on the contrary, it has descended into the core of life, in small, minor, everyday reforms made by ordinary people, and spread to a number of points where the life and soul of the human being are in transformation. In this idea and in this model of the live idea there is neither resignation nor the pessimism of maturity; on the contrary, it is accompanied by a great youthful joy, *the joy of creation*: instead of the difficult waiting for the “special moment” that is to overturn the old world and erect a new one, we see that the hoped-for world is among us and for the taking—that we can begin to build it today, at once, from the very foundations of human life and from the deepest elements of human souls. It is not just a slogan, not principles, not words but *acts*—acts that give

body and blood to our ideals, that bring them down to earth and order us to live them. And what is more joyful and greater than to be a creator?

I The Economic Principle of Consumer Cooperative

The consumer cooperative occasioned an unprecedentedly significant economic discovery, namely, that capital, even in today's social system, *can be collected without limit in the hands of the working people as their common wealth* and that for this to happen there is no need either for onerous sacrifice on the part of the people or philanthropic aid from the state, but only one simple thing: *the goodwill* to help one another. This discovery has contradicted the widespread economic knowledge, both liberal and social-democratic; both have declared the complete powerlessness of the workers against the laws governing the social economy and the entire question of freeing the workers has been placed either in the hands of the wealthy or in the hands of revolution. This was thus the heralding of a new truth, showing the people a new road to social rebirth. And it is noteworthy that the discoverers were not scholars or politicians but ordinary workers—weavers in the English town of Rochdale, who in 1844 created their famous consumer cooperative.

Let us see what this economic discovery entails. Its principle is very simple. In today's social system, between the producers, who make items for sale, and the consumers, that is, the general population, there exists a very numerous merchant class, whose task is to intermediate between the producer and the consumer: finding goods, stocking stores with them, and selling them to the public. Large merchant firms acquire goods from the producers themselves, from industrialists and farmers, and they transport those goods to their wholesale warehouses from various parts of the world. From these warehouses, goods are sold to smaller merchants and placed in various stores throughout the country. From these, finally, goods are bought by small shopkeepers for the retail trade, where the majority of the public usually makes its purchases. Thus, before an item passes to the hands of a consumer it has gone through the hands of several intermediaries, beginning with the wholesale buyer and ending with the small shopkeeper. Each one profits from his intermediation, based on the fact that he buys wholesale and more cheaply and sells retail and more expensively. The price of every item in a large store or small shop must be enough higher than the factory price that the merchant can pay not only the costs of commission, transport, tariffs, patents, and the whole furnishing

of shops, but also have some net income left over. Judging by the wealth that accumulates from trade operations, this income can be quite significant.

The consumer cooperative has proven that all this merchant intermediation is entirely unnecessary to people—unnecessary and burdensome. Consumers can themselves conduct all those trade operations; they can acquire wholesale goods directly from the sources and appropriate for themselves all those revenues that belong to the merchant class. All they need to do is *to organize*.

For instance, a few dozen or a few hundred families get together and decide that instead of each one buying items of daily use separately in various shops they will buy them wholesale from the distributors, as a partnership. To this end they calculate how much bread, milk, butter, cheese, tobacco, candles, soap, kerosene, sugar, etc., each one will need; they calculate what sum they will need for the first purchases and the equipping of a shop; this sum they divide among themselves as members' contributions and, choosing from among themselves a board of management for their association, entrust it with making purchases and keeping accounts.

This simple decision opens the way to new sources of income for them. In buying consumer articles wholesale—not from shops but from large merchants or even from the producers themselves—the association buys each item at *lower* prices. In selling them to the members at the usual, *higher* retail prices, a certain net profit is obtained. The more the members buy, the greater will be the income collected in the association's treasury: a few or even some dozen cents of profit, which were previously taken by the merchant, will go to it from every loaf of bread, pound of butter, candles, and so forth. In this way, *the common fund* of the associated members will grow and can be used according to their will: they can either divide it annually among themselves as a dividend or they can allocate it for some goal of the common good or for expanding the business. Ordinarily, a cooperative does one and the other: it transfers part of the income to the joint capital, while part is divided among the members in relation to how many purchases they made in the association's shop: the larger the number of purchases, the larger the dividend, as a partial return of the profit the cooperative has made on his purchases.

We can see thus that the economic principle of the consumer cooperative is *the joint and organized purchase of items of everyday use*, with the result that the income previously collected by merchants and small shopkeepers passes into the hands of the consumers. In place of the merchants, people's associations arise, and the people belonging to these associations *save through their expenditures and, in making expenditures for their daily needs, amass joint capital*.

The greatest challenge in establishing a consumer cooperative consists in gathering the initial funds necessary to make the first wholesale purchases, renting a premises in which to store the goods, and paying a salesperson. In this respect, workers in the countries of Western Europe have managed in various ways. It has often happened that in order to avoid larger costs at the beginning, the store of goods—that is, the consumer shop—was located in the apartment of one of the members, and a number of them in turn conducted the sales and accounting in the evening hours. In order to have the requisite funds for the first purchases, workers sometimes hoarded their minor savings for many months; sometimes they took credit from a savings and loan bank or credit union, or came to an agreement with a baker that they would always buy from him if he offered them a discount, and this discount, paid to one of the association, was collected in a joint fund and after some time provided the sum needed to establish a consumer cooperative.

When that first difficulty is removed, the further development of the cooperative's interests depends solely on the members themselves, on how much they care for the fate of their institution. If they only buy in their own shop, if they are careful to expand the idea of the cooperative and to attract more adherents, if they get together regularly to discuss the cooperative's affairs, then the cooperative is certain to develop. With the growth in the number of members and the quantity of purchases, the range of the cooperative's interests also expands and its revenues increase. The more orders and needs it has, the easier it will be to step into the role of the wholesale merchant and to acquire goods on better terms, while by selling them at the usual price the profit on selling each article will be increased. Another necessary condition is the cooperative's strict observance of the rule of selling *for cash* only. A cooperative that sells for credit must itself live by credit in relation to its suppliers and then the smallest lack of commercial success can easily lead to bankruptcy.

Whether a cooperative is to adhere to its economic objectives or it is to be a real association amassing the *joint* capital of the working people also depends on the goodwill of the members. Capital is amassed in a cooperative in a dual manner: from the shares acquired by members and from the revenues from the cooperative's shop.

The shares may be of varying amounts, depending on what the association decides. They are usually for 10 to 15 rubles. Each person joining a cooperative obligatorily acquires such a share. However, since for many workers it would be hard to pay such a sum at once, the cooperative facilitates the acquisition of shares in various ways. It either accepts payment in small weekly or monthly installments, or if it already has sufficient working capital to conduct its operations, it does not demand cash payment for a share at all but only deducts

from the member's dividend that sum that should have been paid to the fund for his share.¹ Every share is recorded in the name of the member; it gives him a certain percent and is returned to him if he leaves the cooperative.

It is very important for an association to amass as many members' shares as possible in its coffers; from the shares, working capital is created by which the cooperative can expand its commercial interests and obtain new revenues. For this reason as well, cooperatives that care for their development and economic vitality try as far as possible not to restrict the number of shares that each member can acquire beyond the obligatory share and even, on the contrary, try to facilitate their purchase, encouraging members to place their savings in cooperative shares instead of in state or capitalist banks.

An important source of the capital accumulated in a cooperative is not the savings brought to it from outside—savings requiring the sacrifice and efforts of working people—but those revenues that arise in the cooperative shop from the purchases made by its members. These revenues, which come from a surplus payment on the price obtained from members on the sale of goods, are returned again to the members at the end of the year or half year as their personal dividend on purchases. Whoever buys more goods in the association's shop leaves a higher surplus payment in the fund and consequently receives a larger dividend. It depends on the members, however, what they want to do with that dividend. In cooperatives that are only called by the name but in reality are not true cooperatives, the entire dividend is paid into the members' hands: everyone takes his part, while the association remains permanently with the same small capital it had at the beginning unless there is an influx of new shares in a larger quantity. The cooperative is then weak, infirm, and condemned to economic stagnation, because due to the lack of capital it can neither expand its business nor organize any social aid for its members. It might in fact vegetate for years, busy with its little shop and dividend, presenting the sad picture of a dead institution, which is not improving life or creating anything.

The situation is entirely different in a cooperative whose members understand the interest of the common [*interes spółności*]. They decide at a general assembly that the whole dividend will not be paid out but only a certain part; some part will remain in the cooperative coffers as the associated members'

1 The cooperative in Milan, one of the largest consumer associations in Italy, has invented a new way to facilitate the acquisition of its 25-franc shares. Namely, an automatic device which for a 10-centime coin throws out a 10-centime receipt was placed in front of the cooperative's warehouse. Whoever wants to become a member of the cooperative from time to time throws 10 centimes into the instrument and, when he has collected receipts for a total sum of 25 francs, becomes owner of a cooperative share.

continually growing *common fund*, which will be allocated to expanding the activities of the cooperative to their furthest limit. Furthermore, they do not stop at the purchase of just one obligatory share. In receiving the dividend on purchases, which comes to them for free as the result of their joint organization in trade, they can easily allocate part of the dividend for the purchase of new shares in the cooperative. They thus provide a dual service: to themselves and to their association. The money that is deposited in shares is each member's personal savings, which draws interest, and at the same time it is part of the joint capital, which the association can use for collective benefits and purposes. In a word, if the workers' cooperative wishes to go beyond the small-shop sphere and grow into a giant institution of the people, it must absolutely and sincerely adopt the thinking of real cooperativists, namely, that *the dividend should be capitalized in the cooperative funds as the common wealth of the associated members*.

Economic tasks—the amassing of the people's capital—yet requires the proper organization of the cooperative as an association. A cooperative can not amass capital, especially from shares, on which interest is paid to the members, if at the same time it does not expand to an ever greater mass of the people. This capital must be productively used; it must bring income and benefit; it must be in continual circulation because otherwise it becomes an unnecessary weight for the cooperative. When the number of members is limited, and consequently a range of activities is narrowed down, the cooperative has nowhere to place the majority of its capital and there is no benefit in amassing it. In order to amass it purposefully and to the cooperative's advantage, it must have its own broad economy which can develop unlimitedly; it must thus be an association that is open to all and that gives all the same rights. We can imagine a consumer cooperative whose highly priced shares or other restrictions hinder access for new members and whose revenues come chiefly from public sales; however, this would not be a real people's cooperative, forming its own internal economy based on new principles of mutuality, but an ordinary merchant company exploiting the public for the benefit of its shareholders. A cooperative that gives predominance to capital in its internal administration—that is, one that grants more votes at decision-making meetings to those who have more shares—is also not a real cooperative. This is how ordinary capitalist companies proceed: by counting votes according to shares. The adoption of such a system in a cooperative would easily lead to its being run by a clique of wealthy individuals who would destroy its economic importance as a joint business of the people and prevent its expansion among the masses, because an institution based on privilege would evoke an entirely justified distrust.

The economic strength of a cooperative is thus closely dependent on its internal organization. This organization should be credibly *democratic* and all cooperatives worthy of the name will carefully observe the principles of democracy in their regulations and practice. Every member, regardless of how many shares he has, should have only one vote at the general assembly.

The general assembly of members, both men and women, is the highest power in the association and decides everything by a majority of votes. The choice of management board and of the commission auditing accounting belongs to the assembly; the board and the commission present the assembly with reports on their activities. Every member has the right to express his opinion, submit proposals for a vote, criticize the proceedings of the board, and look into the cooperative's business. Everything should take place openly, according to the will of the whole body of members and under their supervision and control. Thanks to being thus organized, the consumer cooperative becomes a real business of the people and draws toward itself ever more of the masses; it becomes an institution inextricably connected with the life of the people, with the needs and hopes that they themselves create, expand, and perfect.

We can see then that there are a few main principles by which a consumer cooperative should be governed in order to ensure its economic development and social strength. The four principles are the following: (1) to sell goods for cash; (2) to sell goods at ordinary shop prices, that is, at higher cost than the cooperative buys them; (3) to capitalize dividends in shares and joint funds; and (4) to be a democratic association, that is, open to all and managed on the basis of equality. In proceeding thus, a cooperative will gradually but certainly expand, expel merchant intermediation to an ever greater degree, gain control of more of the market, and amass an increasing amount of the people's capital. And here, the gate to a new social world is already opening.

II The Benefits of a Consumer Cooperative

1 *A Better Life*

Merchants, and especially small shopkeepers and manufacturers, who sometimes have difficulty holding their own due to the competition of large firms, often save themselves by means of falsifying goods, by cheating in weights and measures, or by selling various kinds of shoddy goods, which a wealthier and more exacting public will not take. The first victims of such falsification are workers and poorer people in general, who primarily buy in small shops on credit and are forced to take what is available. The produce that is unwanted

elsewhere is delivered to the working people, i.e. worse kinds of materials, shoes, linen, adulterated coffee, watered-down milk, butter that has been colored or mixed with margarine, vodka and wine with the addition of poisonous alcohols, rotting conserves, and so forth. And the workers consume all that, paying as if for good items. Clearly, this has a deleterious effect not only on their domestic budgets but also on their health and strength.

State inspection of products does not prevent their falsification and can not protect the population against the fraud of minor trade and industry. The most perfect sanitary commission is not capable of tracking on a daily basis every small shopkeeper or industrialist, who have various methods of avoiding the unpleasant consequences of inspections and confiscations of goods. In Belgium, for instance, where the ministry of agriculture has a special inspection agency, it was yet discovered in 1899 that 78 percent of the products sold in villages and small towns were unfit for consumption; in the following years, 1900 and 1901, as much as 80 percent of the products turned out to be harmful. In Brussels, the capital of the country itself, where the inspection was especially strict, it was found that 12 percent of various goods, such as oil, chocolate, coffee, pepper, wine, honey, beer, chicory, mineral water, and so forth, were adulterated; 32 percent of milk was found to be falsified.²

This state of affairs is entirely obviated by the consumer cooperative. Never mind the great English cooperatives that import goods from all parts of the world on their own ships and get consumer items firsthand from the sources—as wholesale purchasers, even small cooperatives can buy from serious merchant firms and sometimes from the producers themselves, and they can have their own experts, who know about the goods and can present the cooperative's price and quality requirements to the merchants. In addition, a member of a cooperative has privileges in his own shop that no merchant would grant him. He has continual oversight of how the business is being run.

If he is dissatisfied with some item, he can complain to the administration and raise the issue at a general assembly. In these conditions of daily control by members, there can be no adulterated, spoiled, or mismeasured goods in the cooperative shop. Moreover, a cooperative can not cheat because people would have no interest in cheating themselves. Its administration is responsible to all the members and must take any of their demands or complaints into consideration. In joining a consumer cooperative, a worker's family will

2 E. Rousseau, *La coopération socialiste et ses avantages*, Gand 1902, Société cooperative "Volksdrukkerij."

maintain itself and eat better for the same expenditure as before, thus protecting its health and strength.

Another benefit is that the worker's family will free itself of shop credit and of dependence in relation to the merchant. In buying on credit in a small shop, the worker's family places itself under a yoke of submission from which it can not easily liberate itself later. The merchant takes advantage of the fact in order to sell his debtors all kinds of shoddy goods and sometimes even to raise the prices. The dependence becomes even greater when the fatal payment deadline arrives and the worker can not pay the whole sum. Shop credit has another bad side in that people count their expenditures less and are easily persuaded by merchants to buy things that they do not even absolutely need.

In a consumer cooperative there is no credit; everything is bought for ready money. As a result, a member of the cooperative can draw up a budget of expenditures with clarity as to his own affairs; he buys only what is absolutely necessary and is free of debts. Wherever cooperatives are very widespread, as in England and Belgium, the working population has become convinced that it can do very well without shop credit and that it does not suffer for that reason but, on the contrary, has gained considerably in well-being and future security. In times of difficulty—of unemployment or other accidents of life—the worker receives a loan from a fund belonging to his trade union or from a mutual-aid society. Many consumer cooperatives also organize *interest-free-credit unions* and then, instead of shop credit, they give their members who are in difficult circumstances the possibility of receiving an easy loan for current needs.

In many countries, the fact can now be confirmed that wherever numerous and well-managed consumer cooperatives have developed, there after the passage of a few or a dozen years a complete turnabout has occurred in the well-being of the working population. Holyoake,³ the historian of the Rochdale cooperative, describes how ten years after the establishment of the cooperative it was not possible to recognize the former workers of the town of Rochdale. "The gray mass of the workers" he says, "who previously knew neither good food nor clothing that was not so shoddy as to be unfit for use, now, like millionaires, buy first-rate consumer items, make cloth and shoes in their own factories, bring grain to their own mills, use the best sugar, the best tea and coffee. The cooperative then counted thousands of members and millions in capital."⁴

3 * George Jacob Holyoake (1817–1906) was an English secularist, cooperativist and newspaper editor. Author of the book *Self-Help By the People—The History of the Rochdale Pioneers*.

4 * G. J. Holyoake, *Self-Help By the People—The History of the Rochdale Pioneers*, 10th edition revised and enlarged, London 1893, Swan Sonnenschein & co., pp. 39–40: „These crowds of

2 *Effortless Saving*

For the working class, saving was always connected with sacrifice, with depriving oneself of something; it often meant taking the meat out of one's mouth, in the literal sense of the phrase, in order to secure oneself against a black day. It was rare, too, that a worker could save, because there was nothing to save from and a "black day" would leave him homeless. Only the consumer cooperative was able to resolve this question, allowing workers to save without difficulty or sacrifice—to save though spending and consuming.

We saw earlier how this is done. A cooperative, through the organization of common purchases, occupies the place of the merchant and takes his trade revenues from him. At the end of the year or half year a certain part of these revenues is divided among the members as a dividend on purchases. If, for instance, the dividend is 10 percent, a member who bought 200 rubles worth of goods in the association shop over the course of the year will receive 20 rubles as a dividend. These 20 rubles come from the profit the cooperative obtained from his annual purchases and as such, it is *returned* to him. These are his savings.

What large sums workers can acquire in this manner is shown by the example—one of many moreover—of the Rochdale cooperative. Here is what a correspondent from the town of Rochdale wrote to the newspaper *The Times* in 1869: "In the last quarter the members of the cooperative received 3 francs dividends on every 25 francs spent in the store. Thanks to this, the Rochdale worker, instead of being indebted to the shop as formerly, now himself obtains the shopkeeper's profit. The more affluently he lives, the larger is his share in the annual revenues of the cooperative."⁵ The following note, taken from the shop's accounting book, explains the system. In September 1854, a certain member had a share in the association worth 187 francs, 50 centimes. For eight years he bought clothes and food from the cooperative. Never once during that time did he add new money to the fund. On the contrary, at various intervals, he took out various sums, which together came to 2,250 francs. Nevertheless, in the last quarter he still had 1,250 francs. Furthermore, the dividends which he

humble working men, who never knew before when they put good food in their mouths, whose every dinner was adulterated, whose shoes let in the water a month too soon, whose waistcoats shone with devil's dust, and whose wives wore calico that would not wash now buy in the markets like millionaires, and, as far as pureness of food goes, live like lords. They are weaving their own stuffs, making their own shoes, sewing their own garments, and grind their own corn. They buy the purest sugar, and the best tea, and grind their own coffee" [translated from the Polish—translator's note].

5 * Translated from the Polish—translator's note.

collected on his purchases, together with the interest on his shares in the cooperative fund, came to 3,500. Another worker had previously been continually in debt. At times the total of his debts had exceeded the sum of 700 francs. In becoming a member of the cooperative, he brought to the fund only 72 francs, 50 centimes cash. After a few years, he was able to receive from the fund 500 francs of his dividend, and in addition he was the owner of 5 obligatory shares for the sum of 115 francs. "It is thus natural," writes the correspondent further, "that in these conditions the number of members and the entrepreneurship of the cooperative are growing rapidly and that the working class is everywhere trying to establish similar institutions. Capital amasses so quickly and abundantly in cooperatives that in spite of expanding, cooperatives still have to look for ways to utilize these capital sums."⁶

3 *The Aptitude for Self-Government*

The consumer cooperative, to a larger degree than other people's associations, is a social school, where people learn to manage their own affairs, organize themselves, and act collectively and solidarily to reform the conditions of their existence by their own thoughts and efforts, and where they learn in practice the complex economic and social mechanism of today's world and how to deal with it. The cooperative is thus, in the full sense of the word, a school of *social self-government and democracy*, which can not be replaced by any theories or book-learning.

Even the reversals that a cooperative may encounter become stimuli for the social formation of its members. A cooperative member, says Cernesson,⁷ can not abandon his shop in the way any client can leave a merchant who does not serve him well. The cooperative shop is after all his own place; none of us leave our home if it is uncomfortable but try to improve it; the cooperativist too, within a few months of becoming a member, will begin to feel that it is his responsibility to do so. If he points out the losses that the shop will incur through bad administration, it can be confidently asserted that he does so not only in his own interest but in the interest of all. And the administration of the cooperative can not adopt the kind of dismissive attitude in regard to those complaints that in such cases is ordinarily adopted by the administration of state institutions. The cooperative administration is too dependent on those who make the complaints. A cooperativist, by making use of the common

6 * G. J. Holyoake *Self-Help By the People*, the quotation could not be located [translated from the Polish—translator's note].

7 * Joseph Edme Cernesson (1851–1942) was a French mathematics teacher and cooperative activist.

shop, is stimulated to follow the cooperative business on a daily basis, to think about it and propose improvements, and to consult his companions in these matters. The first success achieved will encourage him even more and will gradually draw him into ever broader tasks within the cooperative, where it is no longer simply a matter of his personal interest but of the good of people who are often unknown to him and outsiders. This is how the school of social solidarity operates.

In their association, cooperativists also learn in practice various secrets of the social economy and how to manage a business. On being called to fulfill various activities as administrators, members of a supervisory commission, or even as ordinary participants in a meeting that is to decide on the affairs of the association, cooperativists must of necessity continually expand their economic knowledge: their opinions are needed on many matters concerning purchases, production, the use of capital, and so forth, and the success of the cooperative depends on their wisdom. This is like a small commonwealth, which has its finances, trade, and industry, its public affairs, officials, offices, and parliament. But in this commonwealth, every citizen is called to the government and everyone should know how to govern. "Workers," says Cernesson, "who have been active in cooperatives have a honed practical sense in social affairs and knowledge of people. They can be recognized by this trait in all other public works: in local councils, in party congresses, at election meetings. Everywhere they bring with them a talent for political life, which distinguishes them and elevates them over others, who did not pass through that school."⁸

"If the popular classes," says Charles Gide,⁹ "wish to obtain the position they are dreaming of, namely, to replace today's ruling class, the first condition for achieving this is to obtain the information needed for economic governance. It is easy to repeat that industrialists, capitalists, and property owners are only parasites, yet if they were suddenly to disappear the entire economic mechanism would break down. In saying that the masses could today achieve the same social transformation that the French bourgeoisie made at the end of the eighteenth century, it is forgotten that in 1789 that bourgeoisie had long been maturing to replace the rule of the nobles, while the popular classes are not in the least prepared to do so. Everyone senses this perfectly and thus in all workers' programs the question of a 'comprehensive education' is raised. However, for managing economic affairs, knowledge of higher mathematics or paleography is not necessary for the people. What is necessary, on the other hand, is

8 Cf. J. Cernesson, *Les sociétés coopératives anglaises*, Paris 1905, Arthur Rousseau, ch. II [translated from the Polish—translator's note].

9 * Charles Gide (1847–1932) was a French economist and historian of economic thought.

knowledge of the circulation of capital, an understanding of the role of money, of the power and risk of credit; practice in business interests and in knowledge of people must be acquired. And where can these things be learned better than in consumer cooperatives, which are the 'school of things' of democracy? Above all, what is received there is an economic education: the ability to organize and run enterprises, find markets, foresee changes, find talented people; the ability to save and keep order, to draw up and fill out a budget. Then, there is the moral education: perseverance and not being discouraged by failure; solidarity in reversals and struggles; taking an interest not only in one's personal affairs but in the affairs of others; driving lies and cheating out of commercial relations. These are the things that can be learned in a successful cooperative, and it will be successful only when people have learned this ... But what will be the use of social reforms that do not reform the people themselves?"¹⁰

Members of the workers' movement in Belgium speak in the same vein. "In a consumer cooperative," says Serwy,¹¹ "We are not only seeking economic benefits, the acquisition of the best goods; we look at it as an instrument for the liberation of the workers. In persuading workers to engage in running their own shops, bakeries, pharmacies, and so forth, we want them to become familiar with the administration of economic interests, with the complex social mechanism, and thereby to equip them for a new system; we want them, in buying, selling, and producing, to get precise and firsthand knowledge of capitalist production and exchange, to see its errors and to look for methods by which it would be possible to pass from individual economics to collective economics."¹²

The moral and educational significance of consumer cooperatives was emphasized with great force by Louis Bertrand,¹³ a socialist member of the Belgian parliament in his speech at the cooperative congress in Brussels in 1901. "Above all," he said, "we acknowledge outright that great truth that each nation has the institutions it deserves. And we must also admit that socialists were wrong in counting rather too much on the state in the matter of

10 C. Gide, *Almanach de la Coopération française*, Paris 1904, Imprimerie nouvelle (Association ouvrière) [translated from the Polish—translator's note].

11 * Probably: Victor Serwy (1864–1946), Belgian teacher, socialist activist, leader and propagandist of Belgian and international socialist cooperation, author of numerous writings (including *Manuel pratique de la coopération*, *La coopération socialiste belge de demain*, and *La coopération de production*).

12 *Almanach des coopérateurs belges*, Bruxelles 1902, L. Bertrand: (imprimerie économique) [translated from the Polish—translator's note].

13 * Louis Bertrand (1856–1943) was a Belgian writer and politician, one of the pioneers of socialism in Belgium.

improving the lot of wage laborers. We were led to believe that bourgeois society was rotten and would any moment collapse of itself; and workers waited for this ultimate catastrophe with folded arms, forgetting that the liberation of the workers must be brought about by themselves. This means that the working people themselves must organize reforms, and educate themselves morally and intellectually; in consumer cooperatives they find the right conditions for this and a field of action in creating mutual-aid and solidarity, educational and formative institutions.”¹⁴

This new direction—the cooperative one—that is currently developing in the socialism of the more civilized countries of Europe, will fundamentally change the previous view of labor politics. The premise that everything would depend on a “revolutionary” government which at the decisive moment would itself organize new production and the social economy—that premise is beginning to decline. The culturally more mature layer of the working class is becoming convinced that no revolutionary authorities are capable of reforming either production or the social system, because reforms of this variety can not be conducted by means of decrees or by officials but must be created spontaneously and gradually, by the efforts of the people themselves. And just as it is not possible to decree new knowledge and new discoveries, new human talents and a new morality from above, it is similarly not possible to bring a new social system to life by decree. That system is created from the bottom, not from the top; it is created slowly in new centers of the people’s culture, in the people’s institutions and associations, in cooperatives and unions. There, new types of relations based on solidarity develop, such as new forms of trade, production, management, and credit; new types of people who can think independently, who can govern themselves and what they produce. This is where the democracy of the future will be born—that economic republic that ensures freedom and property to everyone. Former theories of social revolution, which promised heaven on earth after a coup d’état, demoralized the workers by drawing them away from all independent productive work; all efforts were directed only toward “great politics,” toward obtaining state reforms or a coup. And in essence it was believed that if the state merely announces the abolition of property privileges, the nationalization of land and industry, then at once, as if touched by a magic wand, a new organization of the social economy emerges, and all contradictions and failures disappear. All the problems bothering the population would be resolved, and the same workers and farming people who previously had no opportunity to learn how to run economic and social

14 * Translated from the Polish—translator’s note.

enterprises independently and who did not know either how to organize an institution or how to act together in harmony would at once become conscious and active citizens. Everything was to be arranged, organized, and created by an all-powerful “state of the future,” and the adherents of those revolutionary theories did not even sense how many slave instincts and how much denial of human dignity were involved in this presentation of this ideal.

Such revolutionary theories and faith in an omnipotent state could not withstand the expansion of democratic culture. And in the workers’ movement today, the trend of politics based on associations—the trend of *cooperativism*, whose idea is the reform of life through social self-help and reform of the people in the school of fraternal associations—is becoming increasingly pronounced.

4 *Joint Capital*

The consumer cooperative made one of the greatest of social discoveries: it found a means by which the folk classes could amass joint capital [*kapitały spółne*] easily and without self-sacrifice. We already know how this is done. A cooperative, by organizing joint purchases, obtains merchant revenues; these revenues are managed by the general assembly of members and are usually divided in two parts: one part is divided as dividends on purchases, while the other remains with the cooperative as the joint fund of the associated members. This amassed capital is the most important acquisition of the consumer cooperative, the main foundation of its future development and the underpinning of the various social reforms it conducts. With the aid of its capital, the cooperative can perfect and expand its trade turnover and make purchases directly from the sources of production, avoiding all merchant intermediation and thereby increasing its revenues even further. It can find the best suppliers and operate without credit; it can put up its own buildings for shops and warehouses, and people’s palaces containing libraries, museums, schools, concert halls, and meeting rooms; it can establish mutual-aid funds and insurance funds for its members; finally, it can organize its own production enterprises, acquire factories and farms, and create a common production cooperative, unencumbered by exploitation. Thus, too, in attending to the cooperative’s development and nurturing social ideals, cooperatives attach more importance to increasing their common fund than to the dividends paid to members directly, and sometimes they voluntarily limit the dividend in order to amass greater capital in the association’s coffers. Some cooperatives even—which are famous for their development and variety of institutions, such as the cooperative “Forward” in Ghent (in Belgium)—do not at all give dividends in money but in vouchers for new goods in cooperative stores, and consequently the

dividend that is received by a member in this form goes again to increase the circulation of goods and the cooperative's income.

Such a principle is entirely correct and has been well understood by the working classes. A dividend, which on average in a cooperative amounts to 20 to 50 rubles annually, on being paid to the members individually will not contribute much to improving the existence of a working-class family and is often expended on current needs without any particular benefit. On the other hand, that same dividend amassed in an association is transformed into giant joint capital, which can provide the workers with various important services, whether it is aid in unemployment and illness, or an old-age pension, or schools and libraries, or the cooperative's own workshops and factories. Instead of a small supplement to everyone's annual budget, the working population becomes the owner of manifold institutions and enterprises that permanently and fundamentally change its previous conditions of existence. Resolutions in precisely this spirit were advanced at the most recent international congresses of consumer cooperatives.

It is enough to look at the following examples to be convinced of what significant revenues come to consumer cooperatives when they are well managed and with what ease the joint capital of the people is thus amassed. Here, for instance, are the budgets for 1904 of small Belgian cooperatives located in small provincial towns. These are associations counting scarcely a few hundred members. The figures for revenues are as following: the cooperative "Unity" in Begne closed its year with a profit of 13,000 francs; "Immortal" in Luttre showed 52,625 francs in annual turnover and 5,128 francs of net profit; "Worker Savings" in Baulet had 400,000 francs of turnover and 11,000 francs of profit; "Fraternity" in Jupille sold goods for 181,225 francs, with a profit of 17,669; "People's House" in Avelais, a cooperative with 2,528 members, had turnover of 2 million with 65,813 francs of net profit; in that year of 1904 it distributed 12,298 kilos of bread free to its members in ill health and added 5,000 francs to its old-age insurance fund.¹⁵

In the history of the large English cooperatives we meet with even more amazing examples of the cooperative's inherent economic force and ability to develop. In the town of *Leeds*, workers were struggling to make ends meet until they had the idea of establishing a consumer cooperative. Stagnation in industry was frequent; the wages were low; the working day was long. In 1847, on account of the rising price of bread, they got together to consider how to

15 *Coopérateurs Belges*, 1905, 1 Avril [Probably: *Les Coopérateurs belges: Organe mensuel de la coopération*].

obtain their own mill and bakery. After many meetings a committee was chosen to manage the project and to organize a consumer cooperative, which at the beginning counted only 58 members. Gradually a consumer-goods shop, a bakery, a mill, a canvas factory, and a shoe factory were brought into being. Today that cooperative has 48,000 members and 8,570,500 francs of capital in land and buildings. In 1906 it had turnover of 36,842,500 francs and a net profit of 5,897,250 francs. That year it expended 40,150 francs on education and 17,500 francs on mutual aid. In the town of Oldham as well, a cooperative was established at a time when great poverty prevailed among the workers. At numerous meetings the workers sought a means of escape from that sad situation. The initiators of the cooperative were six workers. They contributed 16 shillings, for which they bought the first supply of consumer articles. When the number of the associated members began to grow they opened their own shop. These were the beginnings. Now the cooperative has numerous stores and bakeries throughout the city, a mill, a slaughterhouse, a library, a lecture room, and so forth. It has 13,994 members; it sells annually around 12,023,375 francs worth of goods with a net profit of 1,966,425 francs. It allocates annually 64,500 francs for education and 27,700 francs for mutual aid.

[...]

Thus a workers' economy is developing in England. Over a dozen years ago, Jacob Holyoake, the historian of English cooperativism, calculated that the English cooperatives, which then had a total of more than 2 million members, had obtained the following capital: from the hands of retail merchants—2 *billion* francs; from trade and large-scale intermediation—450 million francs; from the hands of industrialists—100 million francs. Of the sum of 500 million francs which was then amassed in the cooperative, scarcely one third was used for trade turnover; the rest, that is, over 300 million, remained for various purposes. Many cooperatives invest their capital in homes, which they build themselves. In England, 38,000 houses have already been built. And one cooperative alone, in Woolwich, in the vicinity of London, is intending to build itself, with its own capital, a whole new town, composed of 4,000 houses, for which it has already bought an enormous piece of land. Charles Gide, in citing these figures, points out that the sum of 370 million francs which the English cooperatives have at their disposal, as dormant capital, is equal to the sum that the famous socialist Lassalle¹⁶ once requested from the German state in order to organize new, collective production. The state did not give the requested aid

16 * Ferdinand Lassalle (1825–1864) was a Prussian-German jurist, philosopher, socialist and political activist best remembered as the initiator of the social democratic movement in Germany.

and collective production was not organized. No one could then have imagined that a similarly large capital would be collected by the workers themselves by means of their consumer associations.

Due to the surprising ease with which capital accumulates in English cooperatives, they can play the role of real banks disposing of millions. Elsewhere, workers' associations want various kinds of assistance from the state or from the local government; there, however, we encounter such facts, for instance, as that Glasgow, one of the largest cities in Scotland, with 700,000 inhabitants, is taking a loan of 5 million rubles from the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society.

From these examples we should already have a certain idea of what an excellent mechanism consumer cooperatives are for amassing the capital of the people. Wherever such associations develop, a breach in the capitalist economy occurs and through that breach the revenues previously collected by shopkeepers, merchants, and industrialists flow to the workers' coffers. And a new and important phenomenon appears within capitalism itself, where there are colossal private fortunes, the joint assets of the working people and their common economy is growing and getting stronger.

III Consumer Cooperative Federations and Institutions

1 *Wholesale Purchasing Federations*

If the organization of joint purchases for even a few hundred members of an association can become the source of serious revenues and benefits, its economic significance will become even clearer when it is conducted on a large scale, for the great mass of the population. For the purpose of creating such a powerful trade organization, consumer cooperatives, which are scattered about various parts of a country, join together in a federation whose task is to make joint purchases for all the cooperatives together. Instead of each association independently seeking its own suppliers and agreeing with them about the prices, they entrust the task to the office of their federation, which at once becomes a large-scale purchaser.

The advantages are enormous. Above all, mass purchases are much cheaper. A small individual cooperative, in buying wholesale from merchant warehouses, keeps shopkeeper revenues for itself, but a federation of such cooperatives, in trading on a far greater scale, acquires goods firsthand, often from the producers themselves, and thereby keeps the revenues not only of the small intermediaries but of large merchant firms as well. [...] Thus the revenues that previously went to great trade and transport firms now go to the federation of

cooperatives. The associated cooperatives receive goods from the federation's warehouses at prices lower than the commercial ones. The federation's revenues are divided the same as in every cooperative: part is allocated for the costs of administration, transport, and storage; part increases the joint capital of the federation, and is used to expand cooperative enterprises and institutions; the remainder is divided among the combined cooperatives in relation to the purchases that each made from the federation's stores. A cooperative belonging to the federation thus has a double income—not only does it pay less for goods in the federation store but it has greater profit from sales to its members, and in addition, it receives a dividend on purchases in the federation store. These new cooperative revenues are the revenues of large merchants, which the federation has taken. This is not all, however. Part of the federation's revenues, which comes from the same source, is continually amassing in its coffers as *the joint capital* of those hundreds of thousands of people who belong to the combined cooperatives; thanks to that capital, the federation can proceed to organize *its own production* and a whole range of social institutions—mutual aid, insurance, education, and so forth.

The example of the English federation¹⁷ shows us what economic power an alliance of consumer cooperatives can achieve. [...]

We can see, thus, how the federation of English cooperatives is consciously and deliberately pursuing the aim of *transforming the capitalist economy into a cooperative one, which means a popular and common economy*.

First, it creates an enormous sales market, combining in one market the needs of thousands of consumer associations; it creates collective capital, which accumulates in its funds and bank, drawing the dividends and savings of various associations of the people; then, having assured these two primary conditions—a market and capital—it proceeds to organize its own industrial and agricultural production whose manager and owner is the entire working people, organized in consumer associations. Production develops slowly but surely, without fearing crises or bankruptcy; the federation does not gamble nor experiment but creates everything with a sure hand, as a skilled organizer. Judging by the growth in such production to this time, it can confidently be stated that as new cooperatives arise and join the federation, and the cooperative consciousness and the habit of collecting joint funds and buying everything in the members' associations expands, the federation's production will encompass ever more areas of industry and will arrive at the point where everything the working classes need for life will be created in their own factories and on

17 * British Co-operative Wholesale Society—translator's note.

their own farms. The aim of fundamentally transforming the entire economic world is being set forth with increasing distinctness and deliberateness by nearly all the wholesale federations in Europe. A recently established alliance of Belgian cooperatives clearly expressed the idea in its call to consumer associations published in 1905: "Combine," says the call, "in wholesale federations and before long we will have our own workshops, factories, ships, mines, and farms; combine work and capital in one hand."

Aside from wholesale supplies and the organization of production, federations bring yet another benefit to the cooperative movement. Namely, *they facilitate the establishment of new cooperatives and prevent the collusion of merchants against them.* "Newly established consumer associations," says Charles Gide, "which have few members, little capital, and no experience in running a business, and which in addition have against them all the local shopkeepers and merchants trying to harm them, can easily perish at the very beginning of their existence. If, however, there is a wholesale federation in the country, their situation is entirely different. They can be provided with goods at low prices from the union's stores, on the basis of a simple letter order; they receive all the guidelines and information necessary to save them many unsuccessful trials; while if the suppliers and merchants in a given locality collude to destroy a cooperative there, such collusion will be entirely powerless against the cooperative because the cooperative can order all its goods from its wholesale stores and entirely do without the aid and intermediation of the merchants."¹⁸

2 *Mutual-Aid and Insurance Funds*

The joint capital that is amassed in consumer associations and their federations constitutes something like the hereditary assets of the working people, which they can freely use for purposes of their own good. The question of organized aid in illness and unemployment, old-age insurance, and accident insurance, which is so important especially in the life of the working class, is easily resolved in these conditions. The workers do not need to be burdened with payments, or to collect their small savings with difficulty, or to call on the help of philanthropy or the state; it is enough if they decide at their cooperative meeting that a certain part of their annual revenue from purchases will be allocated to a mutual-aid or insurance fund. If all the workers belonged to cooperatives and all bought in cooperative shops, the income from these purchases would be so large that it would easily suffice to ensure assistance in ill health and old age for everyone.

18 * The quote has not been identified.

[...]

3 *The Construction of Homes*

The housing question is another of the tasks that the consumer cooperative has undertaken: to free the working people from the exploitation of property owners, from the dependency of workers who live in factory housing, and finally, from horrible living conditions—from damp basements to narrow rooms where the lack of air, sun, and cleanliness spread contagious diseases and destroy children's organisms. This problem is resolved by consumer cooperatives in such a manner that the working people are enabled to build their own homes—which are not only spacious, light, pleasant, and healthy but also *their own*, free of exploitation, belonging to the residents themselves.

[...]

Building homes occurs in one of two ways: either the cooperative itself builds the homes and then sells them to its members, or it loans the members part of the sum necessary for construction. It should be added that these are small homes, generally calculated to suit the needs of one family. [...]

In recent times, a new form of building cooperative has also begun to develop, namely, a cooperative which builds homes on its own account and maintains ownership in those homes, while the members only rent. It thus happens that the same people are shareholders and residents of the same cooperative, or, as Gide says, they rent homes to themselves, just as they sell themselves goods in cooperative stores, or give each other credit in mutual credit unions. In many respects, this form is superior to the preceding ones, especially in regard to urban homes. As homes that become the private property of their residents leave the control of the cooperative entirely, they can always become the object of speculation, in spite of all the previous restrictions on the part of the association. In addition, the cooperative can not always supervise the property for healthiness, garden maintenance, cleanliness, and so forth. On the other hand, when homes remain the property of the association they can never be objects of speculation and can protect the health of entire generations of the local population. Furthermore, such a cooperative can devise great projects of building a city of the future, where there will be no privileged owners, but only the common good of all the inhabitants, combining convenience of living with beauty. The beginnings of such cooperative cities have already started to form. Among others, the association in Ealing near London, which has already built a small town of beautiful and comfortable homes among gardens and lawns, is worthy of attention. Each house costs an average of 5,000 francs. It is let annually for 365 francs and is composed of 3 bedrooms, a sitting room, dining room, kitchen, and bathroom.

[...]

A consumer cooperative thus completely fulfills the task of improving the working-class family life and making it healthier. It not only protects the family from consumer products that are often bad and harmful—from the use of ugly and perishable shoddy goods—and it not only provides security against illness, unemployment, and being orphaned, but in addition, it draws the family out of those holes unworthy of the name of human habitations—from those seats of sickness and sadness—and gives the family instead an independent, light, and healthy home. The cooperative, Cernesson says, has awoken in the English workers the need for life comforts, and more importantly, made it possible for them to possess that comfort, while in exchange requiring solely that they remain its faithful members.

4 *Education*

The secretary of the English cooperatives, I.C. Gray,¹⁹ writes that “They often ask why consumer cooperatives should devote part of their revenues to the question of education. We answer: (1) because it is their duty, and (2) because it brings benefits. It is the cooperative’s responsibility to give its members a social and industrial education which will contribute to the development of the association. The aim of consumer associations is to replace the struggle for life with an alliance for life, competition with cooperation, exploitation with justice. Only the apostles of cooperation can spread these principles and it is their duty to devote their entire free time to it. Above all, they should teach that the common interest should always have priority over the personal interest, that the common good can be achieved only through the joint action of all, and that the cooperative shop is only the first step toward a higher and nobler social system which the cooperative can build. Various forms and stages of cooperation should be elucidated for the members gradually and with special explanation. For this purpose, not only should lectures be organized in every cooperative center but social gatherings where the members can freely discuss various questions should be organized as often as possible. Every consumer association should have its own hall for lectures and readings, its reading room and library; it should also organize special instruction for children, to inculcate early the capacity for cooperativism. All this is being done in England and is the main reason for the uninterrupted and continual development of cooperatives in this country. In 1896, English consumer cooperatives expended 1,062,000 francs on education. And it has been confirmed that those associations that

19 * No information on I.C. Gray could be found.

are developing best, that have the largest incomes and most members, are those that have been expending the most for educational purposes.”²⁰

From the time these words were written, the educational budget of the English cooperatives has grown to 2 million francs; in consumer cooperatives a real ministry of education for the masses has been created, establishing schools for children, courses for adults, museums and libraries; an enormous literature on cooperatives and an entire press, counting several tens of journals published by cooperatives and their unions has developed. Continual and lasting efforts are being made in order to achieve that internal development of the individual without which all social progress is impossible. Many consumer associations have resolved in their statutes to allocate a fixed percent of revenues for the purposes of education: the Rochdale pioneers—2.5 percent, which brings about 15,000 rubles per year; both consumer associations in Oldham—3 percent, that is, 40,000 rubles annually; the association in Derby—5,000 rubles; the association in Leeds—16,000 rubles annually, and so forth.

[...]

5 *The Social Importance of the People's Institutions*

The idea of education organized independently by individuals and groups has begun to spread ever further among the working classes, in opposition to those currents that would like to make the education of the masses into a monopoly of the government and to hamper the freedom of teaching by nationalizing the schools. In the interests of democracy, this is a matter of no small weight. The people's schools, particularly elementary ones, form entire future generations of the country's citizens: what those young hearts and minds will become depends on their influence. In government schools, where the teachers are state officials who must closely follow the instructions of their superiors, there is always the danger that the education received there will not be a real education—the free development of minds—but will rather serve the aims of the state or the interests of the government or the leading political party at a given time, which are external to it. At the same time, the program of teaching, the methods, and the books in state schools are set for everyone according to one obligatory model, and new educational ideas penetrate there only with great difficulty.

20 *Kalendarz kooperatyw francuskich 1897* [translated from the Polish—translator's note. Original edition has not been found].

What coercive education in the hands of the state can become and of what terrible social harm it can be the tool we ourselves know best by looking at what happens under the Prussian partition, where in spite of the constitution, which in the German state guarantees freedom of speech, teaching, and conscience, the government school for the masses has become a torture for Polish children, a horrible educational prison, which attempts to corrupt the heart and mind of the child. Not one letter of the constitutional law was changed, and nevertheless it was possible to give school institutions a thoroughly police nature, serving systematic de-nationalization; it was possible to adapt the entire system of teaching, down to the smallest details, in order to impose a foreign language and tradition on the child, and to tear from his soul the sense of being a Pole and to train him in principles of obsequiousness to the Prussian government. The interest of the state has here driven out the interest of education and transformed "free, obligatory education" into the most complete measure of oppression.

The same can be said in the case of every other conflict between society and the state, especially if a certain social minority, which the government has less need to take into account, is in conflict with the state. It might not be solely an ethnic conflict, but a religious, cultural, class-based, or economic one; in each of these struggles, it could be in the state's interest to suppress certain of the masses' beliefs and aims, certain new or old ideas that are contrary to the prevailing order, an entire ideology, or a social religion that is dear to hundreds or thousands of people but not officially recognized by the state, and in each of these cases, free, obligatory schools for the masses will be in the hands of the government a terrible tool of suppression. Thus, too, the organization of free education by various groups and associations, of education that is free from the state authorities and takes into consideration the various needs of human spirituality and ever newer ideological currents, is one of the most important interests of democracy. It is a protection of the moral freedom of the child and human being against the influences of bureaucratic education, against the influences of a state school where teaching can often be the handmaid of politics and where at times the mandate to make all in the same mold prevails.

As with education, all other institutions belonging to people's associations—mutual aid, insurance, savings and loan unions, etc.—have high significance for democracy in the sense of the freedom of social life. What the masses build in their associations becomes for them not only a source of material and civilizational benefit but at the same time a confirmation of their freedom: first, because the associations' institutions are administered not by state officials, who are dependent on their superiors, but by the members themselves. Such an institution—whether it is a school or an aid, safety-net, or insurance

fund—is directly dependent on those very people for whom it was formed, on those who make use of it, and the result is that it is easily and continually adapted to the needs of their lives, serves their ends, and is a kind of expansion of their own home and family. The institution is not managed by decree and by bureaucratic routine, but by the goodwill of a certain human collective, united by common interests. It can be easily altered, controlled, and perfected. Thus if associations engage in a certain area of human life, by organizing teaching, aid in sickness and old age, the protection of workers' rights, production, or any other thing, then each such area of life is a *free* area, where the human being's creative talents can work freely and satisfy various needs and aims.

In addition, wherever such free fields of social life appear under the occupation of the institutions of the people's associations, by that same fact the care of the state becomes less necessary for society. Bureaucratic governments withdraw and shrink to the degree that associations spread, taking into their hands the questions of education, health, aid, and insurance. The less there is of bureaucracy and its governance, the more society is free and the more it is democratic. Even in those countries that are ruled by universal suffrage, civic freedom depends on the strength and importance of the bureaucracy: its numbers and the range of affairs it encompasses. In a widely branched bureaucratic economy, the government in a democratic state acquires an easy predominance both in elections to parliament and to local councils, as well as in voting on laws, and this predominance is the more lasting and the more threatening to freedom, the more civilized and useful the bureaucracy is. Through the influence of its army of officials occupying positions as teachers, inspectors, caretakers, councilors, and chairmen of various social institutions, the government can demoralize and morally oppress every opposition, deaden public opinion and consequently rule almost autocratically in spite of a constitution based on human and civic rights. A democratic constitution in itself will not secure the interests of democracy. It can even happen that universal suffrage, which is to express the will of the people, becomes the support of government despotism: in France, it created a reign of terror and Napoleon's imperial power; in today's French republic, it gives a majority to a government which under the name of combating the Church, does not hesitate to limit the civil liberties of teaching, associating, and religious cults; in Germany, universal voting has sometimes ensured the predominance in parliament of allies of the government, and thereby sanctioned its oppressive, military, and anti-democratic policies. These are not at all abnormal and mysterious phenomena, because universal suffrage and parliamentary representation, as an expression of the moral culture of the majority, can equally express either a striving for freedom or social enslavement. A democratic constitution is only a legal form that

favors the development of freedom, but the entire content of democracy—its real strength and real protection of human liberties—must come from society itself, from its democratic *culture*. Only where a broad tolerance appears in social life is there an aversion to imposing one's own convictions and customs on someone else by force; where people know how to manage their own affairs independently, where the element of public life is not decree and coercion but solidarity and goodwill—only there can democracy truly exist. Thus as well, people's associations, which are schools of independence, centers of that culture, play a primary role in the political development of the nation. It can be said with certainty that in these associations a new society is being created, a new political system built on previously unknown principles: a system in which decree and coercion are replaced by fraternal solidarity; bureaucratic routine by a call to work together on the broadest individual initiatives and ideas; and blind obedience to an imposed law is replaced by voluntary and judicious cooperation, out of appreciation for the ideal toward which the collective is working.

IV Consumer Cooperatives' Production

1 *The Power of the Organized Market*

The world no longer belongs exclusively to capitalism. Here and there, in democratic countries of the West, there are seeming islands of a new social system. In England, there are provinces and industrial towns where a consumer cooperative encompasses nearly three fourths of the population; there are small towns, such as Kettering and Desborough, where the entire population belongs to a cooperative. In Switzerland, the town of Basel is an exclusively cooperativist town, where of 107,000 inhabitants, there are 23,788 cooperative members, which with their families, makes 93,000. According to the most recent statistics, the administration of the Basel cooperative has calculated that there are only 300 families in the town that do not belong to the cooperative. Therefore, elections to the cooperative board affect everyone and have nearly the importance of elections to the government of the canton. In this same canton of Basel, in the countryside there is a consumer cooperative with headquarters in Birseck, encompassing 14 districts, which has organized not only the consumer needs of the population but also production, the sale of rural products, a baking enterprise, electrical power generators and distribution, insurance and aid funds, teaching and canton politics—in a word, the whole social life of the vicinity is organized in the cooperative.

In such localities, the consumer cooperative means the same thing as society, as a whole; it is a free organization belonging to everyone, an organization of the entire people, as consumers. Obviously, economic life, and even the cultural life of a given locality, will then depend on it. Its institutions encompass the needs of everyone, and all local industry and agriculture must comply with the requirements set by the cooperative.

[...]

Let us imagine that the whole country, or at least a major part of its population, is organized in consumer cooperatives and creates one great union of cooperatives, buying goods wholesale. Let us also imagine—as is close to becoming real in England—that members of cooperatives only buy in their own stores, breaking off all connection with capitalist merchants and the capitalist market. What happens then? A whole range of changes revolutionizing today's system, down to its deepest foundations, would occur.

Above all, the entire merchant class would disappear, from the largest wholesaler to the smallest shopkeeper; the giant and socially parasitical multitude of these trade intermediaries would have to close their businesses and work in cooperatives. Capitalism would undergo its first mortal failure; it would shrink to just half its current kingdom. There would no longer be room for speculation in grain, coal, sugar, or other products supplied by merchant syndicates, which in pursuit of profit sometimes starve the population and tax them by monopoly prices. There would be no room for the stock exchange, which by the order of one rich man can bring about stagnation in the production most needed by the country or push capital toward the dubious value of speculative enterprises. There would also not be that uncounted mass of the shop-keeping population, who crowd the cities and small towns, often living in poverty and fear of bankruptcy, and who, in order to make some sort of living from their unproductive intermediation, are often forced to cheat, adulterate their goods, and drive people into the snare of usury and drunkenness, while becoming morally and socially demoralized themselves. All this will disappear without a trace when the country's market is within the hands of the organized people, that is, in the hands of consumer cooperatives.

But this is not the end. The organized power of the market will also directly affect the last bastion of capitalism—*industry*. Capitalist enterprises, large and small, will thus find themselves in the position of producing solely for cooperatives, since there will be no other wholesale purchasers in the country. They will thus be completely dependent on their one great client, on the federation of cooperatives, and they will have to adapt to its requirements and produce only what the cooperatives order and in such quantities as they need. Thus an enormously important change in economic relations would occur—*deliberate*

production. Instead of the blind, chaotic production that prevails today, production would have to adhere closely to the real needs of the population and to base itself on statistics of those needs. The rule today in all cooperative unions for wholesale purchases—that all their trade and industrial operations are based on a precise calculation of the cooperatives' needs—would then be applied to the entire market and to national production. Overproduction, which often causes stagnation and industrial crises and weighs heavily on the working population, would not occur. There would also be no production of shoddy goods, adulterated goods, or unnecessary goods, which the masses of the public are fooled into buying today through advertising and artificially created fashions so that factory owners and merchants can profit from these ugly and useless items. On the cooperative market such goods would be impossible, as cooperatives *order* the goods and *inspect* their value. Production would thus fulfill its natural task: it would satisfy the essential needs of the people. Instead of serving to help entrepreneurs amass profits, it would serve the needs and culture of society.

As with quantity and quality, so in regard to the prices of goods and the conditions in which they are produced, capitalist production would be entirely dependent on the requirements of the federation of cooperatives. The artificial raising of prices, the monopoly of capitalist syndicates which today entirely control various markets—oil, coal, iron, and so forth—would be more difficult. Entrepreneurs, in order not to lose purchasers, would have to maintain normal prices and adapt to progress in production when instead of merchant sales among the disorganized public they have to deal with a federation of cooperatives which can knowledgeably set forth its requirements in the name of the entire society. By force of the same social weight, the cooperative market would also provide norms for working conditions in capitalist enterprises. The federation of cooperatives, as the representative of the totality of consumers, and thus of the entire working class, would look into the situation of workers in the factories from which it purchases goods, and those enterprises that did not respect the reasonable demands of the workers in regard to occupational hygiene, hours, and wages, could easily be compelled to do so by threat of breaking trade relations with them.

In this way, through controlling the market, cooperativism could resolve all conflicts between society and capitalists. These conflicts also frequently appear in the sphere of political affairs. For Poland, such a political aim would be liberation from the predominance of German industry and in general from the predominance of foreign capital, that is, the cultural and economic dependence of the nation. Consumer cooperatives could become a primary factor here as well. In expanding as a wisely managed market they would form a natural basis

for the development of national industry, and they would simultaneously be a ready organization for the systematic and purposeful boycotting of foreign goods. After all, as with work, the mass organization of consumption could easily be transformed into a weapon of political struggle, and just as political strikes occur and by a refusal to work expand certain rights and freedoms of the masses, a political boycott by consumers with the aim of driving foreign industry out of the country and liberating local production forces could work in the same way and even more powerfully. Such phenomena as, for example, that in the Kingdom, an agricultural land, flour of foreign origin dominates the market, or that Warsaw shoes and Łódź textiles must seek purchasers in distant eastern markets, while the local population buys foreign canvas in bulk and shoes from German factories, or that Galicia,²¹ which has excellent soil for sugar beets, is not able to create a sugar industry, and many other, similar facts, prove that the economic enslavement of the nation in regard to its neighboring partitioning societies can be eliminated only by organizing a people's market. Elsewhere, such friction between the interests of society and of capitalism are regulated, to a certain degree, by the state, by establishing protective duties, reducing freight tariffs, or placing orders for various supplies from domestic entrepreneurs. In Poland, however, the opposite happens: the German and Austrian governments which rule us have no interest in protecting or creating Polish industry; their economic policy indicates a clear tendency to maintain the economic dependency of the Polish lands, in order thus to lower their culture and independence and hasten their "organic incorporation" in those states. The only way out of this situation is through consumer cooperatives. If, as in England in this regard, a few million people organize in associations combined in one federation, then even with partial control of the market, the Polish people will be the managers of their country. They will be able to close the road to the sale of foreign goods, establish new branches of national production, create a large local market for Polish agriculture and industry, organize their own cooperative production, and free at least part of society from the parasitical class of small merchants and Jewish intermediaries,²² while

21 * Galicia (Polish: *Galicja*, Ukrainian: *Halychyna*) was a historical and geographic region spanning what is now south-eastern Poland and western Ukraine.

22 * In criticizing financial capitalism, Abramowski uses the anti-Semitic stereotypes that were widespread at his time among Polish and other European socialist activists. For Abramowski—as for instance, Karl Marx in his famous article "On the Jewish Question," in which Jewish merchants figure as ruthless capitalists *par excellence*—the position of Jews in the capitalist world made them enemies of the working people. Like Marx, Abramowski believed that the parasitic class of small merchants and middlemen would disappear with the emancipation of all bourgeois society in the new democratic system.

obliging that class to lead a productive and civic life—thereby achieving the ever broader liberation of the nation by increasing the power and democracy of its economic and cultural forces.

The power of the organized market must theoretically always bring victory over capital and resolve all social issues in favor of society. After all, in every enterprise, capital depends solely on the market, on purchasers, and whoever controls the market controls capital, all production, and the capitalist economy. The masses, in creating a market of organized consumer cooperatives, become masters of the country in the complete meaning of the word.

No enterprise will live if the combined cooperatives refuse it the right to life; no economic system will survive if society's market is closed to it. "The day on which the masses of the people," says Hans Müller, "say to the capitalists, industrialists, and merchants: we no longer need you, we can supply goods without your help—that day will be the end of the reign of capital. Capitalists will then have to disappear, that is, become like others, workers in cooperatives."²³

In expectation of that day, consumer cooperatives are not only expanding their market by spreading among ever wider masses of the people, but they are also organizing their own production. A dual development activity occurs here. On the one hand, organizing consumers in cooperatives and their unions is systematically preparing such a state of affairs where capitalist industry will find itself facing a market organized by people's associations and will have to submit to it, accepting without reservation its management and requirements; on the other hand, the work of cooperatives toward creating their own production prepares a social and peaceful resolution to the unavoidable conflict that will occur between capitalist production and the organized people's market.

Capitalist enterprises, which are conducted for profit and live by competitive struggle, exploitation, and state military patronage—frequently seeking new and broader sales markets for their products under the protection of bayonets—are not capable of adapting to the requirements of the cooperative market. Cooperatives' neglect of creating their own production could expose that new market of the masses to severe shocks; industrialists could begin a

It should also be emphasized that in these fragments, Abramowski places the economic and political conflict in an ethnic and national context, making Jews, like Germans or Austrians, an ethnically alien group, harmful to the Polish nation. Although he repeatedly emphasized his anti-chauvinist views, for example in the "Ustawa stowarzyszenia Komuna" ("Commune Association Act"), he did not manage to avoid replicating the anti-Semitic tropes common in Polish political journalism at the beginning of the twentieth century.

23 * The words of Hans Müller, secretary of the Swiss cooperative union at an English cooperative congress in Paisley in 1905.

systematic and general action to disorganize it, determining by a great lockout to starve the cooperative market—the final life-and-death struggle of the old world with the new.

Consumer cooperatives can prevent this ahead of time by gradually organizing their own production on an ever broader scale and thereby freeing themselves ever further from capitalist enterprises and preparing for them an inevitable, if slow, death. Capitalist enterprises, whose market will narrow to the degree that cooperativism develops, will face a competitor that can not be overcome, in spite of all their administrative and commercial efficiency and enormous financial resources and credit. Their competitor—cooperative industry—will join the struggle supplied with a ready, organized market, expanding with the vital force of democratic movements. For the capitalists, though, along with the development of this same process of the unification of consumers, the sales market will narrow and threaten complete disappearance. In such conditions, the competitive struggle will be easily resolved and the cooperativism of the masses will complete the work of “expropriating the expropriators” and of preparing for them not a heroic death in revolutionary catastrophe but the ordinary bankruptcy of industrial firms that are unable to overcome their new competitors.

2 *Conditions for the Development of Cooperative Production*

Workers' production associations, that is, occupational partnerships that bring artisans together in order to run a joint workshop, do not produce positive results. Many go bankrupt after a few years; others maintain themselves only because the state or local government gives them continual commissions; others, having reached a successful level of business, close their doors to new members, hire wage labor, and change from a cooperative into an ordinary capitalist company, exploiting labor. The reason for the bankruptcy of production associations is lack of capital for running the business, lack of an assured sales market for their products, and often also lack of skill in administering collective interests. Craftsmen's partnerships are usually created on the basis of shares or borrowed money; they have no reserve funds or assured revenue. They also do not have potential purchasers for their products and must seek them, which is not at all easy given the commercial competition and a market overloaded with the goods of large-scale industry. Usually as well, the members of a company set about their business without the proper commercial and administrative training, without having previously gone through a practical school of self-government and collective action and thus in difficult situations they do not know how to manage; they are unable to think ahead and act together. The closing of a company to new members and transforming it

into a capital firm is also the natural result of its economic situation. Work in a joint workshop is of necessity calculated on a certain limited amount of goods; when production grows, more workers are needed; when stagnation comes, fewer are needed, and thus the company has no interest in accepting an unlimited number of new members, with whom it must divide the income. It is more advantageous for it to use hired laborers, who are not allowed to share in the profits and can be freely dismissed when their work is no longer needed.

The conditions for production enterprises run by consumer associations are quite different. Above all, every larger cooperative, and especially a federation of wholesale purchasing cooperatives, has *reserve capital* which is continually accumulating from the commercial profit of the cooperative, without any sacrifice on the part of the members. Then, it is a *ready sales market* for goods, namely, its own consumer associations' stores and shops, which have—for instance, in the case of the English or Scottish federations of cooperatives—hundreds of thousands of permanent client-members. There is thus someone to produce for, without fear of a slump in sales, especially as a cooperative or a federation of cooperatives closely suits the production of its factories to the amount of need in its stores; its sales market relies not on suppositions and trade competition but on statistics calculating the real demand, and there is no need either to seek or to win purchasers, because it is already organized for them. By its very nature, the consumer association has no interest in limiting the number of its members and creating the monopoly of a certain group. On the contrary, every new member is a new purchaser of the association's goods, expanding the range of the cooperative's trade and providing it with revenues, and thus the consumer cooperative continually strives to expand, to accept the largest number of members, and this is easier in that it is not a trade organization but a consumer one and, as such, can bring together all kinds of people, because every person is a consumer. We should add to this yet another important condition, namely that before members of the consumer association begin to run their own factory or workshop they already have a certain economic and social preparation; they have themselves passed through that excellent school of economic self-government that is a consumer cooperative. They are people who are already acquainted with the conditions of commercial production, with administration and accounting, and at the same time, they are accustomed to harmonious joint action; running a jointly owned factory is no more difficult for them than running a jointly owned shop.

Thanks to all these conditions, production by consumer associations is growing continually and at an accelerating pace, and today after just a few decades it already has a substantial market share. [...]

Cooperative enterprises, especially the English ones, are predominantly large factories, equipped in accord with the requirements of modern technology; in this regard they equal the best models of capitalist industry. However, they have the superiority and economic advantage over them that they do not fear either competition or crises. They do not fear these things because their owners are consumer associations, which produce only for themselves. The capitalist enterprises are seriously threatened by them. That sum of 228 million francs, which is the annual value of the English cooperatives' production, is capital taken from the factory owners; the two million English families who get their supplies from cooperative stores are clients lost to the cooperative market. With every new consumer cooperative and every new cooperative factory the field of action and development for capitalist industry is narrowed, and against that dangerous onslaught of people's organizations, which gradually and permanently take the ground from under its feet, it has no means of resistance—it is powerless.

3 *Working Conditions in Cooperative Factories*

The hygiene of cooperative factories in comparison to private factories can be judged in particular in regard to bakeries, which are the most neglected branch of industry in this respect. In England, even though a whole range of laws has long been in place to require the police authorities to enforce hygienic conditions, cleanliness, ventilation, and so forth in bakeries, their state is for the most part lamentable and the reality does not at all conform to the regulations. Cooperative bakeries, however—for instance, the bakeries in Woolwich or Glasgow—could be used as models of factory hygiene. These are mostly mechanical factories; the majority of the work, such as carrying bags or mixing the dough, occurs with the help of improved machines. The rooms are high and light. There is a separate dining room, kitchen, washroom, and lounge, while in private bakeries the workers eat and rest in the same place where they work. The pay of workers is higher even than the norms that were accepted by English trade union workers. They work 51 hours a week, while workers in private bakeries work 70 to 80 hours a week. In addition, the workers have a share in the revenues. In the Glasgow bakery, they have their representatives in the management and special facilitations for acquiring association shares, thanks to which every worker becomes a member of the consumer cooperative and co-owner of the bakery. A member of one of the local workers' movements writes that the Belgian cooperative bakeries entirely revolutionized the production of bread. Hand-kneading of bread was replaced by mechanical kneading, making the work incomparably easier. The wood-fired ovens were replaced with improved, new-system ovens; tight quarters were replaced by

light and spacious ones. Formerly, a worker had to work 14 to 16 hours a day in arduous conditions and for pay that was scarcely sufficient to live on; now in the cooperative's bakeries, workers work only 8 hours a day, for significantly higher pay.

[...]

At international cooperativists' congresses, it has been advanced as a principle that workers should have a share in the profits of a cooperative enterprise. This principle was even added to the statute of the International Co-operative Alliance. We are speaking here of a worker's share in the profits not as a member of the consumer cooperative but as an employee of the cooperative factory. As a member of the cooperative, every worker, wherever he works, has a share in all the cooperative's revenues, both commercial and industrial. But here it is a matter of ensuring that workers working in cooperative factories have a share in the profits from the factory, regardless of whether or not they are members of the cooperative. It is considered that the very labor of the worker gives him a right to partial benefit from the factory's revenues, even when he does not belong to the association owning the factory. [...]

4 *Who Owns Cooperative Factories?*

Factories and cooperative workshops either belong to one consumer association or to a federation of consumer associations, which sometimes also have other people's associations as partners. They are thus *the common property* of the freely organized people. Every member of a consumer association is co-owner of all the capital, factories, and institutions that the association possesses; everyone participates in the revenues and in the administration. Factory matters, the same as matters concerning the cooperative's stores, funds, dwellings, libraries, and so forth, are directed by the general assembly of the members; they choose the administrative management and control its activities; they choose the supervisory board for auditing the books and review its reports. The management board chooses a factory director (in English cooperatives, for an unlimited period of time), which can only be changed by the general assembly.

It also happens that management of the factory is exclusively in the hands of a workers' *production* association, which is joined with consumer associations as factory shareholders. [...]

However, the main trend that has developed in cooperativism is the direct organization of production by the consumer associations themselves, and especially by their federations. They are completely capable of doing so both through their skill and experience in commercial affairs and through their

ready sales market and the capital which amasses with such ease in their coffers. [...]

Whatever form the production enterprises of consumer cooperatives take—whether they are in combination with a workers' partnership or independently organized—they always have the same basic trait of *social communism*: they are the common property of consumers organized in democratic associations; they are democratically managed by those same associations; and they are conducted not for the profit of a privileged group or persons but for the benefit of the whole and have the added, socialized value [*dają nadwartość uspołecznioną*] of providing an increase in wealth expanding the well-being of all members in equal measure by means of a personal dividend and by those various institutions for aid, education, insurance, and health which the cooperative maintains from the revenues of these enterprises. This is thus production freed from capitalism: "socialized" or "nationalized" production. Only here that expression means something different than in socialist programs. In socialist programs, "socialized production" means the kind whose owner and manager is exclusively *the people's state*, a government based on universal suffrage; it is conducted by a bureaucracy according to guidelines received from superiors and on the basis of the coercive laws in force. It is commonality by decree, compliance under threat of crime and punishment. In cooperative production, *free people's associations* governed on the basis of a voluntary contract are the owner and manager; instead of governors and the governed, decree and obedience, here only a natural element operates—the mutuality of interests and that moral awareness that people's solidarity is the condition for the well-being of each of them, and that fraternity is the most essential principle for happiness. The other is socially coerced and bureaucratic; the latter is a free and fraternal socialization.

5 *Is There Exploitation in Cooperative Factories?*

It is obvious that if, as in Hebden-Bridge or Paisley, the workers of a cooperative factory belong to a production partnership which, together with consumer associations, runs the enterprise and is its main administrator, then there can be no question of exploitation. The workers in a factory are its direct owners while they are working in their own place.

But even when consumer cooperatives themselves run a factory and when they *hire* workers, as happens in the majority of cooperative production, these workers are never in the same situation as capitalist wage laborers. The working conditions laid down by the trade unions—the factory hygiene, the normal working day, minimum pay, etc.—are closely adhered to in cooperative factories, as is entirely natural given that these factories belong to associations

composed primarily of workers. The most important point, though, is that workers who work in cooperative factories can at any time, if they so desire, become wage-laborer *co-owners* of these factories; it is sufficient for them to sign on as members of the consumer association that owns the factory. It is not difficult for them to do so because the consumer association facilitates the purchase of its member shares in various ways; it allows them to be paid for in installments, takes the payment from the dividend, or even simply allocates a certain percentage of the factory revenues for the workers to use to buy shares in the association. On becoming members of the consumer cooperative, the workers are already working in their own place, in their own factories. On an equal footing with all other members, they control the administration and business turnover, choose the board of management and association officials, decide how the revenues are to be used and divided, and have the benefit of a personal dividend and the joint funds. Every increase in the enterprise's revenues is at the same time an increase in their own personal wealth and the common wealth. Then not only all possibility of exploitation but even the very concept of a "wage laborer" will disappear. The surplus value that arises from the work in a cooperative factory does not go into the pocket of a capitalist but into the coffers of a people's association and the association decides itself how to use it, how much to allocate to common institutions, and how much to divide among the members. Thus what was produced by the work of the laborers returns to them either in the form of a personal dividend or as the common assets of the association to which they belong. There will then be no trace of an exploited laborer; in his place will appear a free citizen of a cooperative commonwealth, who works in the factory of his association for his own personal ends and for the common good.

v People's Associations in Cooperation with Consumer Cooperatives

[...]

vi The Ideas of Cooperativism

1 *Socialism and Cooperativism*

Socialism and cooperativism are two great currents developing alongside each other in modern societies and creating their future. Sometimes, in the beginning periods especially, they struggle with each other; more often they preserve their mutual neutrality or try to merge with one another. It can

confidently be stated that the last word in the history of nations will belong to these two forces. In Poland, as in other civilized countries, both these social currents operate alongside each other; here, however, perhaps more often than elsewhere in the current era, they rub against each other and fight—if not in social life, then in the minds of people. Thus, too, it is important for both Polish cooperativists and socialists to be clearly cognizant of how these two ideas coincide and what the difference between them is.

In its ultimate aims and basic aspirations, socialism strives for the socialization of all economic life, that is, the socialization of industry, land under cultivation, and trade. Instead of private, personal production and trade enterprises—factories, businesses, workshops, exchanges, etc.—it attempts to introduce one social organization, one great industrial-agricultural economy, belonging to all the citizens and managed by the whole. This fundamental change removes in one blow all the social ills: the exploitation of the workers, poverty, the predominance of some over others, busts and bankruptcies, the dependence of consumers on just one class of industrialists and farmers, the disorder of production, market competition—in a word, everything that characterizes today's capitalist system, and that still brings upon people the terrible bane of sanctioned harm and abuse.

But how can the entire society, the whole, become manager and owner? Socialism answers that this will be undertaken by that most common and durable method of organizing society, an organization by force, namely, by *the state*. Strictly speaking, then, the aim of socialism is *to nationalize* the entire economy. Just as today in all countries we have national railways, post offices, and telegraph companies, state production of salt, matches, vodka, and so forth, and state gold and silver mines, so in the future all other enterprises, both industrial and agricultural, should be transferred to the ownership of the state and be under its exclusive management.

Naturally, today's "bourgeois" and class-based state is not called upon to fill this management role. In order to take in its hands the entire economic life of society, the state must become deeply democratic; its legislative power must derive from the representative body of the nation, chosen by universal voting; its executive power, that is, the government, must be responsible to that representative body. Only under this condition will the state be capable of becoming a universal producer and steward of goods, a guardian and feeder of every family. Obviously, in such a state, in such an economic democracy, there will be no room for social classes and wage labor. Every citizen will be obliged to work in the state folwarks or factories, or other institutions, the same as today each one is obliged to perform military service. In exchange for his work, he will receive from the state everything that is required to satisfy the needs of life.

By what path could such change be achieved? Socialism responds variously to that question; the predominant answer today is that the task of implementation—by peaceful means—belongs to the working class, the proletariat. The working class, organizing itself in powerful trade unions and political parties, could have sufficient social power to control the parliamentary representation of the nation, use its influence to gradually bring about reforms in the spirit of the socialist idea, exert pressure on public opinion and the governing authorities, and when necessary support its demands for reform by a general strike, and thus aspire to the slow but certain overcoming of capitalism and to the creation of a new economic state. The reforms would thus be introduced from above, by the legislative and executive authorities themselves, who are forced to submit by strong pressure from the working class.

Socialism's idea of reform is presented as follows: economic life should be nationalized; the role of manager is taken by the democratic state on the rubble of private enterprise; such a change must occur by coercion as the result of new laws, which gradually bring about reforms.

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Let us look now at the idea of cooperativism. Cooperativism, like socialism, considers that the evils of the world—the evils of poverty, injury, exploitation, and ignorance—largely derive from a defective economic system, from private business, which gives one class predominance over others and allows anyone who has capital to oppress and exploit the crowds of the disinherited. And like socialism, cooperativism claims that *the socialization* of production and trade is the sole means of destroying that evil. In wanting to bring justice to human relations, to save them from poverty and exploitation, capital must first of all be yoked and made not into a tool of force to be used by certain people against others but into a common wealth, accessible to the broadest possible layers of society.

Cooperativism considers, however, that a state, even the most democratic one, is not the proper form for the takeover of the social economy. And here the differences between cooperativism and socialism begin. The teachings of cooperativism say that the socialization of production and trade must occur, but the instrument and form of this socialization should be *associations*, that is, the voluntary organization of the people. There are many arguments in favor of this idea. First, there is the very nature of production and trade activities, that is, of the economy in general, which always requires a lot of personal initiative, rapid adaptation to new conditions, ingenuity, and passion. In a coercive and bureaucratic state organization, all these properties are stifled;

an official organization in even the best state operates slowly, heavily, and schematically; it must closely follow administrative and legal regulations—thousands of bureaucratic formalities—which prevent rapid adaptation, the rapid introduction of necessary changes, and at the same time, at every step necessarily cramp personal initiative and inventiveness. The best state official will never have as much occupational passion and as much energy in fulfilling his duties as an owner, an industrialist, an artisan, a farmer, or the head of an enterprise—in general, people who are directly interested in a given thing and are free to act. The democratization of the state will not much help here; on the contrary, it may even be seriously feared that the economic culture of a country would lose a great deal in regard to its development if every change required by production, every application of a new system or discovery, required a debate in parliament, in ministries, and at folk rallies before it received its legal sanction and could be introduced. Secondary, party, political considerations, having nothing in common with a given economic matter, would often thwart and influence decisions in ways that might even be contrary to the essential requirements of production. That the development of economic culture would be obstructed due to the non-adaptation of the stiff and heavy state organization to its nature—this is the primary serious objection to the socialist postulate of nationalization.

But there is another objection of even greater significance. It is that the state, on taking into its hands the entire life of a human being—the state, which feeds and clothes, raises and teaches, which is at once employer, teacher, and policeman—that state would have too much power in its hands and in being creating for freedom would in essence produce slaves. The citizens of such a country, in spite of their participation in voting during elections, would yet be entirely dependent on the organs of the state authorities, which would interfere in everything and govern everything in entire dependence on the opinions, needs, and aspirations of the majority, which at a given time would choose its representatives and would rule the country. Not only human freedom would be threatened but even civil equality, and in place of the previous social classes, new classes might form, consisting of the ruling bureaucracy and the ruled people.

Thus the idea of cooperativism, which values the freedom of the human being and his freedom to develop his intellectual and moral forces above all, wants the principle of social production to occur by way of associations, and it does not aspire to destroy private property and farms but only *to assemble* them—in a large common enterprise. Thus instead of state industrial production, it posits the ideal of economic production, conducted by federations of consumer cooperatives encompassing the whole of the country's

citizens. Instead of state-run farms in the hands of government colonists, as there would be in a socialist system, it sees alliances of larger or smaller private farms—alliances which without eliminating property or private owners yet create a higher type of joint agriculture and allow even peasant patches to participate in large agricultural production and advanced cultivation techniques. In addition to these two main types of cooperativism there are various other forms that are developing—credit, building, and manufacturing cooperatives, which easily adapt to every need of life, striving everywhere to the same social reforms in order to change private enterprise into joint enterprise, and to replace competition and struggle with cooperation: in order to replace the “everyone for himself” principle of today’s capitalist system with the principle of a new system—“each for all.”

In accord with socialism’s different view of the “socialization” of production, the means by which cooperativism tries to conduct its systemic reform are also different. Socialism’s reforms can only come *from the top*, as laws issued by the state—laws eliminating private ownership of the means of production and their monopoly by state organizations. Thus it is solely a matter of passing such laws; obtaining passage of the new laws can only happen by way of a political struggle conducted in and outside of parliament, a battle with the bourgeois government and with the classes interested in maintaining the old order.

Cooperativism chooses an entirely different path. As its aim is not the nationalization of production but its takeover by associations—without legal coercion and without eliminating property rights—the social reform of cooperativism can proceed only *from the bottom*, by the power of its own expanding cooperative associations, which as they grow will garner ever larger fields of industry, agriculture, and trade. The founding and development of these cooperatives does not occur by means of legal decree but depends exclusively on the measure of education and independence the nation possesses—on its understanding of the new principle of life based on mutual aid and friendship. Thus, too, the cooperative movement must simultaneously involve an expansion of a new morality among people. Thus, too, it must not honor the principle that the end justifies the means—that it is possible to reform social life by whatever path—because in reform work the value of a new institution depends entirely and exclusively on the value of the people who create it.

This method of cooperativism—the method of the gradual and voluntary creation of a new system—means that the relation of the human being to the idea of cooperativism is different than his relation to the socialist idea. A person must relate to the socialist ideal as to something very distant, which today can only be dreamed about, as future worlds are dreamed of in general: as the triumph of good that is sometime to occur. At the same time, the partisans

and proponents of socialism must satisfy themselves with a struggle adapted to today's world and can only expand among the people the idea itself of a future system, without being able to make it real in anything. A cooperativist, on the contrary, not only speaks of a new social system, of a better and more just world, but *he is building that world*; without waiting for a revolution, he is creating that new system today already by removing capitalism from new sectors of trade, industry, and agriculture one after another. Every consumer cooperative that emerges, every farming circle, every common dairy, factory, bakery, and so forth, that the association founds—these are the beginnings of a new social system: its real, strong, true entry into our life. The dreamed-of world of social justice, the world of fraternity and common wealth, is not hidden in the dusk of a distant future but is among us for the taking and can be created in every village, every factory settlement, every city. Cooperativists know it, and thus they value the small, modest cooperative institutions—workers' or farmers' or other people's—which arise without fanfare more than the resounding ideas of a struggle that is to occur in the future.

It is clear from this presentation of the ideas of socialism and cooperativism that in spite of large differences in understanding social reforms and their means of implementation, both movements are very closely related to each other, as they derive from the same source. Both are a protest against human harm, and the aspiration to introduce justice on earth; both make the socialization of means of production the main condition for the economic liberation of the people. Thus, too, in socialism in recent years, especially in German, Belgian, and Italian socialism, there has been a very strong turn toward a close affiliation with cooperativism. The strongest consumer associations in Belgium and Germany are conducted by socialists; in Switzerland, Italy, and England, the most outstanding leaders of labor organizations are at the same time propagators of cooperativism and organizers of consumer associations. And so it must be wherever socialism matures and departs from its initial visionary phase. Then labor organizers see clearly that consumer cooperatives, which bring the masses together so they can conduct economic affairs independently and which make them owners of large enterprises, are the best preparation for a great future social reform, if not the reform that in itself abolishes capitalism, and at the same time they are the best school for the democratization of society—for teaching the people so they will be capable of being organizers and owners of the national economy.

If, then, conflicts and battles between the two social movements occur in our country and elsewhere, this is only a symptom of the immaturity of the movement itself—of a rather too bookish and doctrinaire treatment of real life on the part of the socialists or of a rather too superficial treatment

by cooperativism, without an in-depth consideration of the ideas. In order for an understanding to be reached, a socialist should forget about theories for a moment and go deeper into life, while a cooperativist should learn to see—beyond the bookkeeping of his stores and workshops—that great idea of rebirth that should guide all his activities.

2 *The Cooperative Commonwealth*

From the difference between socialism and cooperativism it can be seen that the relation of society to the state can be treated in a dual fashion: the aim could be for society to merge with the state entirely, that is, for all its needs and actions to be supplied and performed by the state organization—this is the stance of socialism; or, contrarily, the guideline for development could be to have the state as little identified with society as possible, that is, giving the state the smallest share of social tasks to perform. This is the stance of cooperativism.

It is in the interests of both human freedom and the development of culture that the activities of the state authorities should be limited to the smallest sphere. Only things requiring coercive and general organization, such as, for instance, public safety, matters of the civil and criminal code, communications, national defense—in general, whatever matters private initiative and associations can not undertake for the common good—should necessarily pertain to the state organization. In addition, the larger the field of activity that remains free of the state, the more affairs are taken into the hands of associations based on private initiative and the goodwill of citizens, who understand their common needs, the more broadly and exuberantly will national life develop; in associations and in their free activities, which are unhampered by excessive regulation, there is room for the development of every kind of new social idea, every achievement of science and culture, every improvement, be it in the cultivation of crops or industry, in teaching, in ways of combating disease or alcoholism, and so forth. It is entirely clear that every new thing, even the best thing, will at the beginning find only a small circle of people who understand it and can achieve it; it will also always meet with disregard, disbelief, and resistance on the part of society; it must break through that resistance gradually and slowly convince the majority, because a state, whether democratic or not, is always the expresser only of the will of the majority and can only develop very slowly, being hampered by thousands of laws and administrative regulations, while new things, new needs, will not find promoters and executors in a state organization; they must wait until the majority of society recognizes them and only then can they count on support from the state. Therefore, too, the more social affairs are nationalized and the less space they leave for the free

initiative of associations, the more there will be stagnation in life and the more contradictions and struggles there will be between people's needs and ideas and the social institutions. The state can not keep up with development; it can not adapt to it easily and thus antagonisms and dilemmas, protests put down by force, and unsatisfied needs must appear between the state and society.

Associations are founded in order that every new manifestation of social life can develop normally and freely and thereby perfect life. The more social tasks they assume, the greater will be the certainty that human forces are not wasted and that both the individual and the whole nation can develop comprehensively. We saw previously that cooperativism is heading in this direction. Consumer cooperatives organize trade and try to master industry through their unions and production cooperatives. Farmers' circles, and the dairy, cattle-raising, and seed-production companies and so forth that come together in connection with them, try to organize the entire agriculture of the country as an alliance of larger and smaller farms, entirely controlling the market for grain and other rural products. Savings and loan societies, in collecting the capital of the masses, aim to organize the internal finances of the country and to make skillful use of the accumulated reserves by founding various enterprises and public institutions. Mutual-aid societies organize old-age and health insurance, medical help, and hygiene among the broadest layers of the population.

In the further, normal development of all these associations, with skillful management, it could easily happen that they encompass the whole society and satisfy all its production, trade, and cultural needs. At that moment, the capitalist system, which is based on gains and competition, will die a quiet, natural death because there will be no room for it in society. And in its place *the cooperative commonwealth* will appear, a great organization of all the cooperatives, federations, and associations—a true democracy, without coercion. In this organization, which is composed of thousands of individual consumer, production, agricultural, and savings associations, every citizen of the country will find himself in the position of *co-owner* of capital and common enterprises, capable of indirectly influencing the entire course of affairs connected with this and with its very administration.

This is due to the very nature of every kind of individual cooperative, which in spirit and by statute is a purely democratic association, one where all the members have equal rights and responsibilities and where all decide on association matters. The general assembly of members is here the highest legislator, and its will decides everything. It chooses the association's officials, supervises their activities, and declares the main guidelines and principles by which the association is to be directed. In a cooperative, instead of submitting

to principles and provisions imposed from above, people must themselves decide how to manage their interests; they must have exact knowledge of national economic conditions, research various aspects of trade and industrial activity, and learn about joint economic work, the administration of enterprises, and the management of funds and institutions. In a word, they learn *how to be creators of their own lives* as free people, uncompelled by any outside thing.

This *creative freedom* is the essence of a real democracy. Where the citizens all demand everything from the state or from philanthropy, where they rest all their hope in one or another reform introduced from above, by compulsion—there, neither democracy nor free citizens exist, only more or less progressive subjects, and a more or less enlightened government. Democracy and freedom, though, begin only when the citizens of the country, instead of demanding reforms from the state in economic and cultural relations, themselves introduce these reforms through voluntary solidarity, in which instead of the human being as “a vote” for parliament, instead of a pawn in the hands of bureaucracy or in the hands of party leaders, the human being appears as *a free creator of life*, knowing how to act without coercion, in solidarity with others, and how to perfect life.

This spirit of democracy, which forms in small individual cooperatives, must necessarily lead to their widespread unification in one national economic organization and to the creation of what we call the “cooperative commonwealth.” That commonwealth resolves the most important problems that have troubled humanity for centuries: it makes the freedom of the individual accord with the commonality of ownership. In socializing production, trade, and agriculture, it simultaneously puts in place permanent bases for the people’s self-government and for the independence of the human being; it protects against exploitation and at the same time protects against enslavement.

The arrival of the cooperative commonwealth is approaching quietly and calmly, like everything that is strong and great. It does not need revolutions or violence, or the demagogic deceiving of the people in order to gain force. It will arrive by fragments and will be built in every cooperative, in every people’s association; it will take over the country slowly, from village to village, settlement to settlement, vicinity to vicinity, city to city, one craft after another, reaching ever more branches of industry and trade. It will spread not only externally, in its storehouses, workshops, and federations, but also internally, by shaping people intellectually and morally into its citizens, into members of a democracy, into independent workers and co-owners of the national economy.

3 *The Moral Rebirth of the Human Being*

The influence that life in cooperatives exerts on the human being reaches deep into his moral nature. Certain traits of character nurtured in the human being by today's capitalist system die or weaken, while new ones will be encouraged to develop. As in every new social system, so in cooperatives, the human being is transformed morally, even though that transformation occurs slowly and unconsciously. But all important and lasting spiritual changes are gradual and deeply hidden.

One of the moral changes of which we have spoken is the development in the human being of life *independence*, the ability to take the initiative, to manage life, to organize his *economic and cultural* affairs. The social conditions to this time have not permitted these things for the mass of the population. An artisan, a factory worker, a small farmer passively bears what life affords him; he has had neither the knowledge nor the strength to change his life conditions and to bring about a new economic order. Merchants organized trade; factory owners organized industry; larger landowners and market financiers organized agriculture and the sale of products. Thus only the rich and privileged classes had the opportunity to create a social life alongside the state organization, which took upon itself the tasks of schooling, public health, philanthropy, and so forth, especially in the west of Europe. The share of the average citizen of the country in these affairs consisted only in passive submission to the conditions imposed, the payment of taxes, and the use of the institutions provided. Precisely for this reason, in capitalist societies a type of human being has developed who is incapable of independence and initiative: a type who knows how to submit to coercion or to fight it desperately but who is not capable of taking the helm of life in his own hands and managing his economic and cultural affairs himself. That trait of passivity in the human character is one of those that most hinders the creation of a democracy and most favors the maintenance of the masses in the subjection of capitalism.

Cooperatives, in calling on the broadest layers of the people to manage farming, trading, and cultural affairs, exert a quite contrary educational influence—they destroy in people that submissive passivity and, as we have already said, teach the human being to be a *free creator of life*. They teach by the fact that in cooperatives the farmer, worker, or artisan becomes accustomed to joint and solidary action with others for the management of common affairs. In belonging to a consumer shop, farm company, fund, or trade union, he must necessarily look more deeply into the conditions in which social exchange and production occur; he must become acquainted with methods of administering and running enterprises and understand to what a high degree his own and his family's living depends on the good of all others.

This capacity for independence thus goes in tandem with another moral change that occurs in a human being under the influence of a cooperative; he becomes less self-centered and more capable of *friendship and fraternity*. In cooperatives, which are based on the solidarity of the group and in which all improve the living of each through solidarity, a person becomes accustomed to an entirely different view of life. If the previous social conditions taught him to mind only his personal interests and to obtain gains for himself at the injury of others, in cooperatives he will learn at firsthand that his own interest is so closely related with the interests of other people that his lot will improve only when he begins to work and strive not only for himself but for others. The farmer will see in his farming matters how much he gains when instead of standing alone he unites with his neighbors to manage joint purchases, sales, animal husbandry, etc. The worker will see the same in the benefits he receives from the mutual-aid fund, in the care the trade union provides to him, and he will be surprised at the power of association, when as a member of a consumer association he finds himself after a certain time the co-owner of stores, workshops, and capital. From the beginning, perhaps people go to cooperatives most often for their own small interests, for obtaining some dividend, loan, or a temporary economic benefit, but with time, after having once entered that new atmosphere, they become accustomed to seeing everything and evaluating everything from the position of human solidarity, from the position of friendship. Gradually they lose the habit of their former egoism and self-centeredness, which only gave them poverty and defencelessness, and they begin to understand and feel ever more deeply the true significance for life of the idea of fraternity.

In cooperatives, we become acquainted with the practical good of commonality, the good of mutual aid; living in it we become convinced by our own experiences how fatal for the human being is self love and what a great driver of well-being and happiness is commonality. Almost unknowingly, without moralizing and theory, we learn there to feel the interests of other people as our own, another's good and harm—as our own. We learn that poverty and all the cares of life come from the fact that each person thinks only of himself and looks out for himself, without concern for the other; and at the same time we know that by mutual aid, from being fearful and weak we become pillars of strength in regard to all evil and masters of life. And then we understand what *fraternity* is; we understand that this is the one true life; we understand that joy, that internal strength, that clarity, that it gives to the human being.

4 *The Rebirth of the Nation*

After all that we have said, it becomes clear what great importance cooperativism has for the Polish nation. This is the most vital and most real source of our strength.

If Galicia is beginning to be reborn economically and culturally and is advancing new social forces—farmers and workers—onto the stage of Polish history, it is thanks to cooperativism, which in the form of farmers' circles, mutual-aid societies, agricultural federations, and other entities is being increasingly better and more widely organized there. That same dawn of the people's rebirth has been appearing in Congress Poland²⁴ since consumer and agricultural cooperatives expanded their activities.

The importance of cooperativism for the national future is connected with various questions of primary value. Above all, it concerns *enrichment of the nation*—and not the enrichment of specific individuals or of the privileged classes but of the broadest masses of the people. It is the growth of wealth and well-being not only for the farmers but also for factory workers and craftsmen; the accumulation of savings in capital amounting to millions; the increased yield of the land, and especially of peasant farms; the creation of new branches of the economy and of rural industry; the increase in wages and expanded fields of work for both farmers and artisans. We know that the wealth of the masses is the economic force of the nation, which in today's era of history determines its fate and future.

The second important issue that cooperativism resolves is *the freeing of the nation from the dominance of foreign capital and foreign industry*, and especially freeing ourselves from the economic dependence in which we find ourselves in relation to the influx of Jewish people, who are foreign to the Polish nation and clearly acting against it.²⁵ In order to be freed from this economic slavery and to gain complete independence in this sphere—an independence so necessary for the development of each nation—neither periodical boycotts

24 * Congress Poland or Russian Poland, formally known as the Kingdom of Poland, or in some tsarist documents and Russian historical literature as the "Tsardom of Poland" (Tsarstvo Pol'skoye), was created in 1815 by the Congress of Vienna as an autonomous Polish state connected by personal union with Tsarist Russia. Up until the November Uprising (1830–1831), the Kingdom lost much of its autonomy. As a main result of January Uprising from 1863, any remaining separate status of the Kingdom was removed and special reform made the Kingdom's administrative division similar to other parts of the Empire—governorates (guberniya) were created (there were 10 of them) as basic administrative units. The current governor of the Kingdom, representing the government in St. Petersburg, has now been replaced by the Warsaw General-Governor.

25 * See: footnote 96 on p. 52.

of foreign goods nor admonitions and moralizing in regard to Polish society are sufficient. The sole certain and necessary means is for people's organizations to control the national market—complete control, in cities and in the countryside—and this can be done through cooperatives. Let us imagine that consumer and agricultural cooperatives have garnered the entire country and that all the inhabitants of the country satisfy all their needs of both daily life and of their trade and production through them, and it is easy to understand that in such a state of affairs no product will enter the national market without the agreement of the cooperatives and no foreign capital can be invested in the country without their aid. Only then will we be able to talk seriously about liberating ourselves economically from the predominance of German and Jewish capital, of the universal and free development of national industry. Consumer cooperatives, together with agricultural federations, give the national market into the control of the people; they thus make that people the sole and true manager of the country. Neither enterprises nor foreign and unwanted goods can then penetrate the sales market because there will be no orders or consumers. This will work more effectively than any protective tariffs. It will be the same with the revitalization and expansion of national industry; the creation of new economic sectors and new production forces can rely on the consumers' associations and on an assured place in the market. In this way, it will be possible to combat not only the incursion of German or other kinds of foreign capital but also the exploitation of the workers. In many cases, consumer cooperatives, in disposing of a large sales field, can force factory owners to provide fair conditions and can close their market against those enterprises that neglect social interests.

Protection against exploitation and the development of social justice in economic relations is the third task of cooperativism and will raise and multiply the strength of the nation a hundredfold. The reduction of social harm will in general raise the level of national life; it will open new sources of culture and in the place of soul- and body-destroying poverty, which stifles hundreds and thousands of talented minds and large hearts at the outset, will summon new human forces to joint work for the good and the beautiful, for achieving civil rights and freedoms. The generations raised in cooperativism, having imbibed the idea of the common, friendship, and independence, will be a kind of rejuvenation of the national soul—this will be the new, indestructible, democratic Poland, expected and predicted in prophecy and song: a strong, wealthy, independent nation, not recognizing either class privileges or rights based on harm.

In order to reach that great era of rebirth, we must begin from small reforms and must gradually and persistently, from day to day, transform our life and daily conditions into a new model. Every region of the country should have

these four main types of people's cooperatives, which mutually complement each other and are the foundations of a new social system: *the consumer cooperative*, which organizes the market, accumulates the capital of the people, and then creates joint production; *farmers' circles*, which bring peasant farming to the higher form of united farming, giving them culture and wealth; *savings and loan or mutual credit societies*, which in collecting small savings into large amounts of capital make it possible for the people to create their own enterprises and institutions; and finally, *labor unions*, protecting workers against exploitation, organizing the supply of labor, and regulating wage conditions in accord with justice and the needs of culture.

Our whole future rests on these four forms of cooperativism; all those large questions of our social life, before which we stand helpless, will be resolved to the extent that the people's cooperativism advances and develops. The ill-treatment of factory workers, the poverty of the country people, the control of industry and trade by foreign and hostile powers, the destruction of national resources, the emigration of the people even though enormous areas of work and earnings lie fallow, the ignorance, the lack of medical care, the neglect of children—these are matters which, in our country especially, no one will be able to handle as well as cooperativism. For other nations, it is only a force for further social development in the direction of justice; for us it is something more because it is also a force for our national defense, a force capable of protecting us against extermination and *destruction*.

The Significance of Cooperativism for Democracy

I The Consumer Cooperative Places National Trade in the Hands of the People

A consumer cooperative is an association for *the common purchase* of both items of everyday consumption and all other goods. Instead of having everyone buy bread, milk, butter, oil, coal, shoes, clothing, linen, and other things separately, in small shops and stores, people combine in an association, which, by the intermediary effect of its administration, buys all these items wholesale, for its own shop. In buying wholesale, the association buys more cheaply, while it sells to its members at the ordinary price and from thence comes the association's profit.

This is ordinary mercantile profit; only here, instead of being the personal income of one or another merchant, it is the common income of the association; it belongs to all the members and can be used by them in accordance with their desires and will. A part of this can be earmarked for division among them, as a dividend on purchases, while another part can be preserved as a *collective fund*, for purposes of collective use.

The more people belong to an association and the more every member makes purchases in the association's shop, the more the commercial significance and economic force of the cooperative will increase. It will become a great recipient of goods, a great buyer, with which trading companies and industrialists must deal seriously, caring for the quality of goods and making concessions in prices. At the same time, from the growth in the number of members and from the growth in the commercial turnover of the cooperative, its income will also grow and an increasingly large amount of capital will collect, allowing the cooperative to expand its economic activities.

It thus results from the nature of the consumer cooperative that it is an association open to all, a natural enemy of all monopolies and limitations, a true people's association. It takes upon itself the task of the direct acquisition of goods, striving necessarily to collect within itself all consumers, that is, all people, or, in other words, to take control of the entire national market in order to organize that market and adapt it to the needs of the population, while taking management from the hands of capitalists and merchants and placing it in the hands of the people.

II The Consumer Cooperative Places Production and National Resources in the Hands of the People

A cooperative, in appropriating to itself merchant revenues and having its own organized market—the numerous ranks of its members—is in a position to go further on the road of great social reforms and to create its own *production*. For this purpose, it should concentrate in its hands the largest possible amount of contributions and try to have the largest part of its net profit capitalized as a collective fund. With the aid of the capital collected in this manner, the cooperative establishes workshops and factories, acquires mines and folwarks,¹ which, as the property of the cooperative, are the *common* assets of all the associated members. They themselves choose administrators; they themselves control how the businesses are run; they set the rules themselves and use the revenues themselves. It is the property of the organized people.

In factories and cooperative farms organized on this basis, the exploitation of the workers should be completely out of the question. The workers who are employed are also *members* of the consumer cooperative and, as such, are at the same time the co-owners of those factories and folwarks, which belong to the cooperative; they take part in managing them and in all the income that they give. It will thus be in the interest of the associated members themselves for the work in those cooperative factories to be well paid, healthy, pleasant, and leaving a good amount of free time. The cooperative, in becoming a producer, appropriates to itself new sources of income; it collects those profits that belong to capitalists. Instead of buying bread, flour, canvas, shoes, etcetera, from factory owners, the cooperative sets up its own bakeries, mills, weaving mills, and sewing shops, and collects those revenues that it formerly gave to the factory owners.

In this way, the common capital of the people, organized in a consumer cooperative, grows even more. And to the extent that that the cooperative's industrial and agricultural enterprises multiply, to that measure an increasingly large part of production and national resources will pass into its hands. Alongside the capitalist economy, based on privilege and exploitation, destroying the health and freedom of the human being, a new economy will appear in which there are no exploiters and exploited workers, no owners and proletariat, rulers and ruled, in which the sole owner is the association of free people, which is open to all and has absolute respect for equal rights and responsibilities.

1 * Folwarks—primarily a serfdom-based farm and agricultural enterprise in the Polish Kingdom and Commonwealth (a type of *latifundium*), often very large. Folwarks were operated in the Crown of Poland from the 14th century and survived after the partitions of the Polish Commonwealth until the early 20th century.

III The Consumer Cooperative Places Education and Health in the Hands of the People

If a cooperative is well-administrated, if it possesses large numbers of members and if those members buy everything from it, then the revenues of the cooperative achieve huge dimensions and can be earmarked for the satisfaction of all kinds of social needs. These revenues are usually divided into two parts: one part is paid to the members as a dividend; the second is preserved as a collective fund. The second part is the most important and ensures the associated members the greatest benefit. Thus to the degree the cooperative is aware of its tasks and the great role it has to play in the world, to that degree it will allocate less to dividends and more to the collective fund.

On the basis of the collective fund, a cooperative should form its own complete culture of the people. Just as the cooperative takes the market from the merchant, and production from the factory owner, in the same way it takes education, hospitals, schools, security, old-age insurance, and help in sickness away from private and government philanthropy and places them all in the hands of the people, in order to allow the people to manage its own life. For a consumer cooperative, this is the easier because it does not require any sacrifice in the gathering of funds as its revenues emerge solely from consumption itself.

Every loaf of bread, every pair of shoes bought in a cooperative leaves in the collective fund a certain supplementary payment and from these small increments huge sums are formed, which can be used for various collective needs. The philanthropic institutions require donations; the government ones require taxes in order to maintain themselves; only cooperative institutions can maintain themselves without placing on the people one burden or another. In addition, institutions—both philanthropic and governmental—always try to impose a thing on the people; they remove the people from direct influence and govern in accord with their systems and plans, without necessarily counting on the life needs of various human groups.

A consumer cooperative is the broadest and most democratic people's association, open to all and ensuring equal rights. If, then, it takes on itself the maintenance of schools, libraries, security, hospitals, old-age insurance, and ill-health funds, these institutions become truly the people's; they will adapt to the real requirements of life and to the needs of those people who make use of them. The people then frees itself from philanthropy and bureaucratic care, and itself becomes its own philanthropist, the guardian of its infirm, and up-bringer of its children.

IV The Consumer Cooperative Teaches Self-government and Freedom

The consumer cooperative is a democratic association, that is, the kind in which all the members have uniform rights and responsibilities and where all decide about the affairs of the association. The general assembly of members is the highest legislator; its will resolves everything. It chooses the association's officials, controls their activity, and declares the main guidelines and principles for the conduct of association's affairs.

It is thus a real commonwealth where all are called to the government; a commonwealth where there is no coercion, and all happens on the basis of goodwill. In a cooperative, instead of submitting to plans and decrees imposed on them from above, people themselves decide on the methods of conducting their interests; they must understand the exact conditions prevailing in the national economy, research various aspects of commercial and industrial activity, establish insurance funds, and educational and health institutions—everything in which the cooperative is engaged. Instead of accepting the ready products and conditions set for them by capitalists, philanthropists, and the state, they learn to be creators of their own life, as free people, whom no one forces into these activities.

And in this rests the great significance of the cooperative—that it teaches *a creative freedom*, and that from it real democracy is created. Where all the people make demands on the state, where all their hope rests in one or another reform conducted by force, there is no democracy, nor are there free citizens. There, there are only the subjects of a more or less progressive, more or less enlightened government. Democracy and freedom, though, are only created when people, instead of demanding reforms from the state, conduct those reforms themselves, on the basis of voluntary solidarity, and when instead of a human being as a “vote,” instead of a pawn in the hands of bureaucracy or party leaders, instead of only people who know either how to dominate or to listen, the human being appears as *a free creator of life*, knowing how, without coercion, to act in solidarity with others and to perfect life.

The cooperative should form this kind of *human being* and this is its highest calling. All systems and social regimes can disappoint, can turn out to be erroneous, or be distorted by new, unforeseen conditions of life; but that moral value of the human being—as *creator*—will remain its eternal achievement, a source of inexhaustible strength and increasingly beautiful human worlds.

Associations and Their Role

I On Associations in General (What Is an Association?)

An association is a voluntary combination of people for certain aims. These aims could be of the most various kinds. People come together above all to protect their interests against exploitation, to improve their farms, to build cheap and comfortable homes, to facilitate education and occupational training, for mutual aid in illness and the accidents of life, for security in old age, to ensure cheap credit, and for any other common need that requires collective and organized action.

The entire strength, power, and significance of associations rests in this *goodwill*. Since each person joins an association voluntarily and each person can leave at will, if it does not correspond to his interests or convictions, there can be no force, no oppression of one by another, no imposition on anyone of a way of thinking or behaving. Here what prevails is not an outward but a real equality of laws and duties. The resolutions and decisions that direct the life of the association are recognized and adopted by everyone voluntarily; those who do not agree with them can at any moment leave the association and create another for themselves.

What links people in this case is neither coercion nor command but only a common need and common idea, an inner concordance of the people. A good understanding of his personal interest inclines the worker to belong to a mutual aid society or a farmer to belong to an agricultural company. In joining these associations they see and are easily convinced that their interests are the same as those of their companions and that the well-being of the whole association or company at once becomes their own well-being. And this entirely suffices for them to care for the interests of the association the same as they would for their own interests.

In correspondence with this basic trait of associations—that they are a voluntary association of people—their constitution, or the statute of their collective life, is also formed. An association, like a state, has its legislation, its collection of resolutions and decisions, which are binding for all its members. It also has its own executive authority, or management, which conducts the interests of the association and implements the decisions that have been made. However, both the legislation and the executive authority are completely different things in an association to those in a state. The legislation of an association belongs to the totality of the membership; every member, man or woman, takes part in creating the laws; they are resolved at a general

assembly of the association and only go into force when ratified by a majority of votes. Such resolutions are continually dependent on the will of their creators and if, at a certain moment, they seem unsuitable, the next assembly can remove them and replace them with others. Anyone can criticize the resolutions, point out their defects, and contribute to their development. The right of personal initiative is unlimited here. Every human aptitude, every idea that grew and developed in someone's mind, can find a proper field of creativity and, by way of conviction, enter into the life of the association. Thanks to this, the association's legislation does not constitute an immobile and rigid routine that yokes and bends human lives to itself but, on the contrary, it is in constant contact and in a state of constant dependence on the needs and convictions of that whole for which it arose and for which it operates. It is not a master but a servant of life.

The association's laws are voluntarily respected by the members. Since they themselves adopted them, as a useful thing for their common interests, there is no need for coercion or punishments for them to respect and implement those laws. The natural solidarity of interests, the commonality of aims and needs, is entirely sufficient for the association to operate and develop according to the plan adopted. If, however, it occurs in an association that a certain resolution is adopted not unanimously but only by a majority of votes and if the minority feel injured thereby, then they can leave the association and organize themselves separately, according to their own views. In this way, in an association the general membership cannot oppress the individual, or the majority the minority. The law that has been passed, however, will work and has effect from the mere fact that every member sees in it a useful thing, in accord with his own convictions and needs, an expression of his own will.

The association's executive authority, that is the management board and administration, is chosen by the general assembly of members for a limited time, from one to three years. It remains under the dual control of the association: under the control of the general assembly, to which it must present detailed reports on its activity; and under the control of a commission chosen for this purpose by the assembly. The role of the management board is usually strictly limited to implementing the resolutions of the general assembly and those tasks that constitute the permanent function of the association. However, if an association becomes convinced that the proceedings of the management board are not entirely in accord with the spirit of the association's resolutions and aims, it always has the power to submit those proceedings to criticism at a general assembly and to change the personal composition of the management board to a more suitable one. The initiative for such criticism and improvement is in the hands of every member. The management board can also not

conduct any reform or new plan of action for as long as it does not acquire the agreement of the majority of the members and, in general, during its whole period of management it must continually remember that it is only an ordinary executor of the will of the association and not its overlord.

From these basic traits of the constitution of associations, which recur in the regulations of various credit, consumer, farm, worker, education, and other kinds of associations, both in Poland and in other countries—from these traits we see that in terms of equality and freedom the constitution of an association goes considerably farther than any state constitution, even in the countries that are the most democratic and free. We meet here with the most important principles of democracy: the legislative authority rests in the hands of the whole; everyone has the right of initiative; there is complete freedom to criticize and propagandize; and the executive authority, which arises from direct elections, is responsible to the whole in all its actions and at the same time is subject to the will of the majority in every important affair. Only a few republican countries, such as Switzerland and some of the States of North America, have reached this degree of democratic development in their state organization, and yet there the political rights of citizens—for instance, the right to initiate legislation and control over the executive authority—are significantly limited and never obtain that completeness that exists in the constitutions of associations.

On the other hand, no state, even the most democratic and the most free, gives its citizens the freedom to recognize or not the state authority and laws: that is to say the freedom to leave the organization, if it is inconvenient for anyone. This ensues from the very nature of the state and of state law, whose force affects not people who voluntarily agreed to it but the entire territory occupied by the state, and it is connected to that territory. It is not a law of the people but of the land; everyone who was born or lived within the borders of a given state must thereby be subject to the laws in force within those borders, and his agreement or non-agreement has no significance or influence. Consequently, the state law requires coercion in order to be respected and implemented by everyone; it requires a penal system and a superior, ruling power that has the force to punish and bend human lives to the prevailing law. Even where the state laws are passed by the nation, by means of a general vote on the draft of a law (as in Switzerland), or by a simple majority of votes, the result is that there is always a significant part of the population that was against the confirmed law or for whom the law, over the course of time, becomes undesirable in life, and who would cease to submit to it were it not for the coercion of the state.

The difference between the resolutions in force in associations and state laws is fundamental: the first exist only for those who consider them to be useful for

themselves; the second exist compulsorily for everyone who lives within the territory of a state. The first are only a simple expression of a life need; the second are imposed on human lives and try to adapt them to themselves.

Thus it also emerges that state laws change slowly and with difficulty; they always remain behind the development of needs and life issues, hampering new forces and social aspirations. Associations, on the other hand, adapt with ease to every change; they emerge in various forms and with various aims, whenever new life tasks appear. A state encompasses various social classes having contrary interests, various nationalities, faiths, and groups of people with diverging concepts, aims, and needs; one compulsory law is applied uniformly to them all. If, in one social class or group there appears a need for the reform of those laws, other classes and groups may not recognize that need and may oppose the introduction of reforms: the state executive authority, as well as the national representative body, must count on it. Thus, as well, all social reforms concerning labor, farm, and trade relations, concerning education, religion, tax affairs, and so forth, occur in all states cautiously and slowly; they come with difficulty and with struggle, and at every step they meet with contrasting social interests and forces.

In an association, however, there are no such obstacles to change and reform, for the simple reason that it is a voluntary association of people with common interests and aims; they can thus easily agree within the sphere of their common goals, and if a fundamental difference appears between them, then nothing forces them to remain in one organization and be subject to one law. Those who are dissatisfied with the existing state of affairs or with the reforms conducted can freely leave the organization and strive to unite in another.

In the life of an association, this is a fairly simple phenomenon. Thus, for instance, a few years ago those workers' associations that had social-democratic aims left the union of German consumer associations and opened among themselves a separate Union. Similarly, in Belgium, those farmers and workers who have socialist convictions leave those farmers' companies led by the clergy and create separate organizations. We see the same thing in Galicia: alongside the formerly existing Popular Education Association, which is led by conservatives and priests, the Popular Schools Association appeared, providing education in a more progressive and democratic spirit. This is a natural and necessary differentiation of associations, the sign of the development of life itself, which requires that every separate group of human minds and natures can live and create freely.

In addition, an association usually aims to satisfy one group of human needs, for instance in education, defense against exploitation, security in old age, and so forth. Therefore, in a country with various associations and cultures,

a person wanting to satisfy the various needs of his life becomes a member of associations, of which each corresponds to some part of his nature. He will be, for example, simultaneously a member of a consumer cooperative, a mutual aid and insurance fund, a trade union, an educational association, and so forth. In him, all these associations, which are independent of each other, meet and share between themselves his various aims and needs. On the other hand, the state strives to encompass the whole person, and all his needs. It regulates not only the conditions of security and defense, but also upbringing, religious cults, education, private and public behavior, economic conditions, hygiene, and morality. Since the accordance of the citizen with the state is compulsory, and the existence of the state depends on this accord, none of a citizen's ways of thinking or life can be a matter of indifference to the state. Everything concerns the state's interests and everything could threaten to undermine its existence. Thus, "in defense of the state," France must oppress Catholic schools and Prussia must combat the Polish language and culture.

From that trait of the state—that it strives absolutely to encompass and regulate all areas of social life—ensues the rigidity of its legislation, its difficulty in changing, and difficulty in adapting to the needs of life.

An association has no obstacles to changing its decisions and arrangements; it is also continually adapting to the changes that occur in the aims and lives of its members. The mechanism is relatively simple, limited to only a few tasks, and thus can easily be transformed. Furthermore, in an association an injured minority, which does not care for the reforms introduced, can at any moment separate itself as an autonomous association.

In a state organization, the opposite happens. As a complicated mechanism, involved in the most varied tasks, it must calibrate itself to every change. A reform in one area must be evaluated from various viewpoints that are foreign to it, and sometimes from the military standpoint, or the interests of colonial policy, diplomacy or finance, which prevent the introduction of reforms in the field of the economy or education. For these reasons, state legislation will always be behind the development of life, and the state will be found increasingly less capable of dealing with rich, rapidly changing, variable, and internally diverse social issues. These issues, multiplying with the progress of history, require an organization adapted to their nature, that is flexible, spiritualized, and combines the least possible amount of routine with the greatest possible freedom of understanding. Such an organization can be found in associations.

What are the manifestations of the interesting historical processes to which we are currently witness? In spite of the ever-increasing slogans of "nationalization" from the top and from the bottom which have been given a leading

place in the policy of the workers' movement (nationalization of the land, of industry, of insurance, etc.), what is expanding is not only nationalization but also its antagonist—the democracy of associations. We thus have both a state economic policy and a federation of consumer associations striving to regulate production and the market in accord with the interests of consumers; state labor legislation, and trade union legislation protecting the worker from exploitation; state old-age insurance, and insurance from mutual aid and consumer societies; state and district care for agriculture, and associations of farmers undertaking actions to raise the culture and well-being of the country folk; state schools and universities alongside free schools and universities maintained by associations and other groups; state credit beside the credit of savings and loan societies, Raiffeisen rural credit cooperatives, and people's banks; and so forth in every area of life and need. A voluntary organization, such as an association, turns out to be capable of fulfilling all kinds of social tasks and of realizing on a large scale, already today, that ideal commonwealth which without coercion brings solidarity, order, and collective work to people.

In addition to its practical usefulness, an association also has a moral significance, as it prepares the *spiritual rebirth of the human being*. Thanks to its voluntary organization, which is devoid of routine and coercion, every human individual, every striving of the human mind and heart, all human desires and needs, can freely develop and create appropriate conditions for themselves. Instead of imposing a uniform pattern of thinking and life on everyone, and suppressing and exterminating whatever departs and differs from the imposed model, the association respects every human difference; it allows everyone to live and think, to feel and create life in accordance with their own method. New elements of the soul, which today are suppressed but which eternally germinate in various human natures, can develop in the voluntary organization of associations into a world of relations and creativity previously unknown to us, expanding the horizons of life to limits that today cannot be foreseen or imagined. Thanks to associations, a new moral doctrine will enter social life: *absolute respect for every human being*, his freedom to live in accord with his own nature and conscience—a doctrine that unconsciously takes root in human habits and feelings to the degree that the democracy of associations grows and develops.

Simultaneously, as a consequence, another moral influence of the association on the human being occurs. The association is the collective and free work of people to achieve a certain aim. They must themselves think how they want to proceed in order to obtain that goal; they must contribute their own energy, ingenuity, and labour in order for the association to develop successfully and bring advantages. All are called to act uniformly, with various rights and

responsibilities; each one can be the creator of the common, just as by incompetence and neglectfulness he can harm himself and others. As a result, in an association people learn to *manage their own affairs independently*; they learn real freedom—achieving everything by their own forces and shaping life for themselves. Instead of a human being with an enslaved soul, who looks only for outside orders and outside help, in associations a strong type of human being is created, with an independent mind and character, who has learned both his own value as a human being and the value of voluntary solidarity—as a human power.

As a result of this moral influence, associations also have first rate *formative political* significance. They are a social school of life, in which people learn true democracy, self-government, and freedom. Strictly speaking, a free nation is a nation of associations: a political, state-constitutional democracy, which everywhere has developed in dependence on the development of the life of associations, on the ground prepared by them. Democracy only grows where it is needed by the masses. It appears as a reaction against the acquisitiveness of the state, as a necessary defense of diverse institutions of the people against bureaucracy.

If the Swiss people, with such logical resistance, have always defended their bureaucratic arrangements against various claims of the central government, if they managed to widen them to the furthest limit of political freedom, let us remember then that their defense of democracy was a defense of democratic civilization; the political constitution that they created had a wide inborn base: thousands of the most varied associations, clubs, and unions, hundreds of agricultural, trade, labor, cultural, and educational societies; democratic habits, the custom of equality and respect for the human being, which were rooted in the entire civilization of that people. In such conditions, democracy had to develop because it was a need of life itself. The Swiss people had their entire culture to protect, an entire range of their own autonomously organized institutions, and therefore they had to have a political constitution that would correspond to that state of affairs.

A backward society, though—one that does not have a developed organization of associations but lives as a loose collective of individuals united only by a state organization, an institution imposed from above—is never capable of possessing political freedom, of becoming a democratic society. It is a society of masters and slaves. It does not know how to create its life independently, to organize its own institutions, decide its own fate. It does not know how to value either the free initiative of the human being, or the strength of human solidarity. It considers itself as material that someone else should perfect and

variously shape. The citizens of such a society, in regard to every social disability, expect only reforms from the state or help from philanthropy. Their entire political wisdom is contained in pleas and demands for reform: "make of us this or that"; "make a constitutional, democratic, or social-democratic society out of us"; "reform farm or labor relations"; "reform schools and hospitals"; "protect us from poverty and exploitation." All their social ideas can be summarized in just this, that the state should become the omnipotent providence which will think and act for them, and teach, heal, and protect them.

Obviously, in such a society perfect police control [in the sense of discipline, organization] of industry and agriculture, education and health, could at some time be produced, but not democracy. Democracy requires above all a strong sense of and instinct for social self-help. It requires the strong individualism of the human being, who has a sophisticated need to manage his life according to his own needs and to respect that independence in others. Thus it requires the development of associations in all areas of social economy and culture. Without those conditions, it would not be possible to create democracy. Even if it happens that, thanks to various happy circumstances or historical turns, a culturally backward nation receives a democratic constitution, prepared in the cabinets of diplomats and leaders, it will immediately be changed into a government of bureaucrats and elected representatives; it will be adapted to the democratic immaturity of the nation, to its not knowing how to be free, in such a way that the result will be that the same governments and political relations will remain, because the same type of human being and the same type of life remains. Galicia, in the constitutional era, is the best example.

There where that self-generated democracy is created from the bottom up, where mutual aid institutions, various associations, cooperatives, and unions are organized, where independent educational outlets emerge, deep changes must and do simultaneously occur in the habits and souls of people, in child-raising, in physical and moral hygiene, in their approach to life and its pleasures. Above all, people then create the conditions of their existence themselves; the common good, which the association seeks, depends on their abilities, energy, and generosity. Certain aims appear in the life of the individual that previously did not exist; the sense of independent creation and the feeling of human solidarity appears. Not only do the last of the enslaved souls disappear but also those people with the souls of the modern profiteer, who do not understand profit without harm. New categories of moral and social pleasures arise and drive out the mindless boredom of luxury, debauchery, and drunkenness. In a word, a new culture and new type of human being is created, without whom there can be neither freedom nor political democracy.

The association member is *a type of human who creates life* through his mind, character, and heart, and he is the citizen of a democracy. An unattached individual is a passive pawn in the hands of the administration and party leaders, a slave of the conditions of life, typical of a slave society which has not matured to self-government or to a comprehension of freedom, and will always need to have some outside force manage and reform his life, help him, and order him about.

Thus the first step on the road to political rebirth is *the creation of an independent culture of the nation, based on self-help and associations*, the change of people's unconnected lives into an organized life, beating a strong rhythm in various cooperatives, companies, and unions; the change of the unfree human being into the democratic type, and his conduct through the life school of self-government and solidarity constituted by associations.

II Forms of People's Associations

The forms of association are various, depending on what kind of people create the association and for what aims. In present times, in Western European countries with developed cultures, there are practically no social tasks that associations cannot undertake. They develop in every sphere of human relations defending various interests of the population, while gradually driving out the need for philanthropy and social care. They also everywhere precede reforms made by parliaments and open the way to them, both in the practice of their implementation and in expanding the social consciousness.

The sole obstacles to development that associations usually encounter come from state legislation. That legislation, without having ready patterns that would correspond to the newly arising associations and institutions, imposes on them ordinary laws or old regulations, which strongly cramp their activities and often even prevent their establishment through an unnecessary and onerous formalization. In other cases, the creation of associations is basically forbidden, as with, for example, the law of the French Revolution of 1791, as a result of which workers' trade unions and other associations could not develop freely in France until the prohibition was formally lifted in 1884.

Because legislation can never foresee what new types of associations and institutions might appear in the future, and especially because their various needs and interests can not be set forth and formulated from above, the requirement for a policy of freedom, concerned for the development of associations, should always tend in such a direction that the state legislation, while

granting associations the fundamental freedom to arise, should interfere as little as possible in their organization and statutes.

Let us now look at the general traits of various types of the more important people's associations that are present and developing in the civilized countries of the West.

- 1 *Workers' Trade Unions*
- 2 *Agricultural Workers' Unions*
- 3 *Industrial Workers' Production Associations*¹
- 4 *Agricultural Associations (Farmers' Companies)*

Agricultural associations met a quite different fate from that of industrial production associations. They exhibited an enormous force for development, an ability to associate and improve naturally, and today they have made a real breakthrough in agricultural and farm relations. The aim of these associations is to bring together smallholders in order to improve their farms and to undertake, by common effort, various life tasks which the individual is helpless to address on his own.

Above all, they form companies for the *joint purchase of artificial fertilizers, seeds, and agricultural equipment*. The individual small farmer would not be able to take advantage of these things because ordering a small amount of fertilizer or seeds would cost too much and, in terms of their variety, he could easily be deceived. As to farm equipment, many items could not be acquired at all on account of their exorbitant price. All these difficulties are obviated by a company.

It acquires, for all its members collectively, fertilizers and seeds, as a result of which the purchase price is significantly lowered for every farm and, in addition, the quality received is good, not falsified, because a company has the fertilizer and seeds inspected by an expert. More expensive agricultural equipment, such as seeders, threshers, etcetera, the company acquires on the basis of monetary contributions from all the members, as their common property, which they all use successively or together. The common thresher threshes all the grain; the common seeder sows everyone's ground as if it were one large farm. In this manner, small farms can make use of all the agricultural improvements and discoveries on an equal footing with the large farms of rich owners; they can increase the yield of the land, improve the varieties of grain, and spare human labor.

1 These three chapters are identical with the content of „Cooperative as a Matter of Liberating the Working People“, in: this volume.

This is the first step toward changing small, scattered, inefficient small holdings into one great agricultural association which is in no way worse than rich model farms. Even when a farm company is limited only to the joint purchase of fertilizer, seeds, and equipment, the well-being of the country population will be significantly raised; and the culture and value of the land will rise, as at the same time will the social and national importance of the farming people, who will be transformed from a loose collection of individuals into an organized economic force.

But the company does not stop there. In addition to joint purchases, it also organizes *the joint sale* of various farm products: eggs, butter, cheese, cold cuts, fruit, and vegetables. Wholesale purchasers, with whom agreements are made in regard to the price and size of deliveries, are sought in the cities and abroad, thus eliminating the intermediation of small traders. The profits of the various buyers who acquired products in small towns and markets at the price they themselves imposed, and who took advantage of the helplessness of the farmers, now pass into the hands of the farmers themselves. The company sells at better prices because it has steady sales and a reputation with purchasers, whom it guarantees good quality products and conscientious deliveries.

In order to fulfill these obligations, the company must extend its concern and oversight to individual farms; it must take care that the orchard fruits and vegetable plots are knowledgeably managed, and that the poultry rearing and swine and cattle raising should give good results. To this end, it keeps its own common instructors, who travel around the farms and give pointers as to how to proceed in each branch of farming; it provides its members with the best varieties of grafts and seeds; it improves forage, the feeding of cattle and swine; and it maintains common choice bulls to improve the cattle breeds. The farms that unite with each other more strongly introduce livestock raising and crop cultivation in accord with joint plans, and sell their yields wholesale. They thus have all the benefits that to this time were the exclusive privilege of great estates and folwarks.

Joint sales also entail *joint production*. That is, in order to sell butter, cheese, fruit preserves and cold cuts in bulk at a set time and of good quality, they must be produced in facilities that are equipped on a large scale and ably managed, with the use of various improvements and technical discoveries. Thus, numerous butter and cheese factories, fruit preserve factories, and other kinds that are the property of farm companies have arisen and their profits are divided between the members according to the quantity of milk or fruit they provide, while part is retained as capital for the common company, and serves to expand its activities and for other needs of the common good. Lately, farm companies have begun the joint sale of grain, in order to free farmers from the

exploitation of the merchants, and have even established their own mills and bakeries. The latter are especially widespread in France.

In addition to these economic tasks, as farm organizations companies have also taken on themselves care for the cultural needs of the people. They have engaged in the expansion of education, solidarity, and safety. They have also guarded the farm people's interests against state legislation. In the sphere of schools for the people, they were the first to expand on a broad scale *the free school*, which combines general education with education in the agriculture trade for both boys and girls. They thus stimulated among the farm people a love of learning and an understanding of the need for it, as living knowledge, based not only on learning from books but also from one's own experience and observations. In addition, unions of farm companies publish various writings, brochures, and books which popularize agricultural information, and they also establish experimental fields and model farms where raising new types of plants and new methods of cultivating the land can be tried. They organize traveling lectures on agriculture and other subjects of importance to the farm people. They organize agricultural exhibitions and competitions.

In the sphere of life culture, they have developed a whole series of important institutions that have increased people's safety and morality. Above all, they have introduced the custom of *mutual aid* to the countryside. In the case of illness or a disaster affecting his farm, the farmer is not left to his own devices. If he is ill, the company undertakes to perform the work of his farm for free; it loans him inventory, seeds, or feed, if a disaster has destroyed his assets. In addition, mutual aid *groups* are organized which give the needy help in the form of money or in kind and pay for medical aid. Alms are replaced by the solidary aid of neighbors, of which each can make use in the case of necessity. The *mutual insurance* of cattle and grain has also begun to be organized, to limit the losses occurring as a result of flood, hail, or fire, from funds collected to that end from joint contributions of the entire union of companies.

Another important custom that the agricultural companies spread among the farm people is the settlement of their disputes before *arbitration courts*, which has both economic and moral significance, because the arbitration courts resolve conflicts without costs, easily and quickly, while procedures in state courts and the use of paid lawyers usually inflicts large costs on both sides, often entirely ruining people who are not wealthy. The moral significance consists in the fact that in an arbitration court the dispute is resolved by people who are chosen by the two sides, by virtue of confidence in them, and that the resolution is based not on the dead letter of the law but according to conscience and justice, in such a manner that neither of the conflicted sides feels injured or ruined. In an arbitration court, there is no compulsion, only an

explanation of the dispute, leading to bilateral agreement; it leaves no harm or hatred behind.

As we can see, farm companies make deep changes in the life of the rural people. The question of the small peasant property, its economic insufficiency in contrast to large capitalist production, its poverty and inability to progress, has found a solution in farm companies. Until not long ago, social reformers could see no way out for it other than its destruction: the nationalization of the land and the creation of great folwarks, managed by the state, on the rubble of the peasant farms. The farm companies have placed the issue on a different footing: without destroying the independence of the small farms, they combined them into voluntary economic unions, gave them culture and knowledge, and made them capable of all kinds of development and progress. They proved that raising the level of cultivating the land, expanding knowledgeable farming, and organizing joint production and trade, with insurance from accidents, could be done by voluntary farm associations, without the nationalization of the land and without the interference of the coercive state.

5 *Mutual Credit Associations*

Two types of association should be distinguished: one rural, the so-called the Raiffeisen² credit unions, and the second urban, the so-called Schulze-Delitzsch³ credit unions, which are used primarily by the artisan population.

a) *The Raiffeisen rural credit unions* are based on the principle of mutual solidarity and from this solidarity alone they draw their funds. Farm people, who need cheap and convenient loans to improve their farms, join together and declare that they are solidarily responsible for one another. What is more, they do not need to collect capital. They then receive credit with ease, because for every borrower the entire group of several hundred farms responds. The association is the intermediary between the capitalist and the borrowing farmer. It finds capital on advantageous terms, and lends it to its members. However, since all the members are responsible for the loan, the association must be careful in accepting members and must ensure that a loan will not contribute to the loss but rather the raising [the development] of the farm that takes it. People who are thriftless, lazy, or drunken cannot belong to the association, because solidarity with such types would be a terrible plague. Real conditions have shown that credit organized in this manner mutually ensures easy and

2 * Friedrich Wilhelm Raiffeisen (1818–1888) was a German social reformer, founder of the credit cooperatives in Europe.

3 * Hermann Schulze-Delitzsch (real name: Franz Hermann Schulze, 1808–1883) was a German politician, economist and social reformer, founder of the credit cooperatives in Europe.

cheap credit for farmers, and in addition it develops in them interest [initiative] and an understanding of solidarity, and for many of them, it is a stimulus to improving their life and abandoning addictions. Such associations are counted in the thousands in Germany, Italy, Belgium, and France. In addition to intermediation between capitalists and farmers, the Raiffeisen association is also a savings bank for farm people; instead of placing their savings in district and government banks, they place them in the banks of their association at an agreed percentage. Due to these savings, a large amount of capital is collected, from which the association gives loans to members in need, always on the principle that all are mutual guarantors. These loans can be given for longer periods, for 5 and 10 years, which for farm people is necessary, and can be paid in installments to the end of the term. In this manner one and the same association serves its members by keeping their savings, paying interest, and granting cheap loans on advantageous terms in case of need.

A credit union of this type cannot encompass the entire territory of the country; it usually operates within the borders of one parish or district, so that each of these has its separate credit union. This is because in a credit union based on the principle of mutual guarantees, the members must know each other well. In such conditions, administration of the credit union does not require more specialized ability nor does it take much time; the farm people themselves can manage the administration, choosing from among themselves those who are suitable and who fulfill their duties without receiving remuneration.

Mutual credit associations have freed the farm people from the hands of usury; they have given them the ability to improve their farms and save themselves from poverty. Where they have developed, the farm people do not need to rely on either the philanthropy of the rich or the help of the state. By the strength of their own solidarity they have an ensured source of help and of independence.

b) *Schulz-Delitzsch credit unions*, or people's banks, are to be found among the urban artisan population, and the main aim of these associations is to support the small craftsman with the help of facilitated credit. Their basis cannot be, as in the countryside, the mutual solidarity of guarantors, because the population of towns is too numerous, varied, and changeable; not all can know each other and they cannot base their guarantee on a property as uncertain as a small craft workshop or the store of the small merchant. Thus an association of this type relies on monetary contributions; every member must pay a one-time entry fee (usually around 2.5 francs) and in addition place in the association's bank a share of around 125 francs, which can be made by small monthly payments. The share placed in the credit union remains the property of the individual member; upon leaving the company he receives that sum in

return, and during the whole time he receives a certain interest on it. The entry fee, though, remains the property of the association. From the entry fees and shares of the members, as well as the savings deposited in the credit union, capital arises, from which the association gives loans to its members: usually only short-term ones, from 3 to 6 months. The credit union takes 8 percent interest on a loan, and pays 5 percent interest on the money deposited with it. The credit union manages the profit that arises in such a manner that part of it is kept as reserve capital of the common fund, while the remainder is divided among the members in proportion to the size of the loans. The credit union is managed by a chairman, a treasurer, an inspector, and a number of assessors, who are chosen for one year by the general assembly of members. The general assembly meets several times a year in order to check the accounting and to pass various resolutions that become binding for the association.

Associations of this type, which are widespread in Germany in all cities and small towns, have been of great benefit to the craftsmen. They have saved many from bankruptcy and have made it possible for craftsmen to improve their workshops, buy material and tools for their company, and enter into trading relations for the sale of their products.

Both these types of credit union—the rural and the urban—are thus especially important because the small savings of the people, which together amount to hundreds of millions, *are collected in the hands of the people themselves*, in their own credit unions, which they administer and themselves control, instead of being concentrated in the banks of capitalists or of the government and thus bringing profit to someone else. In credit unions, these profits can be capitalized as joint funds, at the disposal of the people, and can be used for various purposes of the social good.

6 *People's Mutual-Aid Associations and Education-Based Mutual-Aid Associations*

The aim of these associations is to organize universally, for everyone, without exception, aid in sickness and the unfortunate accidents of life as well as old-age insurance. They assume that a human being cannot live in isolation but needs the help of others, the same as others need his help, and thus the universal obligation of human mutual aid arises. However, to come together in an association only when some need for help appears, at the moment of misfortune itself, would not be very beneficial; that need must be foreseen ahead of time, to enable the organization of mutual, stable, knowledgeable, and well-supplied aid. People must also be accustomed to giving mutual aid from childhood, developing that first human virtue in the period of earliest

youth, because people who are raised in self-love are unable to perform the tasks of human fraternity when the conditions of life require it.

Organized mutual aid is the planned ensuring that everyone has the necessary funds, especially in sickness and old age, at the cost of an insignificant sacrifice on the part of all. From small one-time and monthly contributions, collected for years by thousands of people and gathering interest, enormous capital is produced, on the basis of which medical and hygienic care for the ill, the care of orphaned children, and old-age pensions are organized. Organizations of this type are correctly called "*friendship societies*" in England.

Where there are well-developed school-based mutual-aid associations (for instance, in France with 13,000 of these associations, grouping a million children), the organized mutual aid encompasses the entire life of the individual. A child who is entered into a school mutual aid scheme pays a 10-centimes entry fee, and subsequently every week places a 10 centimes payment in the teacher's hands. That sum is divided in such a way that 5 centimes goes to the common capital of the association, from which aid payments are made in cases of illnesses or accidents, and the other 5 centimes is recorded in the personal account of the payer as *old-age insurance*.

The child receives two booklets, in which all the sums they have contributed are recorded: in one, the sums earmarked for mutual aid, and in the other for personal old-age insurance. All contributions above the weekly payments, savings, and donations are also accepted. However, it is obligatory that every member's booklet must have an entry of 2 francs 60 centimes yearly, that is the entire sum of the weekly contributions. Some of these associations, in addition to the general aid fund, create other special funds for the cost of instruction in crafts for impoverished students or for the cost of higher education. In the case of illness, the child receives 50 centimes daily in the first month, and in the second and third from 15 to 25 centimes, which is paid to him from the common aid fund. The money of this fund, as with the insurance fund, is usually placed in banks or state savings and loan institutions, at compound interest, and is usually supplemented by subsidies on the part of the state.

After school-based mutual aid, the next stage involves a people's mutual-aid association, which is available to all without exception and collects small contributions to the common fund in the same manner. In addition to aid in illness, this association organizes *help in the event of unemployment, accident insurance, and the equipping of children*. The steady contribution of sums to an old-age insurance fund, from the age of childhood, continues, however, the contributions and entries are gradually raised as the member ages. The pension received in old age amounts at the 50th year of life to 110 francs, at 60 to 260 francs, and at 65 to 438 francs, if the member has paid into the fund beginning

from early childhood, from the third year of life; it decreases progressively in accord with later entries. The extent of this aid can be determined by the following figures concerning mutual-aid associations in France: in 1898, they had 1,600,000 members, of which 700,000 were industrial workers, 500,000 office workers, and 200,000 members of the intelligentsia and upper classes. In 1895, they paid out 12 million francs in assistance to the infirm, including 3 million to pay doctors, 3 million for pharmaceuticals, and 6 million for the daily maintenance of the infirm. For old-age insurance, in 1860, their members had 4 million in capital; in 1880, 38 million; and in 1895, over 115 million. In this manner, the popular classes themselves solved the question of life insurance, without waiting for some future state authority to organize that help for them. The French government feels duty-bound to increase the mutual aid funds by a certain sum annually, and this sum is a fairly significant part of the associations' yearly income. However, the entire organization, initiative, and success of these funds is exclusively in the hands of the people themselves and is their own work.

In recent times, mutual-aid associations have entered on the path of a new kind of activity; namely, they are striving to create a general union between themselves and to take *public health* into their own hands, that is the fight against tuberculosis, and against drunkenness, and care for the health of children. For this purpose, they are establishing their own health centers, hospitals, protection- and summer camps. All that to this time has been provided only by the charity of philanthropists or of the state is beginning to come from the people's associations, and instead of waiting for alms the members of these associations have an ensured source of help in every misfortune, medical care in illness, and a place in their own nursing home. In this way, not only are health and general well-being expanded but also civil independence.

7 *Building Associations*

Their aim is to build cheap, attractive, and healthy homes for the working people and, more importantly, homes that are not the property of capitalists who draw profit from them, but the property of associations or of the inhabitants themselves. These associations are extremely widespread in England and in the United States of America, where to date they have managed to build 315,000 homes. They belong not only to those people who intend to make use of the homes themselves, but to all kinds of people; the funds of these associations function as savings banks, accepting all kinds of contributions, and pay on them higher rates of interest than a normal savings bank, and with the capital collected thus they build homes. The principle of mutuality and cooperativism is here applied in various ways. It can happen that the association builds

homes itself; it keeps them as its property and only rents them to its members. In this case, a rent is set—as low as possible—in order solely to cover the cost of building and the interest on loans, or the rent is maintained at the steady rate, while the income from the building is divided among the residents in relation to the price they paid for the apartment.

Other associations build homes themselves, but give them to the residents, the association's members, as their own property, by means of a simplified system of payment in annual installments. Or they do not engage in building themselves, but only provide their members with the capital necessary for the building of a home. In this case, they are actually savings and loan associations that give credit especially for the building of homes: a large number of their members have no intention of becoming the owners of these homes, but only place their savings in the association's bank. In this way, the savings of some allow others to build themselves homes, either jointly for several families or individually for one family, on easy conditions accessible to working people.

8 *Consumer Associations*⁴

4 This chapter is identical with the content of „Cooperative as a Matter of Liberating the Working People”, in: this volume.

The Principle of the Cooperative Commonwealth

1 The Principle of the Cooperative Commonwealth

People's associations—organizations that are non-territorial but free and voluntary assemblage (*zespolenie*) based on the common interests of people who have equal rights, and who are managers and co-owners of the common.

2 The Nature (Form) of the Cooperative Commonwealth

A network of partial associations, each of which has a different field of interest. This is due to the principle of voluntary uniting, by virtue of a common interest; all people do not have the same needs, and thus they cannot satisfy all their needs as part of one association. This is in contrast to the state, which encompasses the entirety of human needs and standardizes them for everyone.

3 Governance in a Cooperative Commonwealth

Here, governance by the majority—given the voluntary and partial nature of associations—can never entail the violation of minority and individual rights, as in the state. The existence of associations requires constant adaptation to the needs of all. In the case of a conflict it is easy to settle the dispute through the emergence of a new autonomous group [establishing a new association]. Territoriality is not an obstacle here. Cooperative governance essentially involves carrying out the will of all, the common will, not an implicit but a real one, embodied in some particular interest, in keeping with the principle of cooperativism as unification for the fulfilment of a uniform need.

4 The Law of the Cooperative Commonwealth

Law *without compulsion*, easily alterable and relative. The commonwealth does not recognize law imposed against anyone's notions. The law exists here only for those who freely recognize it. It allows for different trends, aims, and practices to exist side by side. There is nothing absolute or sanctified about it; *it serves people*. Life rules over it, not it over life.

5 **The Concept of Human and Civil Rights in a Cooperative Commonwealth**

Leaving every minority and individual free to arrange their lives according to their needs. Minority rights that cannot be resolved in the state.

6 **The Notion of Life in a Cooperative Commonwealth**

Life as such, which is created by man himself, freely, through the power of human fraternity, and which should not be subject to any principles considered to be absolute.

7 **The Antagonism of the State and the Cooperative Commonwealth**

Mutual displacement from different areas of life. The shrinking of the state through the growth of associations and vice versa. The borders of the Commonwealth cannot be predicted. The responsibilities of the state [scope of action] should be as small as possible: public security and protecting the country against aggression from the the outside. The antagonism between the state and associations is, at the same time, an antagonism between the people and bureaucracy, as well as between democratic culture and slavery. The moral antagonism of the state versus the cooperative commonwealth: the passive as against the creative type, the doctrinal against the tolerant type, the routine against the free variability.

8 **Socialism and the Cooperative Commonwealth**

The same point of departure: defense of the interests of the people and pressure for a system of social justice. The degeneration of socialism within the state. Trends in today's socialist ideology and politics. The revival of ideals through their direct realization in a cooperative commonwealth.

9 **The Cooperative Commonwealth and Politics**

Political aims leading to a cooperative commonwealth: 1) Political self-government, 2) Decentralization—local government of districts and towns,

3) Power derived from universal, proportional elections, 4) Direct legislation, 5) Civil liberties, 6) Freedom of association, 7) Narrowing [reducing the scope of] the state's functions. In order to attain and maintain political democracy it is necessary to take action to create deep bases of democracy: the advancing of the cooperative commonwealth, that is, of new life and the new human being.

PART V

Psychology



The Subconscious Origin of Ethics

Edward Abramowski's Psychological Theory

Lena Magnone

Abramowski first became involved in psychology during his stay in Geneva in 1893–1897.¹ His ideas on the subject, which he treated as an auxiliary science of philosophy, significantly complement his findings in sociology, political philosophy, and ethics, and also provide the epistemological foundation for his philosophy of humanity.² He wrote his initial work on psychology, *A Theory of Mental Entities: A Contribution to a Critique of Contemporary Psychology*, in 1895 and published it four years later. After his return to Poland, he produced a series of articles developing the theses he had presented in *A Theory ...* for the recently established, first Polish philosophical journal, *Przegląd Filozoficzny*: “The Bilateral Nature of Perceptions”³ (1898), “What Is Art?” (1898),⁴ “Body and Soul” (1900),⁵ and “A Few Words on Method When Considering the Question of «Mental Entities»” (1900).⁶ After 1908, his interest focused on issues related

- 1 For the earliest attempts to present Abramowski as a psychologist: M. Dąbrowska, “Edward Abramowski jako psycholog,” *Wiadomości Literackie* 1924, no. 18, p. 1; A. Cygielstreich, “Twórczość psychologiczna Edwarda Abramowskiego,” *Przegląd Filozoficzny* 1919, no. 1/2, pp. 1–12. Cf. also J. Szmyd, “Edwarda Abramowskiego system psychologiczny i teoria przeżycia religijnego,” *Rocznik Naukowo-Dydaktyczny wSP w Krakowie. Prace Filozoficzne* 11 1975, no. 57, pp. 7–33; J. Budkiewicz, “Poglądy psychologiczne Edwarda Abramowskiego,” *Psychologia Wychowawcza* 1964, no. 3, pp. 237–253; B. Dobroczyński, “Podświadomość w poglądach psychologicznych Edwarda Abramowskiego,” *Przegląd Psychologiczny* 1985, no. 28; W. Wehrstedt, “Edward Abramowski und seine Konzeption des Unbewußten,” *Psychologie und Gesellschaftskritik* 1986, no. 3/4, pp. 111–128; “Edward Abramowski: od badań nad pamięcią do metafizyki doświadczalnej,” in T. Rzepa, B. Dobroczyński, *Historia polskiej myśli psychologicznej*, Warszawa 2009, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, pp. 107–117.
- 2 A. Dziedzic’s book *Antropologia filozoficzna Edwarda Abramowskiego* (Wrocław 2010, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego) provides a detailed analysis of Abramowski’s writings in order to extract his anthropology.
- 3 E. Abramowski, “Dwulicowy charakter postrzeżeń,” *Przegląd Filozoficzny* 1898, no. 2, pp. 45–63; no. 3, pp. 17–55.
- 4 E. Abramowski, “Co to jest sztuka? Z powodu rozprawy L. Tolstoja «Czto takojze iskusstwo?»,” *Przegląd Filozoficzny* 1898, no. 3, pp. 85–114.
- 5 E. Abramowski, “Dusza i ciało. Prawo współrzędności psychofizjologicznej, rozpatrywane ze stanowiska teorii poznania i biologii,” *Przegląd Filozoficzny*, 1901, nos. 2–3; 1902, nos. 1–4.
- 6 E. Abramowski, “Kilka słów o metodzie przy rozpatrywaniu kwestii «jednostek psychicznych»,” *Przegląd Filozoficzny* 1900, no. 1, pp. 19–34.

to memory. At the beginning, he conducted his experimental research in foreign laboratories and then, from 1910, in a laboratory he founded in Warsaw, under the patronage of the Polish Psychological Society (later renamed the Psychological Institute). His findings were presented in the three volumes of *Experimental Research on Memory* (1910–1912)⁷ and in a series of texts published in *Sfinks*⁸ and *Przegląd Filozoficzny*,⁹ as well as in the French-language press (a total of nine works in *Revue psychologique*,¹⁰ *Journal de psychologie normale et pathologique*,¹¹ and *Archive de psychologie*¹²; all the texts have

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- 7 In France *Badania doświadczalne nad pamięcią* was published in 1914 with the title *Le subconscient normal*. Among others, J.-P. Sartre refers to the work in *L'Imaginaire: Psychologie phénoménologique de l'imagination*. It also influenced the film ideas of J. Epstein (cf. Z. Czeczot-Gawrak, *Jan Epstein. Studium natury w sztuce filmowej*, Warszawa 1962, Wydawnictwa Artystyczne i Filmowe).
- 8 "Świadomość zapomnianego," *Sfinks* 1908, no. 1, pp. 113–134; "Symbolizm wspomnień," *Sfinks* 1908, no. 2, pp. 55–65, pp. 303–313; "Paradoksy pamięci wzruszeniowej," *Sfinks* 1908, no. 3, pp. 358–369; "Psychiczna postać zapomnianego," *Sfinks* 1909, no. 3, pp. 222–244; "Siedlisko zapomnianego," *Sfinks* 1910, no. 3, pp. 241–261.
- 9 "Zagadnienie pamięci w psychologii doświadczalnej," *Przegląd Filozoficzny* 1909, no. 37–53, pp. 163–175; "Czucia rodzajowe jako pierwiastek estetyki i mistycyzmu," *Przegląd Filozoficzny* 1911, no. 2, pp. 156–185; "Postrzeżenie i spostrzeżenie," *Przegląd Filozoficzny* 1911, no. 2, pp. 290–291; "Przedmiotowe mierzenie siły woli," *Przegląd Filozoficzny* 1911, no. 3, pp. 297–316; "Telepatia doświadczalna jako zjawisko kryptomnezji," *Przegląd Filozoficzny* 1911, no. 4, pp. 477–517; "Jeszcze o przedmiotowym mierzeniu woli (polemika z p. Radeckim)," *Przegląd Filozoficzny* 1912, no. 1, pp. 135–142, no. 2, pp. 268–270; "Stosunek wzruszeniowości i pamięci," *Przegląd Filozoficzny* 1912, no. 2, pp. 227–240; "Modlitwa jako zjawisko kryptomnezji," *Przegląd Filozoficzny* 1912, no. 3, pp. 348–370; "Kwestionariusz do zbierania danych dotyczących psychologii modlitwy," *Przegląd Filozoficzny* 1912, no. 3, pp. 444–448; "Rzeczy pozaumysłowe," *Przegląd Filozoficzny* 1912, no. 4, pp. 449–461.
- 10 "Les illusions de la mémoire," *Revue psychologique* 1909 no. 1, pp. 3–36, no. 2, pp. 192–221, "Dissociation et transformation du subconscient normal," *Revue psychologique* 1910 no. 1, pp. 63–80, no. 2, pp. 187–209, "Sur la définition descriptive de la perception et du concept," *Revue psychologique* 1909, no. 4, pp. 458–465, "Les sentiments génériques en tant qu'éléments de l'esthétique et du mysticisme," *Revue Psychologique* 1911, no. 1, pp. 70–99.
- 11 "Les sentiments génériques et la résistance de l'oublié," *Journal de psychologie normale et pathologique* 1910, pp. 301–331; "La résistance de l'oublié dans la mémoire tactile et musculaire," *Journal de la Psychologie* 1911, pp. 221–245; "Nouvelle théorie de la mémoire fondée sur expérience," *Journal de la psychologie* 1913, pp. 375–397; "Télépathie expérimentale en tant que phénomène cryptomnésique," *Journal de la psychologie* 1912, pp. 422–434; 517–541, "Études expérimentales sur la volonté," *Journal de psychologie normale et pathologique* 1915, pp. 14–43; "Recherches expérimentales sur la volonté," *Journal de psychologie* 1913, pp. 491–508.
- 12 "De la loi de corrélation psycho-physiologique au point de vue de la théorie de la connaissance," *Archives de psychologie* 1902, vol. 1, pp. 278–306; "L'image et la reconnaissance," *Archives de psychologie* 1910, vol. 9, pp. 1–38; "L'influence des impressions inconscientes sur le point radial et la respiration," *Archive de la psychologie* 1910; "Les recherches sur la réaction psycho-galvanométrique," *Archive de psychologie* 1910, no. 1.

Polish equivalents). At the time, he also attempted to start the first journal of psychology in Poland. The three issues of *Papers on Experimental Psychology*, published in 1913–1915,¹³ were mostly filled by Abramowski himself and his associates Adam Cygielstrejch and Józefa Kodisowa. In 1914, a synthesis of twenty years of Abramowski's work was published as *Sources of the Subconscious and its Manifestations: The Psychology of Perception and Nameless States*, parts of which are presented in this collection. It was here that Abramowski's theory received its final form. Almost all his previous texts on the subject were preliminary work and sometimes were simply incorporated into the book: for instance, "The Bilateral Nature of Perceptions," "Prayer as a Phenomenon of Cryptomnesia," or "Things beyond the Thought" from *Przegląd Filozoficzny* of 1912.¹⁴ The book also foretold the themes that Abramowski would develop in a series of lectures on experimental metaphysics which he gave at the University of Warsaw toward the end of his life.¹⁵ Below, I will attempt to present the evolution of his psychological theory and to highlight the most important turning points.

The chronological approach is justified inasmuch as Abramowski never abandoned the basic findings contained in *A Theory of Mental Entities* but continued to develop and expand on his conceptualization.

In his first work, Abramowski considered it essential to deal with psychological atomism, that is, the assumption commonly accepted by psychologists in the era of positivism (including by the father of experimental psychology, Wilhelm Wundt himself) that all complex psychological acts consist of irreducible single impressions, just as in the material world particles are composed of atoms. This theory, which refers to the achievements of physics and enables the laboratory study of isolated stimuli, provided the emerging science with the much-desired stamp of being scientific. In Abramowski's opinion, rather

13 In the first volume, Abramowski himself published "Wpływ woli na reakcje galwanometryczne," "Oddech jako czynnik życia duchowego," and "Wpływ woli w tworzeniu obrazów przedśennych," in the second volume, "Metody badania podświadomości," and in third volume "Wpływ wzruszeń i uczuć na opór zapomnianego," and "Metoda skojarzeń w badaniu typów indywidualnych."

14 Many later texts were in reality the reprinted parts of *Sources of the Subconscious*, published after the death of the author under new titles, cf., for example, "Poszukiwanie Boga," *Mysł Wolna* 1922, no. 3, pp. 1–2, "Psychologia modlitwy," *Mysł Wolna* 1923, no. 4, pp. 1–6, no. 5, pp. 1–4.

15 Abramowski's lecture notes have disappeared; all that has been preserved is a manuscript copy prepared for print in 1938 by one of his pupils, which was published in the volume *Metafizyka doświadczalna i inne pisma*, Warszawa 1980, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, pp. 515–624.

than modeling itself on the exact sciences, psychology should develop its own methodology, based on internal experience.

Abramowski assumed that only those phenomena that are correlated with our consciousness are the subject of experience: what exists is what can be the subject of thought. If they exist at all, things in themselves (noumena), as well as external reality independent of our consciousness, are inaccessible to us. Due to the way they appear in our experience, two types of phenomena can be distinguished: physical phenomena, which are perceived indirectly, in the spatio-temporal form, as existing outside of us, and psychological phenomena, which are perceived solely in the temporal form, because they are perceived directly, introspectively. Abramowski agreed with the positivists about the non-existence of unconscious psychological phenomena, that is, those that would not be available for introspection (what occurs in the brain but remains imperceptible has a purely physiological nature and is not a psychological phenomenon, which must appear to and be experienced by someone). Therefore, he considered the sole scientific psychology to be the psychology of consciousness, and the source of knowledge about psychological facts was internal experience. In his opinion, psychological atomism contradicts internal experience because, by means of speculation, it decomposes various sensory impressions perceived by the psyche into individual phenomena, which are never given to us as such by introspection and therefore remain elusive for consciousness. In choosing the path of abstract reasoning, atomism leads to the assumption that "our consciousness is only an appearance of true consciousness, an illusion of psychic reality. What is felt is not what is felt and what is in consciousness is not what is in consciousness!"¹⁶ Atomism thus presupposes not only the existence of some hidden, experientially inaccessible reality (the thing in itself) but also tacitly accepts the occurrence of unconscious mental states.

Abramowski had no doubts that if introspection contradicted atomism, the atomistic theory of cognition should be rejected. In his opinion, the smallest unit of mental life should be considered to be the whole moment of consciousness, corresponding to the diversity of the operating environment: a certain complex whole, an "imaginary fog with a stronger or weaker emotional hue,"¹⁷ a "mindless, nameless feeling"¹⁸ which he called intuition.¹⁹

16 E. Abramowski, "Teoria jednostek psychicznych," in: idem, *Metafizyka doświadczalna i inne pisma*, Warszawa 1980, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, p. 28.

17 Ibidem, p. 88.

18 Ibidem, p. 89.

19 Abramowski understood intuition both as an act and as what is given by the act; thus perceptive activity of a passive nature, occurring without the participation of the intellect, and the content itself of non-intellectual perception. It is worth noting that in spite

It is a non-intellectual, purely emotional dimension of mental life, a state of chaos in which separate things and properties do not yet exist. Only the action of attention (which Abramowski called apperception) makes it possible to create concepts and judgments. Our cognition always concerns the material processed—or even constructed—by the action of apperception. We can not grasp the primary data of internal experience; it is apperception that separates the “moment of perception” from the entire intuitive moment and gives it an associative direction.²⁰ We always look at the intuitive “moment of feeling” retrospectively, “from the final point of completed thought.”²¹ It reveals itself to us only as “the memory of the feeling that immediately precedes every act of perception,”²² about which we know nothing and can say nothing.

As Anna Dziedzic has pointed out, Abramowski took the term “apperception” from Wilhelm Wundt’s theory and then, in a radical gesture of turning the positivist’s views against him, saturated it with the transcendental perspective offered by Kantianism.²³ For Abramowski, apperception (understood not as a mental state, but as a deliberate “active awareness”)²⁴ proves the active role of the subject in the cognition process. These findings, in turn, were of key importance for Abramowski’s understanding of the human individual as an active participant in the historical process, and they constitute the basis for his conception of a moral revolution. In Abramowski’s work, the subject constructing phenomena is a human being endowed with a will, a social being capable of changing himself and the world around him.

of the many similarities between Abramowski’s and Bergson’s ideas—Bergson, like Abramowski, rejected psychological atomism for the sake of internal experience, and he connected psychology with cognitive theory and developed a theory of intuition which contrasted with intellectual cognition—Bergson’s name practically does not appear in Abramowski’s writings. Abramowski (in “The Bilateral Nature of Perceptions” of 1898, which was later included in *Sources of the Subconscious*) cites only one early article by Bergson (“Mémoire et reconnaissance” of 1896). In the opinion of Borzym, Abramowski should nevertheless be considered the first philosopher in Poland to make use of Bergson to construct his own theory (S. Borzym, *Bergson a przemiany światopoglądowe w Polsce*, Wrocław 1984, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, pp. 80–97). In Dziedzic’s opinion, Abramowski owes more to Alfred Fouillée, whom he often mentions by name in his work (A. Dziedzic, *Antropologia filozoficzna Edwarda Abramowskiego*, op. cit., p. 40). Nb: The idea of “experimental metaphysics,” which Abramowski was later to explore, also appears in Fouillée (see: A. Fouillée, *L’avenir de la métaphysique fondé sur l’expérience*, Paris 1889, Alcan).

20 E. Abramowski, “Teoria jednostek psychicznych,” op. cit., pp. 94–96.

21 Ibidem, p. 92.

22 Ibidem, p. 92.

23 A. Dziedzic, *Antropologia filozoficzna Edwarda Abramowskiego*, op. cit., pp. 40–44.

24 E. Abramowski, “Teoria jednostek psychicznych,” op. cit., p. 96.

In the works *Issues of Socialism* and *Individual Elements of Sociology*, which were published in 1899, as was *A Theory of Mental Entities*, it appears that individual consciousness acquires a social dimension thanks to apperception. On the one hand, through apperception, “the environment acts on an individual, transmitting to him the cultural acquisitions of generations.”²⁵ The very functioning of apperception is the result of the influence of the community on the individual: the selection and interpretation of data, the thought process, and the use of language are influenced by a specific cultural environment. On the other hand, if it were not for the apperceptive dimension of consciousness, society could not exist at all. Only what has passed through the apperceptive apparatus can be communicated and thus made intersubjective. It is thanks to this apparatus that humans can express their needs, goals, and ideals, and thereby also actively influence their environment.

Abramowski considered that his theory of “sociological phenomenism” avoided the extremes of both sociologism and psychologism. The former, as represented by Durkheim or Simmel, treated society as a *sui generis* reality and studied the social in isolation from specific people; the latter, in accord with Tarde, did not take into account the external existence of institutions independent of individuals. According to Abramowski, social phenomena, like all other phenomena, are premised by the empirical cognizing subject that constitutes them. “Where there is a social fact,” he wrote, “there is also its individual equivalent in the individual’s soul.”²⁶ What we call conscience, according to Abramowski, is a set of equivalents of social facts. The individual not only internalizes the obligatory morality objectified in institutions but also has the power to change it, because a change in the world occurs solely due to the externalization of changes that have previously occurred in individual morality.

Dividing the psyche into apperception and intuition also allowed Abramowski to formulate a thesis about the essentially social nature of human beings. Just as the intuitive is not accessible until it is perceived, that is, until it is apperceptively processed, and therefore never exists for us as such, we do not exist for ourselves as pre-mental beings. Since apperception has a social dimension, what we feel internally as our own self is common to all people. Abramowski illustrates this question with the metaphor of water poured into branched vessels of various-shapes. It remains a homogeneous mass, although it takes the form of the containers. If this water “were endowed with

25 Z. R. Walczewski [E. Abramowski], *Zagadnienia socjalizmu*, Lwów 1899, B. Połoniecki. p. 86.

26 E. Abramowski, “Individual Elements in Sociology,” in: this volume, p. 88.

consciousness [...], a different individuality would be sensed in each vessel, and looking through its walls at its branches, at the water in other vessels, it would have the illusion of being something completely separate.”²⁷ Similarly, the human sense of individuality is for Abramowski an illusion:

what constitutes our “I,” what we feel as ourselves, is a social substance, and our whole life of thought and our mental states are subject to apperception—they are social, and individuality is opposed to them only as what constitutes our intuitive material for the operation of apperception, data of an emotional nature serving for the development of thought, which do not have the value of a real phenomenon for us, as long as they are not subject to apperceptive determination in the object of thought.²⁸

During this period, Abramowski treated intuition only as a passive material of apperception, but in the following years he would consider it more and more important. Consistently excluding the possibility of the existence of unconscious states, Abramowski gradually drew nearer to formulating a theory of consciousness that would take into account the division into intellectual (apperceptive) consciousness and non-intellectual consciousness, based on intuition. The latter he would ultimately define as the subconscious.

Due to the fact that Abramowski’s reflections on the structure of the human psyche coincided with a period of intense interest in psychoanalysis in Polish medical and philosophical circles, from the very beginning attempts were made to treat his concepts as inspired by or based on Freudianism.²⁹ Contemporary researchers, on the other hand, sometimes situate Abramowski as a precursor of psychoanalysis, almost as a “Polish Freud,” an author who was not only completely independent of the Freudian theory of the unconscious but who also produced “the most important Polish concept of the subconscious before Freud.”³⁰

²⁷ Z. R. Walczewski [E. Abramowski], *Zagadnienia socjalizmu*, op. cit., p. 84–85.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 97–98.

²⁹ For example, Ludwika Karpińska, in reviewing his “Dissociation et transformation du subconscient normal” wrote that “personally, I receive the author’s work with the greater pleasure in that it is premised on Freud’s ideas” (*Przegląd Filozoficzny* 1911, no. 1, p. 117). Such treatment was not limited to Polish writings: for instance, Abramowski’s work is included in a psychoanalytical bibliography prepared by John Rickman (see: *Index Psychoanalyticus 1893–1926*, London 1928, Hogarth Press, p. 33). In 1956, Alexander Grinstein placed Abramowski’s work in *The Index of Psychoanalytic Writings* (New York 1956, International Universities Press, vol. 1, p. 16).

³⁰ See: B. Dobroczyński, *Idea nieświadomości w polskiej myśli psychologicznej przed Freudem*, Kraków 2005, Universitas, pp. 241–250.

The fact is that Abramowski missed the Polish Freudians in the most literal sense. In 1909, he did not travel from Geneva to the Congress of Polish Neurologists, Psychiatrists, and Psychologists in Warsaw, where he was supposed to read a paper entitled “Subconscious States as a Problem of Experimental Psychology.” At the congress, psychoanalytic theory was presented to the attendees by Ludwik Jekels, a physician, popularizer, and translator³¹ who was also the first Polish “emissary of Freud” and the most important actor in the pre-war cultural transfer of psychoanalysis to the Polish intelligentsia. But Jekels and Abramowski never met.

Less than ten years later, toward the end of Abramowski’s life, Eugenia Sokolnicka, a Varsovian who had been active in the Polish Socialist Party, turned up in his circles. She had practiced in the Burghölzli clinic in 1910–1913 under the supervision of Carl Gustav Jung and then, after analysis by Sigmund Freud, she had joined the Vienna Psychoanalytical Society. She spent the First World War in Warsaw, where she made plans to establish a Polish psychoanalytical society. From a note published in the *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse* it appears that the “*Gesellschaft für psychopathologische Forschungen*” was to be affiliated with the Psychological Institute headed by Edward Abramowski. In 1919, the Society was said to have twelve members already.³² The project failed in unclear circumstances. As Poland had regained its independence, there was a sudden need to organize an autonomous administration and rebuild Polish education; probably even those members who were most involved in establishing the Society felt they should postpone it to a more favorable moment. Abramowski’s death on June 21, 1918 presumably also had an effect. An article by Sokolnicka entitled “Research on Individuality Using the Method of Double Associative Reactions (Jung), Combined with the Chosen-Topic Method,” was to have been published in one of the next volumes of *Papers on Experimental Psychology*.³³ After Abramowski’s death, however, the series was not continued. Sokolnicka left for France shortly after the end of the war, where she played an important role as a co-founder of the Paris Psychoanalytical Society and an analyst of almost the entire first generation

31 See: L. Magnone, *Freud’s emissaries. The transfer of psychoanalysis through the Polish intelligentsia to Europe 1900–1939*, vol. 1, Genève-Lausanne 2023, sdvig press, pp. 119–156.

32 *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse* 1919, no. 5, p. 228. It has not been possible to confirm this information in any way. The Polish press did not announce the emergence of such a society, nor is there any mention of it in texts concerning the life and activities of Abramowski.

33 See: E. Abramowski, *Pisma. Pierwsze zbiorowe wydanie dzieł treści filozoficznej i społecznej*, vol. 1, Warszawa 1924, Związek Polskich Stowarzyszeń Spożywczych, p. xcV.

of French psychoanalysts. She was also a popularizer of Freudianism in literary circles,³⁴ although efforts to establish a Polish branch of the International Psychoanalytical Association were unsuccessful.

In his writings, Abramowski mentions Freud on a few occasions: in *Experimental Research on Memory* Freud's earliest works are cited, including *Studies on Hysteria*; in *Sources of the Subconscious* there are two marginal remarks on "trapped emotion." Nevertheless, for Abramowski, Freud was seemingly just one of many researchers studying the "pathological subconscious" which creates conversion disorders.³⁵ Abramowski himself repeatedly emphasized that his research was focused on the normal subconscious, which he thought had not yet been properly investigated. In his opinion, this was the main difference between his research and the achievements of psychoanalysis.³⁶

More importantly, his theory is very different from Freud's and is in no way compatible with it.

Above all, Abramowski, unlike Freud, did not deal with the unconscious but with subconscious states. The difference is not just semantic. The subconscious, as the name suggests, is part of the consciousness, and subconscious processes differ from conscious ones only quantitatively. Psychoanalysis assumes a fundamental qualitative difference between the unconscious and the conscious. Admittedly, Freud's first topic—dividing the human psyche into two separate reservoirs of content (consciousness and unconsciousness) together with a transmission belt allowing them to communicate (called the pre-consciousness)—was in fact a theory of the subconscious, continuing the reflections of such German philosophers as Leibniz, Herbart, Beneke, or Fechner. At this stage in the development of his theory, Freud defined the

34 See: L. Magnone, *Freud's emissaries*, vol. 2, op. cit., pp. 7–64.

35 Although Abramowski sometimes referred to psychoanalysis, his main source of information on the subject of what he called the pathological subconscious was Pierre Janet, a French psychologist considered in his own country—which was opposed to psychoanalysis—to be Freud's most influential competitor (see: E. Roudinesco, *Histoire de la psychanalyse en France*, vol. 1, Paris 2003, Fayard, pp. 181–269).

36 As early as 1910, he wrote that the method he had created "allows for the experimental study of subconscious symbolism, which is not remembered, is unconscious, remains forgotten, and at the same time sends to the consciousness certain representational signs under which it is concealed. This symbolism, to which Freud and Jung give such great importance in the psychoanalysis of the mentally ill, can be studied in the laboratory on a large scale in normal people." (E. Abramowski, "Stany podświadome jako zagadnienie psychologii doświadczalnej" in *Prace I-go Zjazdu neurologów, psychiatrów i psychologów polskich odbytego w Warszawie 11–12–13 Października 1909 r.*, Warszawa 1910, E. Wende i Sp., pp. 885–886).

unconscious as consisting only of what was repressed, that is, of what was already in consciousness and what can return to it. This premise entailed *inter alia* a model of interpretation in which each element of the unconscious corresponds to the repressed conscious element. Such a premise also produced the optimism of Freud and his followers in regard to therapy. They were convinced that extracting a repressed experience—making the patient aware of painful memories that had been pushed into the unconscious—would invariably result in the patient's recovery.

When Freud introduced his so-called second topic, he departed from the antithesis of consciousness and the (no longer ontologized) unconscious and introduced a more complicated division of the psyche into the "id," the "ego," and the "superego." He gave consciousness the status of a mere defense mechanism, a battlefield fought by two unconscious instances, and recognized the unconscious as a hotbed of urges, which are essentially alien and unknown to the subject. Only then did he—like Wolff, Schelling, Carus, Fortlage, Schopenhauer, and Hartmann before him—recognize a fundamental qualitative difference between the two systems.³⁷ At the time, he also inevitably departed from his previous belief in the emancipatory dimension of psychoanalysis.

As mentioned above, Abramowski, like Wilhelm Wundt and many other nineteenth-century authors, including Théodule Ribot, Theodor Ziehen, Hugo Münsterberg, and Franz Brentano, but unlike Freud, believed that there are no unconscious mental phenomena. Hence, Abramowski did not outline a theory of the unconscious but explored the subconscious—a consciousness of a different kind, which was sensory and non-intellectual but still available to the subject through introspection, and therefore also experimentally investigable.³⁸

In *Sources of the Subconscious*, Abramowski elaborated and gave a final form to the ideas on the psychology of cognition that he advanced in *A Theory of Mental Entities*, especially his idea of the distinction between intuition and apperception. He also made almost full use of his article "The Bilateral Nature of Perceptions," which had been published at the same time (1898) as a supplement to the *Theory*. He begins with the conviction that a strictly descriptive definition of perception, based on the methods of the natural sciences, must

37 Cf. Henri F. Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry*, New York 1970, Basic Books.

38 He writes at length on the subject in "Metody badania podświadomości," in: idem, *Prace z psychologii doświadczalnej*, vol. 2, Warszawa 1914, Gebethner i Wolff, pp. 3–237.

be developed. The point is not to analyze the concept we have constructed but “the thing itself, independent of our mind.”³⁹

From *A Theory of Mental Entities* on, Abramowski argued that initially all given internal experience is only a certain undefined feeling. Only the act of attention confronts the impressions derived from external impressions with representations (memory images). This, in turn, allows for an initial orientation in the environment and then for the attributes of objects to be isolated and concepts and judgments to be created. *Sources of the Subconscious* opens with a vivid description of a universal experience which perfectly illustrates this phenomenon: Abramowski has us recall our feelings on entering a previously unknown room in which a social gathering is occurring. The first moments, when the mind is overwhelmed with various impressions, is a typical pre-thought state, conceptless and nameless. The initial confusion and helplessness in the face of the pressure of spontaneously imposing data, however, quickly give way to the work of thoughts: by focusing our attention, we gradually begin to orient ourselves in the environment, to recognize faces, and catch the meaning of conversations. The external reality is slowly reflected in our consciousness.

However, the scope of attention conditioning perception is much narrower than the wealth of impressions currently filling the field of consciousness, that is, creating a psychological moment. The very act of apperception thus diminishes reality and distances us from it. Moreover, as Abramowski notices, impressions are transformed into an object of thought by means of representations that come from earlier experiences. What is perceived, before the act of perception, is merely “a certain imperceptible psychic visitor in the field of conscious feeling, whose presence we only guess.”⁴⁰ If we know that this unknown exists at all, it is because, after intellectually transforming the primordial nebula of impressions into perceptions, the unknown survives in the psyche in the form of a certain remainder from experience: “generic feelings,” emotional equivalents which forever color memory of a given moment.

The product of Abramowski’s reflections on the psychology of perceptions and their dual, intuitive, and apperceptive nature was his theory of latent memory, so-called cryptomnesia, which stores not perception (intellectualized memory images) but the intuitive side of perceptions, their emotional equivalents. For Abramowski, cryptomnesia is synonymous with the subconscious and consists of both unnoticed impressions, which escaped the

39 E. Abramowski, “The Sources of Subconsciousness and Its Manifestations,” in: this volume, p. 498.

40 E. Abramowski, *Źródła podświadomości i jej przejawy*, Warszawa 1914, Drukarnia Polska, p. 52.

action of attention and never turned into perceptions, and memories—the nameless-emotional, non-intellectual form that a forgotten perception takes. Cryptomnesia is a kind of “mental past,” available for introspection in the internal perception of the body, in a “feeling of oneself,” or cenesthesia.

According to Abramowski, who throughout his career consistently held to psychophysical parallelism as formulated by Wundt, and thus excluded interactionism, each mental moment leaves a permanent mark in the organism. In other words, certain mental phenomena correspond to certain physical phenomena not because some cause the other but because they are parallel to each other. Abramowski called this process ideoplasty.

Each perception, in falling into oblivion, not only leaves a trace of a physiological nature but is also preserved mentally as an emotional equivalent of perception. The process of forgetting consists in the fact that the intellectual side of the perception is removed; only the nameless-emotional nature survives and passes into latent memory. Everything that is forgotten still exists for us in the cenesthetic self, as “*the present past*, surviving further in its subconscious, emotional reduction, which reveals itself as a creative factor and rules the further steps of life.”⁴¹

In *Sources of the Subconscious*, Abramowski cites the research results he had published earlier, in the second volume of *Experimental Research on Memory*, which was devoted to the subconscious. Thanks to these studies he could confirm as an experimental fact the psychological survival of the forgotten in emotional equivalents. In conducting experiments on the mechanism of recalling the forgotten, he proved that memory gaps are not empty spaces but contain a mental reduction of lost images: the fact that before the sought image appears, there is already an intuition of this image behind the feeling of having something “on the tip of the tongue”; the resisting of erroneous suggestions when we do not know what the forgotten thing was, but we know what it was not; or, finally, the kind of memory responsible for illusions—the feeling of recognizing something familiar in a situation because the equivalent of perception, stored in the subconscious, finds not the proper expression but an emotionally similar one.

A significant part of *Sources of the Subconscious* is devoted to the phenomenon that Abramowski called agnosia, which is each moment of suspended attention, the reduction of mental activity causing the sensory material to be captured in a “nameless and emotional” form. In agnostic states, which are caused by strong emotions, absent-mindedness, weariness of attention, or

41 Ibidem, p. 147.

hypnosis, and are also possible under the influence of chemical agents, as well as of aesthetic and religious experiences, the apperceptive veil is lifted.

As we read in the first chapter of *Sources of the Subconscious*, “thought is located not between the ‘thing in itself’ and ourselves, but between us and the mental thing.”⁴² Since without the activity of the intellect the distinction disappears between the subject and the thing, the phenomenon and the extra-phenomenal being, once the intellect is removed from the path of cognition our inner experience equals the metaphysical reality. “The feeling of psychological namelessness, which occurs with any suspension of thought and attention, is the end and the beginning of all experience, of existence in general.”⁴³ We are then faced with the unknown, the things beyond thought that the philosopher identifies with things in themselves.

On this basis, in lectures given toward the end of his life, Abramowski elaborated on a concept of “experimental metaphysics” whose main outlines were already present in *Sources of the Subconscious*. The future theory is suggested particularly by the last chapter, entitled “Things Beyond Thought,” whose closing sentence stated that “Consequently, not only metaphysics, but even experimental metaphysics, to which the psychology of nameless states opens the door, is possible and legitimate.”⁴⁴

Thus, according to Abramowski, intuitive cognition, which is possible in the states of suspended intellect, when the phenomena constructed by apperception do not stand in our way, allows us to come into contact with noumena. A noumenon, in his definition, is a pre-thought object, not known to perception,⁴⁵ a reality received through internal experience, which reaches consciousness but stops at the threshold of the intellect. A characteristic feature of intuitive cognition is the sense of the extraordinary value of the truths learned and the disappointment experienced in trying to convey these “intuitive certainties” in words, due to the resistance of experience to conceptual terms. For Abramowski, the privileged ways of contacting extra-phenomenal reality are aesthetic and religious states: special cases of agnosia, to which he devoted separate chapters.

The psychology of aesthetic experience taught in *Sources of the Subconscious* had its roots in an article that Abramowski wrote in 1898 critiquing Tolstoy’s

42 E. Abramowski, “The Sources of Subconsciousness and Its Manifestations,” in: this volume, pp. 496–497.

43 E. Abramowski, “Przyczynek do psychologii myślenia logicznego,” in: idem, *Metafizyka doświadczalna*, op. cit., p. 479.

44 E. Abramowski, “The Sources of Subconsciousness and Its Manifestations,” in: this volume, p. 540.

45 E. Abramowski, *Źródła podświadomości i jej przejawy*, op. cit., p. 52.

What Is Art? (that is, in the same period as the “Bilateral Nature of Perceptions”). In this case as well, Abramowski incorporated his earlier work into the book without major changes, only removing all references to Tolstoy’s dissertation and thus depriving the text of its interventionist nature and a specific addressee. In the book edition, the arguments that in the first version were used to contradict Tolstoy’s theses are aimed at “so-called experimental aesthetics,” as well as at common beliefs about the essence and meaning of art.

Abramowski’s main thesis was that aesthetic experience is not a feeling but a special attitude to the world. The condition for beauty is the suspension of the intellect—the contemplative state of the soul—enabling a pre-thought vision. Abramowski was against canons of beauty and its social tests. He considered that what is pre-thought is unconditionally beautiful: “each moment of the suspension of the intellect [...] is also the moment of the birth of beauty.”⁴⁶ Beauty is thoroughly individual:

the most brilliant work of art becomes beauty only when this beauty is the psychological reality of an individual [...] The beauty [...] of a piece of music, painting, or poetry appears or disappears completely, depending on who hears, reads, or looks at it, because outside of the individual sphere of the person – my own perception – it cannot exist anywhere else.⁴⁷

At the same time, it is absolute: it is a direct expression of what is unknowable (the noumenon, the thing in itself).

According to Abramowski, a child perceives the world in a purely aesthetic way when looking at it for the first time, and in this way, we also perceive all new or sudden impressions, as well as dreams and memories. The latter especially are a matter of artistic creativity: what is forgotten and still present in the psyche in the form of emotions, tries to find its representational form in a work of art. In Abramowski’s opinion, this applies to both the personal experiences of a given artist and “inherited, eternal experiences.”⁴⁸ Art is a reminder of the unconscious: “a work of art, in the psychological definition, is [...] always a trapped memory” which “to a greater or lesser extent has found its lost world of representations and ideas, but never completely.”⁴⁹ It is precisely what cannot

46 E. Abramowski, “The Sources of Subconsciousness and Its Manifestations,” in: this volume, p. 502.

47 Ibidem, p. 509.

48 Ibidem, p. 504.

49 Ibidem, pp. 504–505.

be expressed with the intellect, the generic feeling of the forgotten that determines the element of beauty imparted to the recipient. The measure of artistry is the ability to evoke a nameless mood in the recipient.

In light of Abramowski's concept, the utilitarian art postulated by Tolstoy is impossible. Real art does not imitate reality: it does not photograph a certain moment in life and does not make an intellectual description of it. Its aim is to convey the emotional truth of that moment, to express its pre-thought mood. In this sense, the most perfect art for Abramowski is music, which has the greatest wealth of means to evoke emotional images and is simultaneously the least burdened with intellectual ballast. However, the task of every artist is to stop the activity of the intellect, to free a given thing from mental processes.

Like aesthetic experiences, religious experiences of various degrees—from prayer to mystical ecstasy—are moments of agnosia, the suspension of the intellect, a passive contemplation during which the deep layers of cryptomnesia are touched and generic feelings of the forgotten appear on the threshold of consciousness (emotional equivalents of experiences). In mystical experience, this feature of intuitive cognition, which causes subjects to lose themselves in what they encounter, becomes clear: in Abramowski's opinion, intuitive cognition goes beyond the juxtaposition of the subject and the object.

Abramowski considered that the intuitive certainties manifested in religious agnosia confirm the reality of what is transcendental. He devoted considerable space to the feeling of presence characteristic of religious experiences: the emotional abstraction—impossible to express mentally and thus to convey to others—that mystics defined as a connection with God. According to Abramowski, the concordance of mystics across different times and cultures proves that during a religious experience the noumenon, the thing in itself, is reached. In "A Contribution to the Psychology of Logical Thinking," which was published in the following year (1915) and was his last work in the field of psychology, Abramowski distinguishes two paths to metaphysical research: the path of intellectual analysis—the analysis of concepts, which brings us closer to the thinking subject (this is the path of philosophers, especially from the pre-Kantian period)—and the path of experience, the search for primary facts, which brings us closer to the mental noumenon (the method of mystics).⁵⁰ He calls the effects of these two methods "rational metaphysics" and "experimental metaphysics."⁵¹ While the similarities between Plato and Schopenhauer on the one hand and Plotinus, Böhme, and the *Upanishads* on the other caused Abramowski to assume that the two paths can meet in the same understanding

50 E. Abramowski, "Przyczynek do psychologii myślenia logicznego," op. cit., p. 481.

51 Ibidem, p. 497.

of metaphysical reality, he clearly favored the intuitive method of the mystics. Even if the philosophers' speculative method leads to similar conclusions, it does so solely because "abstractions, despite their distance from primary experience, nevertheless contain, like perceptions, their hidden, living connection with experience—that *remainder* of experience that is not subject to mental reduction."⁵²

In discussing religious experience, Abramowski supplemented his theory of the subconscious with the category of the collective (hereditary) subconscious in which the experiences of our ancestors are stored. Already in *Experimental Research on Memory*, he had posited that the important subconscious content that could be reached through aesthetic and mystical experiences included, in addition to forgotten events from childhood, dreams, and unnoticed impressions, also inherited memories and the entire sphere of emotionality inherited from our ancestors. These latter explained a variety of phenomena, among other things, national psychology, including the survival of nations devoid of statehood, such as Poland.⁵³

In his article of 1912, "Prayer as a Phenomenon of Cryptomnesia," which he used in its entirety in this chapter of *Sources of the Subconscious*, Abramowski reiterated that we not only inherit morphological features but also emotional reductions of all the events experienced by previous generations. All experiences of an individual and a species live in the self in its emotional-nameless form, and this "forgotten," by gradually accumulating during life, creates the character of a human being. According to Abramowski, this kind of forgotten

may reach as far back as the continuity of the reproductive idioplasma [...]. Thus, not only the life of ancestors, to the most ancient generations, but also the entire evolution of species, through the vertebrates, insects, echinoderms, and coelenterates, reaching back to the protozoa, has deposited in itself a testimony of its existence, an emotional and nameless reduction of eternal events.⁵⁴

The idioplasma appearing in the above quotation was a category adopted from August Weismann, who claimed that the mechanism for transmitting traits is caused by germplasm in sex cells. The idea was interpreted by Abramowski in

52 Ibidem.

53 E. Abramowski, *Badania doświadczalne nad pamięcią*, vol. 2, Warszawa 1911, Księgarnia E. Wende i S-ka, pp. 102–104.

54 E. Abramowski, "The Sources of Subconsciousness and Its Manifestations," in: this volume, p. 530.

the spirit of psycho-Lamarckism. Like many other philosophers of the era—including Freud, who needed Lamarckism to prove his thesis about the conformity of phylo- and ontogenesis and to help explain in *Totem and Taboo* the Oedipus complex in the heritage of the primal horde—Abramowski believed in the possibility of inheriting acquired qualities. In this conception, the experiences of the ancestors, the entire history of the species, is stored in a physiological form in the idioplasma, and in a psychological form in the subconscious.

Due to producing a complete suspension of the intellect, religious experience allows even the most deeply hidden masses of the forgotten to be revealed. Abramowski was convinced that mystical experience consists in going back to ever older memories—memories that go far beyond personal life, the hereditary memory of a species or even of all living organisms, as they go back to the very beginning of the evolutionary process. In lectures on experimental metaphysics, where the collective subconscious was assigned a superior role over the acquired, personal subconscious, Abramowski added that what a thinking subject encounters in exceptional states is “the first cause of life stored in us”: “A divine being hidden in the human being.”⁵⁵ He also believed that this generically sensed hereditary part of the subconscious mind contains the idioplasmic pattern for further evolution, the direction for humanity’s improvement along with its developmental ideal, that is, the *Übermensch*.⁵⁶

The term “*Übermensch*” had appeared earlier, in *Sources of the Subconscious*, in the discussion of religious states. Abramowski then stated that a moral transformation occurs as a result of years of religious experience; a new personality is created; a human is transformed into a superhuman. However, it was only in lectures he gave at the end of his life that he presented the achievement of the state of superhumanity as the destiny of humanity as a species. At the time, he also distinguished the highest form of religious experience, which he called the Sacrament of Fraternity.

Experimental Metaphysics largely repeats Abramowski’s earlier findings on the psychology of cognition, developing them and finally linking them to political theory, sociology, and ethics. Experimental metaphysics is

55 E. Abramowski, “Metafizyka doświadczalna”, in: idem, *Metafizyka doświadczalna i inne pisma*, Warszawa 1980, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, p. 553.

56 As in regard to Bergson, Abramowski never directly quotes Nietzsche or comments on his philosophy. In Abramowski’s work we find only two mottos from *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, both concerning the *Übermensch*: one is in the book *Socialism and the State*, from 1904, (“Look, my brothers, there where the state ends! Do you not see it: the rainbows and bridges of the overman?” Cambridge, translated by Adrian del Caro, p. 36), and the second is in *Experimental Metaphysics* (“Man is a rope stretched between the animal and the Superman—a rope over an abyss” Digireads, translated by T. Common, p. 26).

presented outright as a result of the psychology of agnostic states. In his lectures, Abramowski added another type of agnosia to those he had previously discussed: ethical agnosia, or the agnosia of fraternity or goodness, which he characterized as “a special movement of the heart at the sight of human misery and harm.”⁵⁷ It is the nucleus of “the most beautiful social movements,”⁵⁸ from primitive Christianity through utopian socialism to the cooperative republic based on friendship societies.

While in earlier works, such as *Issues of Socialism*, Abramowski had argued that “the ethical category applies to mental life only where apperception is active,”⁵⁹ toward the end of his life he had no doubts that ethics had its origins in the pre-thought sphere. In states of the agnosia of fraternity, a person recognizes, as an absolute reality, the truth about the dual identity of human beings. The unity of all people results not only from the apperception that links thinking subjects together but also from their common biological origin, their common idioplasmic heritage. This unity is expressed by the ideal of fraternity, which Abramowski treated as an absolute ideal, corresponding to the developmental pattern of the species preserved by the idioplasma.

For Abramowski, the very existence of such a pattern imposes on humans the obligation to strive for its implementation. For the potential of the idioplasma—the emergence of a new species—to be realized, conscience needs to operate. Conscience is now defined by Abramowski through an analogy with the findings of his research on the generic feeling of the forgotten. It is thus the generic sense of an absolute ideal, an intuitively sensed direction of evolution. Conscience operates in the same manner as a memory gap, which in preserving an agnostic pattern of a forgotten thing, resists wrong suggestions: even when we are unaware of the developmental pattern and are unable to name or define it, we are troubled by the incompatibility of our behavior with this unknown ideal.

Conscience can and should be worked on. Based on the belief that strong psychological experiences leave a mark on the body so deep that the acquired features are inherited, Abramowski concluded that it was possible to actively influence biological evolutionary changes through work on the self. In *Experimental Metaphysics*, he distinguished four successive stages of this process. First, a strong desire to assimilate and identify with the ideal pattern is necessary. The action of the will is then complemented by the work of the subconscious. Thanks to this, the ideal is consolidated in the functional changes

57 E. Abramowski, “Metafizyka doświadczalna”, op. cit., p. 542.

58 Ibidem, p. 541.

59 E. Abramowski, “Issues of Socialism,” in: this volume, p. 85.

of the organism; the ideal is incorporated into the cenesthetic self, and “what was only an idea becomes a part of biological life.” Finally, these changes shape the individual character and temperament; a new type of human is created, capable of creating a new social world.⁶⁰

The realization of fraternity, the moral revolution aimed at creating a superhuman, means not only the fulfillment of humanity’s destiny but also corresponds to the needs and goals of the universe. In *Experimental Metaphysics*, Abramowski draws from his research a final conclusion about the mental nature of being. It is only the human being who transforms substance into the phenomenal world. Various substances of the universe, including divine substances, those coming from other planets or other, higher systemic beings, flow through the human’s subconscious and interact. The ultimate task of the superhuman is to connect all absolute beings with himself and absorb the entire universe.

60 E. Abramowski, “Metafizyka doświadczalna”, op. cit., pp. 617–618.

Edward Abramowski's Writings



The Sources of Subconsciousness and Its Manifestations

I The Problem of Method

Before we proceed to the psychological analysis of this most simple of relationships between the outside world and ourselves that we call “perception,” we must above all begin by considering some general methodological truths that apply to the examination of psychological facts. Not only experimentation, but the very observation and rational analysis of phenomena, requires that the method by which it is conducted be defined; it also requires a critique of the instruments that could serve for the analysis and should delineate the strict bounds of what we intend to observe, while protecting the subject of the study from the intrusion of hypothetical, linguistic, verbal content.

The psychological analysis of “perceptions” entails specific difficulties that have not yet been overcome by philosophers and psychologists, who have usually passed them over in silence, while introducing, on the other hand, the hypothesis that was most convenient in terms of the entire philosophical system to which the given “school” adhered. The difficulties lie in that in the issue of perception there is also the issue of the relationship between consciousness and a “thing,” and the issue of the threshold of this relationship, i.e., the concept of the smallest consciousness, the concept of the “mental unit,” of the element and its reality in wider syntheses. This is connected with concepts of the “complexity” and “simplicity” of the mental state and with concepts of “appearance” and “truth.” These are questions that go beyond simple natural observation and belong rather to the field of philosophy, or more precisely, they lie at the boundary between them both. Hence, when we deal with the analysis of perception, we are very inclined to move to the ground of philosophical reasoning, to the ground of the analysis of concepts instead of facts and the deduction of conclusions, and then we run the risk that the theory and definitions achieved in this manner will obscure the direct reality of the object being examined and force us to abandon the naturalist’s position.

Thus, in discussing method we must first of all find a point of departure that would allow us to engage in the criticism of concepts without compromising direct observation and even making it a test for methodological truths, applicable to reasoning and psychological definitions. For a better explanation of this question of methodology let us begin by taking apart a common fact of spiritual life.

Let us imagine an introspective experience that is easy to verify in the sphere of each person's individual consciousness and that at the same time entails universal conditions, that is, that would remain the same irrespective of the essence of environmental stimuli. Imagine that I enter, for the first time, an unknown room in which there are many people, various pieces of equipment, and a hubbub of voices. At the first moment nothing stands out; there is only a general impression, a disorderly whole in which nothing can yet be defined or named. If the effect of the environment were limited solely to this moment, if it were interrupted at this first impression, our information about it would be nearly nothing; at most, we could—in remembering and concentrating on that past moment—reduce it to its most general classification: that it was *some kind* of a room, that we saw *someone* in it, and that we heard *something*; but what it was, we would not have the least idea, unless our attention had been previously prepared. That first *non-conceptual* moment in which I sense everything at once as one thing but I do not think anything about it, do not imagine anything, do not realize anything, may lengthen and become visible to those witnessing the scene, as revealed in my facial expression and uncertainty of movement, if on entering I am deeply moved by something or deeply thoughtful, or if I see something in the surroundings that completely absorbs my attention. Then there are *objective signs* of a muscular nature by which it can be known that the active stimuli have not yet found their intellectual expression in the consciousness. As in this case, the turning of one's attention in a different direction, as well as *the usual maladjustment of attention to the first moment of a new environment's impact on the senses*, causes the appearance of a non-conceptual, nameless moment.

Thus, in general, in connection with any lack of attention deriving from whatever reason, the mental state that appears in correspondence to certain brain stimulations has no value for our cognition; it is deprived of intellectual nature, although it retains its value as a mental phenomenon because we *sense* that it exists. It is a visible thing because, as our attention begins to move freely the chaotic nature and strangeness of the first impression gradually fades, the faces of acquaintances are recognized, then strangers and objects are distinguished, the arrangement of people and things, voices, the meaning of different conversations; in a word, not all at once, but gradually, as it works on one's attention, everything that objectively exists in a given place appears in the consciousness. From the original nameless, unidentified whole, certain objects are first distinguished, the more known or more interesting ones, and finally it is completely dispersed and transformed into a definite world of relations and things synonymous with those that really exist as an environment of stimuli, which is evaluated and named in the same manner by everyone

present, and confirmed rationally and socially. The original, purely individual moment is dispelled like a dream. It can be defined deductively by assuming that attention is a necessary condition of every cognitive process, and we can say that because attention did not function during its existence, that moment, as a mental moment, must have been completely *non-intellectual*, must have had no cognitive element in it, must have been something elemental, i.e., contrary to the rational intellect, something that is in a primary, direct relationship with the acting environment. Its nature could also be determined empirically, in recalling that it differed from the moments that followed in that it did not reach for any classifications of known things, in that it was foreign to the mind, not amenable to being grasped in terms of speech; that is, it had no intellectual element, and therefore could not embrace what was objective in the environment, recognized socially as a certain order of things and properties.

The above experience therefore shows that the same environment of stimuli appears mentally different at the moment when one's attention is not adjusted, and another way in the next moments, when one's attention is working freely. In the first case, it has a non-conceptual nature and is completely unlike what we perceive when our attention is operating. If we were thus to claim that what we perceive as our consciousness of a given environment after our attention adjusts—a room with all the details of what is in it and what is happening in it—existed in the first moment of our awareness but was not perceived due to a lack of attention, that it was made momentarily by the action of the sensual stimuli themselves and it existed *mentally* in a dark, secret way, until the attention clarified it, directing it toward the *macula lutea*¹ of the soul, then we would be making a dual error. The first would be that *in spite* of internal experience we would be speaking of the existence of certain mental states, although these states were not perceived introspectively, directly, as existing, nor did they reveal their existence externally—in our behavior and movements. Thus we would be speaking of “mental facts” that do not belong to inner experience, to introspection—which is contrary to the very definition of the object of psychology. The other side of the error lies in that instead of the experienced fact, we take the presumed fact. An experienced fact is here the “non-intellectual,” non-conceptual moment, having a sole mental value: an undefined feeling. The presumptive fact is an unconscious arrangement of mental states corresponding to the objective arrangement. We infer its existence by virtue of two hypothetical assumptions: that the senses reproduce objectivity just as the mind knows it; and that attention does not transform or create anything new,

1 **Macula lutea*—Latin, “macular, responsible for visual sharpness.”

thus what appears under its operation also existed mentally beforehand. The first supposition can be easily eliminated as erroneous by comparing sensual information with perceptions; the second depends on resolving the problem of the nature of the first moment, and therefore cannot serve as a premise for solving that question. But even aside from the correctness of the premises, the transfer of what we perceive during the operation of our attention, at the initial mental moment, will always be the replacement of a real fact (which, as a simple sense of *something*, can only have a completely opposing and negative definition in regard to states of perception: non-conceptual, unclassified, nameless) by a fact that does not reveal its existence directly in internal experience, and whose existence we can only guess on the basis of a theory adopted in advance. In assuming the existence of such a hypothetical fact, we must assign it an *unconscious* mental nature, and consequently it can no longer belong to any category of experience and only preserves the value of a concept made intellectually, artificially, to which no concrete, intuitive reality corresponds. In a word, in arguing that the same states that we perceive when our attention is operating existed before our attention as well but were not perceived, we substitute the fact of experience (that these states were not there) with the concept of “unconscious states,” inferred from hypotheses that cannot be justified.

Having made such an incorrect substitution, we hence transform the fact of experiencing into an *apparent fact*. For we then claim that even though the first moment *seems* to us introspectively non-conceptual and simple, in reality (apart from introspection) it consists of many different sensations and their unconscious connections, and includes the perceptions of objects and their conceptual relations, only they have not arrived at consciousness yet due to lack of attention. Thus, in addition to the previous error—the substitution of a fact inferred from certain hypotheses for a fact of direct experience, the concept of “appearance” is also introduced here, which cannot be applied to mental phenomena in any circumstance. When we speak, for example, about apparent distance, as it seems to our eye, or about the apparent simplicity of water (contrary to its chemical composition) and so on, we are aiming to compare our impression with the object itself, which we are trying to know by means of the control of many other experiences and their mental processing. When we say “apparent distance,” then we mean not the mental fact of “distance,” but objective distance, which we can check by measurement and movement and which we compare to what the distance seemed to be in our visual impression. In short, the concept of appearance has meaning only when we speak of an impression, taking into account the object of this impression, which is viewed regardless of the impression; then the mental truth could be

an appearance in regard to the objective truth. But when it comes to the very mental fact as such, the transition to its objective, extra-subjective evaluation cannot occur, because then it would enter the sphere of experience of a category foreign to it and completely incommensurable. The apparent fact of the consciousness has to be confronted with another fact, hidden behind it, which, as “mentally unconscious” would have only verbal value, while as an objective, physical value it would enter the sphere of movements and spatial arrangements. The mental fact cannot therefore be assessed as the appearance of some other thing that is mental because in departing from experiential intuition of it, we enter a completely different scope of research. It would be possible to speak of apparent mental facts then only if we were to find the “mental unconscious” as provided to intuition, elementally imposing on our experience in the manner of physical phenomena or facts of knowledge; or if we had in our knowledge and intuition any transition from the world of movements and spatial arrangements to the world of the inner states of our soul. Because thus the concept of *appearance* is inseparably opposed to the concept of *the real truth* of the fact itself, we cannot speak of the appearance of the fact of internal experience, since it would mean that it hides a true fact, which, however, does not belong to internal experience, because this *apparent* fact is the only one we consciously perceive. In desiring thus to find a contrast to “appearance,” we must move beyond the scope of consciousness and consider as its contrary the “truth” of either the products of hypotheses (unconscious states) or the physical phenomena, which cannot be compared with the object of study.

Hence it follows that every mental fact has the value of *absolute truth*; it is essentially what it presents itself to be introspectively; it is an experience which can only testify to itself. This fundamental principle of the method is linked, as we have seen, to intuitive certainties: that there are only two categories of phenomena—mental and physical, and that there is nothing commensurate and transitional between the two.

Accordingly, the concept of mental “complexity,” which contemporary psychology overuses, should also be changed. Only the sequence of states of consciousness, the series of various moments, can be considered complex. Association, judgments, and their combination are complex, but never one perception or one moment of feeling. What presents itself to us introspectively as simple—what we do not feel as diversity—is *essentially* simple as a mental fact, and we cannot speak about its *mental* components. When it comes to “components,” to what a simple mental fact contains, either its physical conditions are mentioned (various nervous stimulations, conditioning the appearance of a given state) and then the “components” form part of the physical coordinate, or, what develops from a given state of consciousness under the

influence of thoughts, as happens when we move on from first impressions to perceiving what the impression is and to the conceptual understanding of its properties, which are gradually differentiated. In the latter case, it can only be said that the *possibility* of these various elements that appear through perception are due to the development of thoughts about the givens of a state of consciousness which are its starting point. This "possibility," however, should not be understood as diverse hidden components of concealed mental states, but simply as an introspective quality of an existing—i.e., a perceived—state, whose changes are sensed (because every non-conceptual moment has a specific stamp of feeling, depending on what stimuli compose it), and which is thereby a real fact of inner experience.

Accordingly, instead of saying that that first non-conceptual moment of the said experience *consists* of unconscious feelings or perceptions, it should only be said that certain perceptions and concepts may develop from it under the operation of attention, and that its nameless, emotional, introspective quality is closely related to what will later emerge as separate objects of thought; it will be different if there are no people in the room and different again if there is no light and so on; in a word, each thing added to or removed from the stimulating conditions affects the quality of the moment, although the things themselves are not perceived. In this way, the first moment, under a different, undifferentiated, and non-conceptual mental form, represents in itself the same thing that the attention then distinguishes as perceptions, related in a system of thought. It is thus a mental *symbol* of what is to happen during the operation of thought and what the objective state of the environment expresses in itself. Therefore, instead of the concept of "concealed components," we introduce the concept of "*symbolism*" in order to purge psychology of ontological hypotheses and keep it within the strict limits of phenomenalism.

From a critique of the experience under consideration it follows that the first mental moment should be regarded as non-conceptual, unclassifiable, and quite dissimilar to elements of thought. A rationalizing and classificatory nature appears only in the following moments, as a result of the operation of attention, as a product of that operation, forming along with mental material which is independent of it—with the direct correspondent of the stimulation of the environment. Whereas the said experience is universal in nature, because it corresponds to two common conditions for psychological facts—the complexity of the environment, operating by a variety of stimuli, and the operation of attention (this is object and subject, there is no third condition)—therefore, the principle of the method can be established that *if in some fact we find an intellectual element, this fact should be regarded as derivative, secondary*. Every fact of inner experience, perceived when it appears, in a certain way,

as distinguished from others, i.e., having an intellectual feature, being able to enter thought (*the distinction* is the first condition for entering thought), is by this same the object of attention (without attention, distinguishing is impossible because the stimuli always number more than one), and therefore it can always be presented in the form of the above experience and considered as a product of the operation of attention on something mental that must have come before it, because, of course, attention cannot operate without mental material, i.e., it cannot deal with objects, with stimuli, which are beyond consciousness; for example, the touch of anesthetized skin or the operation of objects on a retina whose brain centers are degenerated cannot be perceived. The attention does not turn toward "noumena," to things in themselves, but only toward mental phenomena.

In the object of psychology, it is therefore necessary to distinguish the *thought* element and *pre-thought* element, if the first characterizes derivative manifestations resulting from the operation of attention. The pre-thought element is moreover *spontaneous* and as such opposes the thought element, which is wholly dependent on the operation of attention. It corresponds to the twofold character which inner experience has in relation to cognition. On the one hand, we find conceptual forms in it, facts of developed thought whose existence is strictly conditioned by our apperceptive effort, the operation of attention, and which can be regarded as products of the intellect's abstracting activities, such as, for example, all concepts when we consider them not as images with their own sensory hue, but as elements of logical thought. On the other hand, we see that inner experience exists independently of the operation of our attention and the work of our intellect, that mental facts appear, evoke each other, change, and die, completely ignoring the purely subjective efforts of our will and reasoning; that there is something in them that forces our attention to adaptive moves, something almost material that appears before the thought, independently of it, and from which the thought develops as a testimony to an already existing phenomenon. Thanks precisely to this spontaneous side we cannot freely manage our mental life in the same way as we direct our reasoning, the course of our logical thought. Without the element of "spontaneity" psychology would belong to the abstract sciences like mathematics, or mechanics, whose *data* appear only in reasoning; they are conditioned by the action of abstract thought; thanks to that element, psychology belongs to the natural, experimental sciences, that is those whose *data* exist on their own, not conditioned by any conceptual form, and the experimental sciences require that their observation should be as free as possible from intellectualism, from hypothetically inferred formulas. Mental phenomena should therefore be viewed *as those that have a side existing beyond conceptual forms*

and that impose themselves as *things* on the mind. Psychology transcends intellectualism and encompasses a pre-thought realm of the soul that cannot be equated with what we know as concepts.

Therefore, because the primary side of mental facts is pre-thought, because what appears in our mind is a secondary product, the concept of a phenomenon must also change. For general philosophy, the concept of a phenomena as an "object of thought" is sufficient. As a critic of *concepts*, philosophy can take freely as the departure point, the first given, the human intellect; "I have a representation," meaning "I have objects of thought," may represent for it the first and simple fact on whose basis the remainder is considered; therefore, apart from the notion of the "object of thought," it does not find anything but an ultimate concept, "the thing in itself." For psychology, however, which looks into the creation of the object of thought, into the secrets of its preparatory work, it is not thus. Because the object of thought as such—what appears in a concept, in our representation—is a secondary manifestation, the product of a certain work of the intellect, it is clear that psychology, beyond the object of thought, sees something mental in addition, as the beginning, the starting point of the thought work whose result appears as a perception or a representation. At this point, being involved with inner experience, it cannot see the "thing in itself" but a phenomenon, so it identifies the concept of "phenomenon" with the generator of thoughts, which is *the pre-thought object of feeling*. Such an understanding is at the same time more compatible with the spontaneous nature of the phenomenon. From a psychological viewpoint, a phenomenon, as an object of thought, would present itself as a product of the operation of attention; its existence would thus be conditioned by our abstract reasoning, our apperceptive effort. By transferring the concept of a phenomenon to the beginning of thought, where there is not yet a developed "object," we identify it with that which is spontaneous and independent in facts of awareness, which exist unconditioned by our subjective activity. Simultaneously, we see that in this capacity it loses its value as an intellectual element, and that in respect to our cognition it is a kind of "thing in itself," a mental noumenon, because, in being primary, it excludes everything that belongs to the realm of thought, to concepts; it cannot be named, defined, or classified. The only definition we can give it, that it is "non-conceptual," is a negative and completely contrasting term. Nevertheless, it retains its experiential value as an individual feeling, and therefore must find its place in psychological research, even if only in the role of a verifying negation of *what the process is not*. In a word, because the "object of thought" cannot be understood in psychology as a primary fact but as a secondary fact, the concept of the "phenomenon" must extend beyond the limits of thought. The thought is located not between the "thing in itself" and

ourselves but between us and the mental thing. What we know as the object of thought is not merely the transformation of an unknown external reality into a conscious fact but an intellectual reworking of original states of the soul. We cannot, therefore, ascribe to the original states the qualities perceived in intellectual, secondary states, just as we cannot attribute the features perceived in phenomena to “things in themselves.”

To overlook this is a fundamental flaw of contemporary psychology. It is the error of “intellectualism.” It can be compared, from the methodological point of view, to the ontological realism of the former scholastics. The realism of the scholastics was based on assigning an ontological value, independent of the human intellect, to the constructs of reasoning, the abstractions resulting from a mental process (such as concepts of classification and the concepts of attributes); it was held that they are outside the world of thought, as an external reality, from which, by way of emanation, concrete and individual things arose. This was expressed in the scholastic principle: *Universalia ante rem*.² Now psychology does exactly the same, *in assigning an intuitive primary value to what appears as the result of a thought process*. In the most basic theories, such as the theory of “elementary feelings,” the “synthesis of perception” and “memory images,” we find the same error of transferring intellectual products, abstract concepts, to a pre-thought, non-conceptual domain and considering them as a mental reality independent of thought, as the first *givens* of psychology, while they bear the stamp of logical classification, thereby already proving that certain intellectual work of the cognitive instrument was necessary for them. Consequently, intellectualism is incorrectly expanded to the whole field of internal experience; psychology ceases to be a strictly experiential science because it deals with concepts instead of things.

One of the most outstanding examples of such a substitution is the theory which is accepted in psychology today of perceptions as *a synthesis of elemental feelings*, which is closely connected with the theory of “psychological atomism,” and the misunderstood principle of psycho-physiological coordination. “Elemental feelings” are understood here as the mental equivalents of the simplest nervous shocks, although our internal experience does not at all know similar states. The simplest impression of light or sound, a tactile or moving impression, etc., always has a multi-sensory character from the side of introspection; they are always localized and more or less objectified, and this moreover closely corresponds to the physiological conditions of every

2 * *Universalia ante rem*—Latin, a statement in the medieval dispute over universalities meaning that universal concepts exist independently of things as ideas in God’s mind.

sensation, the diversity of nerve processes that occur under the action of even the simplest stimulus. Thus, because such elemental feelings can never appear as states of our *sentient* consciousness, they should be understood as a mental phenomenon existing beyond our immediate consciousness, which in direct contact with itself creates an elementary awareness inaccessible to ours; only from the synthesis of these elementary awarenesses would our own consciousness, internal experience, arise. "Elemental feeling," according to epistemological criticism, would therefore be reduced to the ontological concept of the "feeling-subject." This concept, which is closely related to the Leibniz monad, has nothing to do with that real phenomenal consciousness that constitutes the field for psychological research.

This error of putting the intellectual product in place of the fact is also carried over to the theory of perception as a synthesis of feeling. This theory, which is also borrowed from chemical hypotheses, and is moreover convenient for a superficial explanation of facts, causes considerable trouble on deeper analysis, and leads, as we have seen, to the acceptance of conceptions as incompatible with the nature of inner experience as the "apparent simplicity" of the state and the "reality of concealed components." In order to be free from this error in studying "perception," we have to rely on the natural method and first of all to seek a strictly *descriptive* definition of the phenomenon that we are going to study. Only thus can we free the nature of the object under study from the influence of theory and achieve the certainty that we are analyzing not the concept we have constructed ourselves, but the *thing* itself, independent of our mind.

[...]

x Aesthetic States

Aesthetic states, that is, the subjective phenomenon of *beauty*, can also be considered to be an instance of normal agnosia.

So-called experiential aesthetics is still in the vicious circle of investigating the *pleasure* we get from one or another sensual impression, and under the illusion that the element of beauty can be explored in this way. But in what is the pleasure given to us by a specific color or a geometric figure, or a tone of a certain frequency, different from the pleasure we experience with the sensations of touch, warmth, taste, or smell? And yet no one would argue that the study of pleasant tastes or touches is also an experiment with the element of beauty.

A fundamental error occurs here in that one of the abstract attributes of a given phenomenon, which it has in common with many other phenomena, replaces the phenomenon itself, which as an object of experimental investigation should always be taken *in concreto*, in its living whole. There is no doubt that a certain "pleasure" is to be found in every phenomenon of beauty, but such pleasure is similarly found in an infinite number of the most varied moments of life which are fundamentally different from the sense of beauty. Any food a person eats will be a pleasure when he is hungry; the stupidest of jokes will be pleasant if it makes you laugh; the state of soul of the boxer who knocks his opponent down, the player who wins a large stake, or the hunter who bags an animal will be pleasant, but no one would think of looking for beauty in these states of pleasure. On the contrary, each of these people will feel completely different at the moment when an aesthetic state appears than what they felt when boxing, hunting, or winning. Every sense of beauty is pleasurable in some way, but by no means is every pleasure beauty. Pleasure and displeasure are emotional abstractions, embracing the whole world of the human soul and, as a result, co-housing in it an infinite variety of states, even those that are utterly contradictory to each other. They cannot tell us anything about the essence of the phenomena they embrace precisely because they are abstracts, drawn from the phenomena intellectually (conceptually) only, while the phenomena themselves, the real states of the human soul, are something living indivisibly, and each of them appears not only by one feature but by their great variety.

Properly speaking, pleasure is specific to each state of consciousness; it is fashioned according to the nature of the thing from which it comes, and it can be said that in the reality of concrete phenomena there is no "pleasure," but rather only various pleasurable things. It is not some one constant trait which attaches only to varying degrees to one phenomena or another but only our mental generalization of some similarity in the way our body, thoughts, and will react to different things.

In aesthetic states various stimulations appear which can hardly be called pleasant as they are so specific and so unlike any other. They are sometimes denoted with contradictory names, such as the pleasure of pain, pleasant melancholy, fear of a sublime nature, the humor of longing, etc., which does not at all prove that such bouts of emotion occur in aesthetic states but only that in them stimulations occur that are quite unlike the stimulations of life—stimulations that, standing apart from life, have not developed their own names, just as they have not developed their own physiological types—such as facial expressions, gestures, vascular reactions, etc.

It might even be doubted whether aesthetic states can be included in the category of feelings in general. For between them and what we call feelings, in the sense of certain life experiences which are useful or harmful, and connected with the struggle for existence, such as feelings of pleasure, pain, rapture, regret, anger, sadness, etc., the resemblance is only superficial. Rather, it should be assumed that these feelings only *accompany* aesthetic states—develop alongside them and merge with them—but the aesthetic state itself (similarly to the religious state) is not of the same nature as them. It is something fundamentally different. These states do not have the continuity and durability of ordinary feelings, nor their ability to develop. They come suddenly and suddenly disappear, usually lasting briefly. Second, they do not have the distinct and characteristic organic conversion that typical feelings such as sadness or anger do; contemplating beauty, though so frequent and normal in life experience, did not produce any physiological type. Third—and this is the most important difference—emotions are *without an object*; the moment an emotion exists, it is everywhere, in everything. We feel it in ourselves and in the surrounding world; our cenesthetic feelings, the movements of our will and thoughts, as well as all external objects, are colored with it. It is a *diffuse* state, the general background of everything that consciousness then takes in. On the other hand, states of aesthetic experience focus on one point of consciousness, or rather of the subconscious; these are states where the feeling conceals in itself some *definite thing* which thought is earnestly seeking and cannot find—something which tries to find its complete and total representation but finds only symbols.

In order to define an aesthetic experience, it is necessary to take into account *the whole* of this experience, and not its particular features and partial similarities, and then we can easily conclude that aesthetic experience is, above all, a *different attitude* toward the world.

In ordinary experience, where there are life needs, interests in the struggle for existence, and the closely related processes of cognition and emotions systematizing the spirituality of the human being into different personalities, our relationship to the world is of an *intellectual nature*. Attention, that permanent director of the constant struggle for existence, transforms everything into perceptions, into objects of thought which are socialized, named, and of accessible purposefulness. We encounter the “unknowable” through the prism of thought, and it transforms our perception of the mystery into an ordered, differentiated reality, showing the relations and laws of its variability, which are accessible to cognition. In a word, the ordinary state of our soul is thinking; an ordinary moment in life is an object of thought. Everything that we name and know, everything that emerges from the substratum of our needs, which

we combine at will to achieve various goals, is only the mental aspect of phenomena, the transformation of primal intuition under the action of attention.

It is thus clear that everything becomes something completely different if we reject the intellectual element from it, that is, if we stop at the threshold of thought. A completely new relation then emerges between the thing and ourselves—an *aesthetic* relation; the phenomenon from which the fabric of an apperceptive transformation has been removed, the mantle of intellectualism, in which we usually see the whole world of things, shows us its second, intuitive aspect, the aspect of a *pre-thought emotion*, and our encounter with this aspect, which is freed from thought, is the birth of beauty in the human soul.

Such a relation is facilitated by certain agnostic factors which *minimize* intellectualism, causing the world to appear differently to us. These are above all *memories*. Every life moment, in passing into the sphere of the “forgotten,” into the resources of memory, casts off its apperceptive robe—the one it had as a perception—and lives on there in the nameless form of a pre-thought emotion. Retrieved from there as a memory, it only receives a certain intellectual stamp in the symbol in which it is contained. This is, however, a minimum of intellectualism, which is unable to absorb the entire intuitive aspect, so that in the psychological nature of memories, the emotion, freed from thought, maintains its dominance—the dominance of the original intuition. Therefore, reality changed into memory somehow preserves those same facts but reveals them rather differently, uncovering their *aesthetic* core; without ceasing to be painful or joyful, terrible or mild, it yet reveals the *calm* essence of these things, freed from the entanglement of life needs and life judgments. Remembered facts possess a charm that is unjustified by anything; a certain longing is nested in them, an attraction toward past moments, which is unwarrantable and is the greater the longer they have remained in the sphere of the “forgotten.” Even the most ordinary or quite unpleasant moments of reality seduce us with their charm, with an element of some acquired emotional novelty solely as a result of having withdrawn entirely from the circulation of the realities of life. This is where beauty begins; memory is the first artism. The world, viewed from the side of memories, is viewed *aesthetically*. Between it and us there arises a relation similar to that which is formed between the world and a child; what is irritating and tiresome disappears because the phenomena have turned to us their aspect that is in contrast to intellectualism, and consequently their basis for cognition, troublesomeness, and deliberate prediction declines; we cease to look at the world with the eye of a fighting animal and regard it with the eye of a contemplator. In order to find this relation, the child does not need to turn to memories, because it has at its disposal another rich area of pre-thought vision: seeing *for the first time*.

The same element of beauty appears in *dreams*, because here too the intellectual side of internal phenomenality is reduced to a minimum. It can also appear under *new* or *sudden* sensations, and sometimes under strong emotional tension, since these are psychological conditions which paralyze the activity of attention, and thus enable *pre-thought vision*, that is, the *contemplative* state of the human soul.

Each moment of the *suspension of the intellect*—and thus the turning toward us of the phenomenon's emotional and nameless aspect—is also the moment of the birth of beauty. And such a state of the soul is opposed to all normal, everyday moments of inner experience, all those necessarily induced by the interest of life's struggle as an essential condition for the survival of the species and the individual; it is like a rest in the fight, a pause in life, an abnormal self-denial.

The role of memory as an element of beauty can be demonstrated in the entire development of art, in its social beginnings, where recollection acts as the main source of aesthetic creation, as well as in the psychology of individual artists in creating a work. To some extent and on a small scale, the derivation of the element of beauty can also be found experimentally, in laboratory research. We performed such experiments while studying cryptomnesia³ by showing people, after the passage of several dozen days, drawings they had perceived in various ways and of which they made two descriptions from memory, one immediately and the other later. The experiment itself consisted in *comparing the recollection with reality* and in noting down the impressions that the individual experienced in this comparison at the first moment. We found that the drawing often seemed to be remembered as more beautiful than it really was; it was said that there was more feeling in it, that it was richer, more refined, more colorful, and so on. Seeing it, however, caused a sense of disappointment, of let down.

This disappointment is very reminiscent of other similar facts, where the transition from being forgotten to reality occurs in the same manner. When, for example, we relate a dream of ours and want to convey all its stored content through ideas and concepts, we most often experience a feeling of disappointment that it is only that, and we feel a huge discrepancy between what was experienced in the dream and what can be expressed in terms of

3 * Cryptomnesia—Greek, hidden or latent memory. Cryptomnesia occurs when forgotten memory returns without its being recognized as such by the subject, who believes it is something new and original. See: E. Abramowski, *Badania doświadczalne nad pamięcią*, Vol. 11: *Podświadomość*, chap. 3: *Czucia rodzajowe jako pierwiastki estetyki i mistycyzmu*, Warszawa 1911, Księgarnia E. Wende i S-ka, pp. 77–106.

intellectual representations. The same is true of the phenomenon of the “hypnotic thoughts” which arise during a state of dozing, of being half-asleep. When we manage to recall them, we are surprised that what seemed to be very interesting and lofty is most often quite banal. Even more similar to the fact discussed here is the disappointment that occurs when old memories come into contact with the corresponding reality, as happens when we return to a certain place, a home, a circle of people, or even things or books which were once known and of which we have kept vivid memories. Not always, but often-times, this renewed encounter causes us a certain disappointment, although there is no substantive basis for it; the disappointment is solely emotional. We feel that the memory was more beautiful, that there was some charm in it, something that was interesting and attractive that we did not find in reality.

In order to understand the phenomenon of “disappointment” which occurs when comparing memories with reality, it suffices to realize what the difference between the memory of a given object and its perception is. The similarity between them, their greater or lesser commonality, rests entirely in the representative side of memory, in the image which is trying to copy the object; the larger the representative side, the greater the resemblance, and the difference between them is mainly in the subconscious side of memory, in the emotional reduction of old representations, in this whole “forgotten” part that still lives, more or less completely, in various “genre feelings” which cannot be intellectualized, and by which the memory image is surrounded and permeated from all sides. All this emotional reduction of the past, the equivalent of its former and possible representation, is the very part of the memory which gives it a character so different from reality and which perishes upon contact with the same reality from which it originates; it dies because it finds its intellectual and perceptual expressions and ceases to be reduction, generic feeling, the subconscious, or something which cannot be thought. Since the element of beauty, which was in the memory, perishes along with it as well and a feeling of disappointment appears, therefore it can be argued that this *element of beauty rests in the generic feelings of the forgotten*.⁴

The experiments with the drawings showed us that those that had been memorized as an object of long-lasting and free perception were the least likely to give the impression of disappointment; it most often occurred with the drawings that had been perceived intermittently, i.e., where a certain part

4 The French poet and aesthete Mallarmé finds the same in the artist's intuition when he says that “to name an object is to suppress three fourths of the enjoyment of the poem, which is made up of gradual discovery” [S. Mallarmé, *Sur l'évolution littéraire*, in: S. Mallarmé, *Ouvres complètes*, Paris 1945, Gallimard, p. 869].

of the drawing had failed to be intellectualized and remained in the memory as a general, unconscious impression. Thus, this result confirms our thesis. Besides, we were able to observe another curiosity: the phenomenon that drawings that were perceived while there was a simultaneous calculation from memory did not cause disappointment when the memory was compared with their renewed viewing, but on the contrary produced a different aesthetic judgment, to the effect that the drawing was prettier than it was in the memory. Since we know from research on the resistance of the forgotten that the emotion of the calculation is stored in the forgotten and distorts its generic feeling as if through the confluence of two emotional states, we can view this phenomenon as the destruction of the beauty element in the generic feeling of the forgotten through an alien emotion's being joined to it.

In the creation of individual works of art the fundamental role of the memory element can easily be found. In every artistic creation there are two basic psychological conditions without which, despite the most perfect technique of creation, there is no work of art; these are the individual *experience* of the thing that is the subject of creativity, and *longing* in its various forms; and both of these conditions belong to the life of memories.

The individual experience of a personal or collective fact, a specific moment in life, is at the same time a deep entry of this fact into the memory and emotion of the whole person, into his mind and organism; it is a memory branched into many different ideological and emotional associations, occupying significant layers of the subconscious (still alive, constantly creative, both in its cryptomnesia and in its conscious manifestations).

Longing is of the same origin. It is the *stimulation of memories*—sometimes even those that have already been completely lost in terms of representation, but whose emotional aspect is strongly alive—and their “emotional reduction,” which seeks a lost world of representations in artistic creation. When an artist creates a work of art, this “stimulation” which is derived from past experiences and maybe even from inherited, eternal experiences, undergoes a psychological process essentially similar to that which takes place when a forgotten thing, which is sensed only generically and namelessly, discovers its real representative form, that is, it recalls itself or a figure which is only similar, i.e., when it creates paramnesia, or else when it finds only the symbol of the thing, creating a hallucination of the memory that hides the thing deeply within itself. The artist's creation repeats the same. Starting from real images and moving to hallucinatory symbols, we find the whole scale of memory reconstruction through which some undying “forgotten thing” of the artist seeks to be intellectualized, accessed, and realistically revealed. A work of art, in the psychological definition, is therefore always a *trapped memory*, enchanted in

words, colors, forms, or tones, a memory which to a greater or lesser extent has found its lost world of representations and ideas, *but never completely*.

The artist, even in the most realistic reconstruction of his experience, does not express everything. An irreducible part always remains, a memory which, in spite of everything, remains only a generic emotion of the forgotten, which can be neither named nor translated into the language of thoughts. This is the charm of beauty. It exists subjectively in a creator and, through his work of art, is communicated to the audience or viewers, who co-produce it, awakening in them the same feeling of something true and unrepresented. This feeling, as anyone can easily check for themselves, is very similar to the feeling of dreams; here and there one meets the same stimulation, which cannot be expressed or grasped in thought, and which escapes and perishes when we transform it into representation.

From this essential nature of the psychology of beauty all the features of that activity which developed on its basis, that is, *art*, result. The task and goal of this activity is *to remind the forgotten* and to find complete representations for persistent strong generic feelings which constantly return to flutter about the threshold of consciousness.

Art cannot *imitate* the reality that we know in human life or nature. If we communicate a certain moment of life to people intellectually, describe it in an objective-logical order, or copy it photographically, then there is no art. A work of art expresses only the mood of the moment, its emotional truth (to fulfil this task, any means can be used, even imaginary imaging, on the condition that the honesty of an individual emotional experience is conveyed). The artistic value of the work lies in its faithful expression, while as free as possible from the thought apparatus. The artist has to partially unveil the mystery of intellectual processes and get to know the pre-thought aspect of the experienced moment in order for the beauty to appear. The moment then receives its aesthetic baptism; it becomes an object not of cognition but of art. The cognitive description of nature will be that of a naturalist or a tourist; a description expressing the mood of complete individual experience under the influence of this nature will be a work of poetry. The poet is only an observer of the individual memories and moods which a given environment awakens, and the strength of the awakening of the mood, the ability to create factors that bring the "forgotten" of listeners or viewers to the threshold of consciousness from distant depths, is a measure of the excellence of art. Therefore, music, which possesses the greatest wealth of means of awakening cryptomnesia and evokes with the greatest ease unspoken memories and thoughts that cannot be strictly formulated and are almost hypnotic in nature, is the purest art, where beauty manifests itself with almost complete liberation from auxiliary

activities of the intellect. In any case, in every art there is the same tendency of "understatement," the same agnosisism; the artist always avoids the role of photographer or reporter and tries to leave as much freedom as possible for the spontaneous formation of memory images in the recipient's soul, because only then does the artist achieve his goal, creates an internal vision, the dominance of memories over the intellect, the dominance of contemplation over reasoning.

The agnostic nature of art also excludes life *usefulness*. The goal is beauty itself, and art, in the face of the interests of life as a struggle for existence, is rather playful. It is not, however, that it cannot produce certain results that are useful to humans. As a mental phenomenon, involved in the process of influencing, it can always be judged by the effects it produces in the social or ethical realm. The utility that may appear here belongs, however, to the causal series of other phenomena; neither the artist as such, nor those who accept beauty from him, can have utility in view, because then, in order to awaken in their soul a certain aesthetic feeling, they would have to reason. A work of art, judged by its utility, would become a thesis conveying to people the message of what is or should be, but would not in itself be beauty. Beauty has the same quality as goodness, in that if it comes out of the realm of the pure movement of the heart, in burdening itself with premises and reasoning it ceases to be a psychological reality of a human being and becomes only a counterfeit of its manifestation to the outside. It must be blind, because by its nature it cannot be grasped by thought; moreover, it is perfectly sufficient for itself, and in regard to it reason can reveal only its own pretentious pettiness and infirmity.

All references to the test of reason and the search for the norm of utility for art are thwarted by the very nature of the object of the psychology of beauty, which appears only where the interests of life and reasoning end. The useful purpose of beauty can manifest itself as its further psychological result, from the awakening of certain moods and the succeeding thoughts, but at the moment of the appearance of beauty in the soul of the artist or recipient, it cannot exist, because then there would be an *adaptation* of the created thing to a given goal, that is, intellectual work, that is, the negation of beauty. Purposefulness is replaced here by the feeling itself. For example, in order to promote the ideal of fraternity, the artist makes use only of the *feeling* of fraternity and communicates the images growing on its substratum, without caring any more about their further mental and practical results, as if they had no social purpose. This is what can justify, from a psychological point of view, the derivation of art from *play* (Spencer), and also its definition as pleasure independent of any

personal comfort (Sully),⁵ because just as with play, with the disappearance of considerations of comfort, *untroubled* mental states appear. The lack of an interest, a useful purpose, makes the human soul more disposed to liberate itself from intellectualism; it can only become contemplative when all life interests and impulses, which force a person to reason prudently, remain dormant. The pleasure that arises during such a state is quite specific in nature; it is most often associated with some sadness, regret, longing, and in general it has a paradoxical character in relation to pleasures of a life nature. In matters of life, for example, sadness excludes pleasure completely and usually causes the avoidance of the object that brings sadness. Pleasure is always connected with a certain purposefulness of action, with the desire for a certain object. In art, almost every piece which deeply touches the soul evokes an emotional feeling of sadness rather than of joy, and yet it attracts with its charm, its liberating nature from all despondency. The desire and longing awakened by it are completely aimless in nature and have no definite object. This only proves that in the realm of beauty, feelings change, and that their properties and relationships become different from those that are manifested in life, and this is also due to the fact that they are freed from intellectualism, from deliberate adaptation to the interests of the struggle for existence. We encounter a similar phenomenon in a related art—the psychology of memories: the above-mentioned emotional moments, which were formerly experienced, always have an aura of a certain charm and relief, despite the fact that they faithfully recreate the hard moments of life; what in reality tormented us and depressed us does not cease to be itself in recreating itself in the memory and yet we often find some pleasure in it; we feel a certain attraction to it, we become entranced by its specter emerging from the “forgotten.”

The psychological nature of beauty—as a *suspension of the activity of the intellect*—also explains why it cannot have its canons or social tests, and why all attempts in this direction must either remain fruitless, or they obstruct the aesthetic activity of the human soul, producing dwarf-like, fettered art, despite the highest guiding ideas, and in no way can they ennoble art, any more than any “law” can ennoble people. If works of art were to arise from the adaptation of a certain general idea of social utility to various individual cases and issues, then they would both have their general social value and would have to be based on a whole scaffold of certain fixed rules. The artist would then have created it intellectually, and people would have to search intellectually

5 * James Sully (1842–1923), English experimental psychologist, an adherent of the associationist school in psychology.

for beauty in works of art, just as they seek the truth by applying a social or scientific model, a general idea, to a given thing. But in such a context, a psychology of beauty would be impossible, and art would be counterfeit, only its technique—of rhyming or painting—would be borrowed to express scientific or ethical principles, leaving the same soul functioning that is necessary for judging and adopting these principles, i.e., intellectual functioning. However, beauty found as the conclusion of reasoning is a psychological impossibility.

The real work of the artist is based only on stopping the activity of the intellect, on liberating a given thing from the mind, and wherever that can be done effectively, beauty appears. Thus every life moment can serve as an object for artistic activity because its *beauty is determined not by its contents but by the way we look at it*. Even the commonplaces of life can reveal beauty if we stand in a contemplative relationship to it. For example, all memories of the past become more beautiful as they move further away, i.e., the more they lose their mental and life-practical features, the more they become a mood. And if there are moments in life that cannot be shown as beauty, it may be because their nature awakens too many practical interests, passions, and drives, or that because of any other qualities they cannot be turned toward us by their pre-thought aspect. On the other hand, abstract concepts do not reveal beauty because they are too intellectual. In order to express them in art, the creator must descend from them to the proper source, to the moments of intuition from which they arose, to the specific moments of life, and only on this substratum, expressed aesthetically, can general ideas appear as a self-generated secondary process, drawing behind them a certain reflection of beauty that comes from their experiential material. In this case, thought takes advantage of the moods awakened by a given work of art and molds them into a general idea, socially expressed.

It is clear as well that beauty must be entirely *individual* because the liberation of things from the intellect is at the same time their liberation from the social aspect. Socialization is only that which is subject to mental conceptualization and cognitive verification—that which can be expressed in terms of concepts, laws, or institutions, and no pre-thought sensation, no mood, can be objectified in any way, and finds itself only in my own depths of cenesthesia,⁶ which are unattainable to anyone else. The most brilliant work of art becomes beauty only when that beauty is the *psychological reality* of the individual,

6 I expand extensively on this thesis in: *Psychologiczne podstawy socjologii (Zasada zjawiska społecznego)*, "Ateneum" 1896, vol. IV, p. 242–287 and in [Z. R. Walczewski], *Zagadnienia socjalizmu*, Lwów 1899, Poloniecki, chap. 1 and 2 (fragments of those two chapters from *Zagadnienia socjalizmu* in this edition: pp. 59–87).

while socialized ideas—of property or families, for example—retain their definite and permanent value even if they are not reflected individually in the soul. Something that has no use value for me has still its social use value, that is, a standardized one, which I am forced to recognize in spite of everything. Likewise, mathematical or physical truths remain true even in a group of people in which they are not understood, since they can nevertheless be practically applied by them. However, the beauty of a piece of music, painting, or poetry appears or completely disappears, depending on who hears, reads, or looks at it, because outside of the individual sphere of the person—my own perception—it cannot exist anywhere else. In relation to the *truth*, which requires social and intellectual tests, we would find here complete disproportion, so that what was socially recognized as true and right might only incidentally adhere to the sufficient principle of a work of art—to individual beauty.

However, this does not exclude the *absolute* nature of beauty—on the contrary, it is absolute only because it is not social, and not subject to the tests of intellectualism. Being the pre-thought aspect of a phenomenon, it is therefore the most direct expression in our consciousness of the “unknowable,” and in regard to our cognition—in regard to the world of named and experienced phenomena grasped in categories of thought—it occupies the position of a psychological *noumenon*, of a thing in itself. The phenomena with which we deal and which constitute the order of the world are the result of the action of thought on primary intuition, and our intuition, our feeling, only become accessible to doubts and tests of a rational nature when, after being transformed into thought, it appears in the nature of a specific item. Therefore, if we take away from the world of phenomena this transforming element of thought, what is found completely beyond the sphere of recognition and all cognitive requirements is a “thing in itself,” expressed directly in the nameless feeling of the human being, that is, the psychological, individual “noumenon.” We can say that something seems real to us, although it is not, because “truthfulness” has its objective and social criteria, but it cannot be said that something seems to be beauty without its being so in actuality, because beauty does not have tests outside of me: as an individual feeling, “appearing” is completely sufficient here for reality.

An artist, in trying to show what the world *beyond our thoughts* looks like, should only be concerned that his work should provide people with the psychological *conditions* that would incline their souls to free themselves from the intellect. Each listener or viewer will only find in himself the aesthetic value of the work itself and for this reason is its creator, on an equal footing with the author; the aesthetic value is contained not in the rules according to which a given work was produced, nor in the idea that guided the author while creating

it, but only in the depths of the individual feeling of each person who comes into contact with this work. Hence, the *principles* of art must be adapted to works of fine art, and not the opposite; for beauty, being purely intuitive, cannot become dependent on demands of a mental nature, but, on the contrary, compels the mind to apply its laws to what evokes in souls the undeniable fact of an individual sense of beauty. Obviously, however, no “feeling” can pretend to any social hegemony, to the position of an exemplar presiding over the arts. These patterns can be as many as there are human souls, and beauty does not lose anything from it, because it is *anarchic* by nature, and instead of striving to objectify itself in a social institution, appears wherever human thought—even the least educated—stops, giving the human being the opportunity to contemplate the charm of namelessness. This is the only principle that makes equal the spiritual dignity of every human being, without disinherit anyone of the greatest good—viewing oneself in the aspect of an aesthetic world beyond thought: the only principle that simultaneously provides the broadest universal human field to the symbolism of beauty and to the ways of its manifestation, giving it the possibility of ever greater improvement and development on newer and newer waves of life.

Thus, we see that by placing the question of art in a strictly psychological position we cannot demand of it that it should allow itself to be measured by any ideological test. The only thing that the criterion of art can concern is this—when my mental state is a state of beauty that means that it does not determine the object of art, but the psychological conditions under which *real*—that is, *individual*—beauty appears; in this sense, it may be universal, since it concerns a universal and permanent quality of human souls—the dual view of the world, depending on the aspect of the phenomenon that is turned to us. The sign that proves that a given state of the soul is a state of beauty is *the namelessness* of the emotion of a suspension of the intellect. Everything that precedes thought is beauty, and thus it is distinguished in human spirituality; the more the state of the soul comes closer to contemplative immobility (the less intellectualism) the more it contains the element of beauty. This condition applies not only to works of art but also to all self-born appearances of aesthetic moments, dreams, memories, and moods deriving from nature and life, without which artistic creativity would be impossible for humans.

XI Religious States

An analysis of religious states can scarcely be undertaken from the standpoint of experimental psychology because experimenting with these states is

out of the question. Their appearance requires such a perfect synthesis of the whole of a human being's spirituality that it would be almost impossible to induce this state freely and deliberately and then to observe it. We are here at the upper summits of life, where relations and differences, the experiencing subject and the phenomena of experiencing, begin to identify and fuse together. The sole experimental material on which the psychological analysis of religious states can be based is self-observation, the introspective diaries of those people who experienced such states intensely and often, and knew how to observe them. The rich literature of so-called mystics must replace the laboratory experiment here.

We do not intend to explore this subject, which by itself would require a separate psychology and a separate research method. We are concerned only with finding a few essential features by which religious experience reveals its cryptomnesic genesis and close affinity with the other above-mentioned states of "namelessness."

Let us begin with the simplest and most frequent religious state—with *prayer*. Myers correctly says in one of his letters⁷ that the question of to whom we are to pray is not of great importance, because the effect of prayer depends only on the perfection of the psychological stimulus which occurs then and opens the way for the elect to enter the transcendental world. Among people of various races and civilizations, of various beliefs and ideas, we encounter completely identical psychological "rules" of praying and the same results are obtained, the same state of "liberation," "grace," or "new strength," described in almost the same way among Buddhists, Brahmins, Mohammedans, and Christians. Of course, each praying person individualizes to a high degree the psychological side of prayer, putting into it not only the beliefs of the church to which he belongs, but also his national traditions, his personal needs, likes, various experiences, hopes, and sufferings. However, the method of this spiritual activity and the relation to the object remain the same. The same essential features of prayer are always found:

1) a state of concentration, but without mental effort; 2) a certain feeling, which is the object of concentration; 3) the impression of the presence of something or someone concealed in this feeling; and 4) experiencing the influence and action of that presence as one that does not come from us, from our self.

7 * Frederick Myers' letter quoted by William James in his book *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, New York 1902, Longmans, Green, and Co. (Fredrick W. H. Myers (1843–1901), English poet and literary critic, founder of the Society for Psychical Research.)

These four main features of prayer can be found both in one's own experience (if it ever happened in one's life), as well as in the analyses and descriptions encountered in religious literature. They only appear stronger or weaker depending on the degree of development obtained in contemplative focusing; its boundaries are very wide and, starting from the usual state of prayer, they can reach states of "delight," "ecstasy," "union," or of getting lost in the mysteries of the "seventh chamber" of the Christian mystics.⁸ Let us examine these four characteristics of religious experience in its various forms of development.

1) *Effortless concentration*, or contemplative concentration, is a state of *passive* attention not aimed at perceiving and its subsequent intellectual results—analysis, conclusions, reasoning. Although the field of consciousness then narrows and is completely filled with only one object (monoideism),⁹ this object nevertheless remains a blind spot for the intellect, the stopping point of thought. This is a phenomenon directly contrary to the concentration of *active* attention, which is always the liveliest point of the intellect, and whose object changes immediately into a source of thought. The former is usually pointless, useless to the interests of practical life, and even harmful, because it interferes with quick adaptation and activities; the latter plays an outstanding role in the struggle for existence and develops under its influence as the most useful trait of an individual and species. This development even combats and displaces the capacity for passive attention; especially contemporary social life, the conditions of civilization, the obligation to work and the method of education adapted in that regard systematically aim to weaken the capacity for passive attention and turn it into active concentration.

In ordinary life experience, passive concentration is most often caused by the stimulatory nature of the object. Terrible or beautiful things, rich emotional memories, impressions of a sexual nature and of many other kinds with strong tension usually immobilize our mind on entering it, absorb our attention, and paralyze it at the same time; these are contemplations of fear and love, aesthetic contemplations, and memories. In prayer, a similar matter occurs but of a different genesis. Emotion [*wzruszenie*], in the ordinary sense of the word, only occasionally appears here, and as an additional thing; concentration does not necessarily need it—sometimes it precedes it, sometimes it can do without it. Perhaps some stimulations—great despair, delight, or joy—prepare the ground for the emergence of the state of prayer, or hasten and facilitate its appearance, but this is not a common and necessary condition; we can pray as

8 * Abramowski is referring here to Saint Teresa of Ávila, also known as Saint Teresa of Jesus, (1515–1582), a Spanish mystic, religious reformer, and theologian of the contemplative life.

9 * Monoideism—Greek, filling consciousness with once image or idea.

a result of habit, without any contingent stimulations, coldly, and it is known that under the influence of practice and an appropriate religious culture, the ability to pray develops so much that a person educated in this regard can at any time induce an appropriate state of concentration, and be absorbed in prayer in every situation, just as he can concentrate actively at any moment for observation or reasoning.

Despite this non-stimulatory nature of prayer, in the sense of life stimulations [*w znaczeniu wzruszeń życowych*], it contains a kind of self-generated tension, a certain *subconscious disposition*, similar to stimulatory monoidealism, thanks to which maintaining concentration does not require an effort of will and the state of concentration is passive in nature. The same role that the factor of stimulation plays in incidental contemplations is played in religious contemplation by disposition, subconscious pressure, the movement of cryptomnesic layers occurring under the threshold of consciousness.

We can understand this easily by taking a closer look at the psychological process of prayer. Prayer, in its various forms, always begins with focusing on some words, symbols, images, or representations. At first, this concentration is even to some extent active, especially in people who are not very skilled and must defend themselves against distraction. Soon, however, this effort of the will disappears, provided that prayer is really going to develop and that the object absorbs the person's attention, immobilizes it, and creates a passive monoidealism. What happens then? There is a process very similar to that seen in artificial dysgnosia¹⁰ but differing in that there is no obstruction of attention by the effort of the will, because it is immobilized by the power of the object of attention itself, and also in that the nature of the object is different in terms of its psychological value. Words, signs, or images, under the influence of concentration, are subjected to a process de-thinking; the associative side of the mind's ordinary habits weakens; the intellectual activity of perception, comparison, analysis, and conclusions becomes more and more obstructed by the force of passive concentration, which does not allow for the usual activity of attention, or by the weariness of the mind through cyclical repetition of the same thing (which is also the purpose, among other things, of saying the rosary). It is a dysgnosia and similar to that liberation of an object from the intellect, the transformation of an ordinary thing into an extraordinary, of perception into a nameless state.

But the positive side of this process of de-thinking—what remains—gives this dysgnosia a special character, which is “prayer.” The object of de-thinking

10 * Dysgnosia—Greek, cognitive or intellectual impairment.

is not an object of ordinary experience; its content is extensively ramified and is usually associated with strong experiences, with important moments in life, with disturbing problems of existence which thought could never clearly formulate or solve. What the words "God," "Christ," "redemption," etc. contain for a religious person are whole worlds of stimulatory memories, deriving from difficult or good moments in life, from strong childhood experiences, from disturbing thoughts, from fears and doubts. All these memories, which usually lie dormant in deep layers of cryptomnesia, move to the threshold of consciousness; when attention is strongly focused on their common symbol, they sometimes even move so close that some of them cross that threshold, and in praying, we then again experience those stronger memories. But even without this specific recollection, the movement of the cryptomnesia which occurred under the influence of religious concentration makes itself felt in the awareness of a new mood, a new, awakened state of stimulation. As the ordinary intellectualization of the subject of prayer weakens, with the progression of dysgnosia, the awakened mass of memories is felt more and more strongly; the weakened intellectual activity cannot picture it and develop it into specific memories; thus, at the threshold of consciousness, generic feelings of the forgotten accumulate—the emotional equivalents of those experiences, their nameless form, which is precisely that specific emotional mood that we experience in prayer.

That this is really the case can be understood by observing similar states in oneself. Any relaxation of the religious focus, but without losing it, usually causes an intense and vivid, albeit brief, recollection of some of the more important moments of life; then our former fears and hopes, specific issues of good and evil that life has presented, often even things from childhood years which did not seem to be of serious importance stand before the eyes of our soul as if they were being relived. Hence, prayer always inclines a person toward an *examination of his conscience*, and this relationship is clearly marked in the practical regulations of the Church. Conversely, too, any intense recollection disposes and enables us to pray, and creates the same mood as religious concentration. In the early religions, remembrance was even the main content of religious messages and had its social form as *ancestor worship*; however, it has survived and still remains, in rationally and socially developed religious systems, as a still living element, manifested in various Church rites and regulations, such as All Souls' Day, prayers for the dead, examination of the conscience, confession, etc. The intense recollection, of a stimulatory tincture, that occurs then—the recollection of one's personal life in small details or from vague mentions of ancestors and deceased acquaintances—awakens nameless states of the soul that are concealed by cryptomnesia and that

ordinary life activity does not allow to occur, and in accumulating these states can gradually take over the mind, absorb a person's attention, immobilize it, and consequently produce that same psychological state as prayer. It is a *recollective contemplation* that stands very close to religious contemplation and comes from the same psychological source. Usually religious life even enables it and contributes to its development; while a life of useful interests, a rational and purposeful life, of trouble and struggle, makes people for the most part completely incapable of recollection, just as it makes them incapable of prayer or aesthetic contemplation. For all of this belongs to the same field of the psychology of the "nameless," as opposed to the psychology of the intellect, which the struggle for existence and the evolution of the species has formed.

2) The second quality of prayer is that the object of focus is *a certain feeling*, not a representation of an intellectual nature—it results from the very nature of concentration and its agnostic effects, which inhibit mental activities.

In the same way that factors of agnosia or dysgnosia—absent-mindedness, being strongly moved, weariness of the attention, maladjustment, etc., which operate at the moment of perception—transform perception into a pure impression, taking away its intellectual side, so the agnostic factor of passive concentration during prayer transforms the idea that is the object of this focus into its *emotional equivalent*; an idea that is de-thought, intellectually blocked, becomes the pure stimulation of this idea; it becomes what it usually is in cryptomnesia, i.e., a generic feeling of the forgotten; with that difference, however, that this generic feeling and that nameless stimulation connected with it are then a very intense phenomenon, standing on the threshold of consciousness, or rather filling it completely. Passive focus, which de-thought the idea, does not simultaneously allow any other thing to come into the consciousness; what is left of the idea, its generic stimulation, does not hide in the depths of the subconscious, but stands at the very threshold of the intellect; the intellect, immobilized in its action, observes this new form—possesses it, but in some other way, finds itself in the face of something real, close, but elusive; it looks at the *forgotten*, at the foreign and mysterious face of a pre-thought thing.

It should also be taken into account that the idea constituting the object of religious focus is actually, as we have already said, a huge *complex of memories* that systematize and associate with each other throughout the life of an individual, choosing a representative symbol around which this self-generated organization occurs. Such complexes, concealed in symbol, present themselves intellectually as an almost infinite *multiplicity* of different images and states; it is a series of many successive experiences; this multiplicity, however, transferred to the domain of the forgotten, i.e., to the subconscious, where the activity of the intellect stops, ceases to be a multiplicity and turns into a kind

of generic stimulation of one symbol, into a certain emotional tone, in which the nameless equivalents of all those things that are distinguished in time and space are found. The series turns into the stimulatory quality of the symbol; multiplicity becomes one when viewed from the pole opposite to the intellect. This transformation of *quantity into quality*, which can be shown in psychological experience, when examining memory of series,¹¹ is the basis for the formation of all psychological complexes, all collectivities and systematizations concealed in symbols. No idea, contained in a word or a sign, would have its own meaning, or its emotional and mental value, if it had not concealed in itself temporarily and constantly the entire systematization of various representations, memories, and life events that the individual's life experience has associated with it. In order to find the value of this idea and its proper mode of action on our minds and feelings, we would have to recall each time an infinite series of these systematized states, and as a result we would never find it, due to our forgetfulness and mistakes. All this work, however, is completely superfluous due to the fact that the *concealment* of systematization in symbol is its *real* existence, albeit non-intellectual—a total existence in the stimulation that the symbol possesses, including a kind of emotional fog that surrounds every word and every sign of value to our mind.

Hence, in the process of de-thinking ideas, in religious concentration, vast layers of the subconscious are disturbed; memories that rarely see light come alive—the distant days of childhood, when the symbol was just beginning to emerge, various moments of suffering, the thought of which was avoided, or joyful impulses, which were usually difficult to recall and hardly tangible. It all awakens, presses against the threshold of the intellect, and finally enters victoriously, taking advantage of the vacuum that the agnosia of religious concentration has created. And then we meet face to face with something that is near but incomprehensible, with a reality about which we cannot think. The forgotten has come to light; it has crossed the threshold of the intellect; it came into contact with it and yet was not transformed; it retained its pre-thought form, remained forgotten. The intellect did not have the power to make a transformation and the charm remained. This is the mystery of prayer.

The whole process can be found in the observations of introspective people whose religious focus, thanks to years of practice, attained great strength and durability, and turned into an almost daily repeated experience that could be described and analyzed in detail. In them, too, we find the entire

11 See: E. Abramowski, *Badania doświadczalne nad pamięcią*, Vol. III: *Podświadomość i reakcje organiczne*, Warszawa 1912, Księgarnia E. Wende i S-ka, p. 110.

developmental scale of this concentration, from ordinary prayer to states of ecstasy and its consolidation in life. In practical prescriptions that can facilitate religious concentration, we can readily recognize the psychological conditions that favor the formation of agnosia, such as the wearying of the mind by repeating the same series of representations, a hypnotic sinking into thoughts, a surrendering to indefinite stimulations, etc.

For example, Ignatius of Loyola, in the “third method of prayer,”¹² recommends pronouncing each word and pondering the meaning of it in the intervals between two breaths; this is a *rhythmic* prayer. In exercises for the fourth week he recommends concentrating on what gives the greatest emotion, what provides the strongest attraction for the soul, clearly stating that “emotional acts of the will” are of greater value for prayer than “discursive acts of the reason.”¹³

According to St. Teresa, *mental* prayer (*oraison mentale*), the first stage of religious experience, should begin with the intense work of the mind; once chosen, the subject of meditation should be considered from different viewpoints, studied, and the details analyzed before returning to the whole. At the same time, however, the soul’s peace must be obtained emotionally—an interior silence that brings us closer to God. At a later stage of practice, with the greater perfection of the individual, the activity of the intellect ceases. “Thought,” says St. Teresa, “is not the soul, and when thought is interrupted it may happen that the soul acquires new strength. It is even necessary for mental activity to cease in order to move on to higher forms of prayer; for the mind introduces into prayer something of the impurity of human thoughts; but it is not up to the human being to choose the moment when thought is to pass away.”¹⁴ In the second degree of prayer (*oraison de recueillement ou de quiétude*),¹⁵ once there is a strong feeling of joy and peace, mental activity weakens even more. The intervention of reason can only be harmful then; nor should we be concerned with what comes from this side, nor with the creations that our imagination may suggest. Mentally, we do not know what is happening in the soul; we only know that the soul draws near to God and that one more step, and it

12 * Ignatius of Loyola, “Spiritual Exercises,” translated by G. E. Ganss, in: Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises and Selected Works*, red. G. E. Ganss, New York 1991, Paulist Press, pp. 181–182.

13 Quoted after: J. Segond, *La Prière. Essai de psychologie religieuse*, Paris 1911, Fèlix Alcan, p. 260. Joseph L. P. Segond (1872–1954), was a French philosopher and psychologist.

14 H. Delacroix, *Études d'histoire et de psychologie du mysticisme. Les grands mystiques chrétiens*, Paris 1908, Fèlix Alcan, p. 18 [Henri Delacroix (1873–1937), French psychologist].

15 * *Oraison de recueillement ou de quiétude*—French, “prayer of recollection or quietness.”

might merge with him entirely. In this state, our intellectual and sensual powers have not yet ceased to function but are needed less and less for the life of the soul. Life has already begun to develop in a new direction.¹⁶ In the third stage of prayer (*oraison d'Union*),¹⁷ these normal powers no longer function. In the previous phase, the soul is still half-asleep, half-vigilant. At this stage, "it is strongly awake in the direction of God, and completely asleep in relation to earthly things and to itself."¹⁸ It is a sleep of the intellect. The intellect is motionless at the sight of what it contemplates and the soul neither understands nor knows what it is doing. The center of this state is a limitless joy in which all individuality dies. It may last only a short time, scarcely half an hour, but it leaves behind a profound transformation of the whole human being.¹⁹ In the fourth stage (*extase et ravissement*)²⁰ the agnostic process goes even further. If, in the third stage of prayer, the soul retains a certain awareness of itself, its state and the world, and can use certain signs to communicate with its surroundings and make known what it feels, then in a state of ecstasy "all personal awareness disappears and all feeling ceases."²¹ The senses cease to function, and there are no mobile reactions. The soul collapses into a kind of faint, in which the body gradually loses all its strength and stops breathing. The person's eyes close involuntarily, or if they remain open, they cannot see anything. Voices are heard, but no words are understood. The person would like to speak, but words cannot come out of his mouth. The only thing that remains and absorbs the person completely is that incomprehensible joy: "All the senses are so occupied with this delight that none of them, either internally or externally, can be concerned with anything."²² "This is the hour of heroic promises and resolutions."²³ From this joy a great, new moral strength is born.²⁴ The state of ecstasy *fluctuates*, as do the lower states of concentration; it appears suddenly (if the preparation process is not counted); it lasts a short time; it disappears again, giving way to the normal activity of the mind and the senses, then it reappears and thus can continue intermittently for hours, according to the observation of St. Teresa. These fluctuations resemble the fluctuations of

16 Ibidem, p. 18–20.

17 * *Oraison d'Union*—French, "prayer of union."

18 * See: ibidem, p. 20.

19 Ibidem, p. 21–22.

20 * *Extase et ravissement*—French, "ecstasy and delight."

21 * Ibidem, p. 22.

22 * Ibidem, p. 24.

23 * Ibidem, p. 26.

24 Ibidem, p. 22–26.

attention when focused on weak sensations, and even more the fluctuations that occur in dysgnosia, which is induced experimentally.²⁵

3) In descriptions of religious experience we can easily discover the third quality of prayer, the most important quality—*the feeling of presence*. The object of focus is not a stimulatory state of joy, in the ordinary sense of the word, or one that differs only in its tension and strength from various other joyful feelings. It is distinguished by something more fundamental; it is distinguished by the fact that this feeling of joy *conceals something within itself*—that there is a *presence* in it. This fact is somewhat deductive from the explanation of prayer we have given above. Since what enters consciousness during religious concentration, and as a result of its agnosia, is a living and strong mass of *generic feelings of the forgotten*, a stimulatory reduction of various new and previous experiences; it is therefore clear that an emotional state of this variety cannot be an ordinary, solely subjective feeling, unconnected to any object and embracing any variety of objects. Just as the simple feeling of the forgotten that occurs in memory gaps, in recall or recognition, and in the study of resistance conceals in itself a certain narrowly defined object which we sense in a certain nameless way although we cannot yet name or picture it, so in the complex mass of feelings of the forgotten—there where they appear as memory moods, or as the symbolism of certain images and ideas—in the stimulation of those moods and symbols, we also feel the presence of thing. These are not actually subjective feelings; *these have the emotional nature of the sensation of objects that thought does not yet possess, or that it cannot even possess at all*. This is why we called the reduction of the forgotten—and agnostic reduction in general—the *emotional equivalents* of perceptions and experiences.

This phenomenon—the emotional presence of a thing which the intellect cannot name, although it perfectly senses its genre—this phenomenon we have already shown in various shapes and forms, as gaps in memory, offering resistance, as hypnotic ideas or aesthetic elements. In prayer, and especially in its higher forms of Union and Ecstasy, it reaches its greatest development and takes such a form that it may seem that here some other, metapsychical world of things is beginning. Similarly, the superiority of the value of the emotional experience over the value of its intellectual form—the feeling of profound disappointment that arises when comparing a memory with reality or a hypnotic idea with its reminder—is also found in religious experience. In the emotional states of Union, Ecstasy, or Rapture, which have been described in detail by

25 See: E. Abramowski, *Badania doświadczalne nad pamięcią*, Vol. II: *Podświadomość*, chap. III: *Czucia rodzajowe jako pierwiastek estetyki i mistycyzmu*, op. cit.

various mystics, there is not only a hidden presence in the feeling, there is also some nameless possession of important knowledge; there is the revelation of a mystery, the penetration of the essence of the world, but in such a way that the intellect cannot possess or maintain any of this, and if it tries then as a result it receives only banal thoughts, or formulations so dark that they hardly make any sense. The same disproportionate state is described by James, Jastrow,²⁶ and others as occurring under anesthesia: under the influence of ether, chloroform, and laughing gas.

There is no such disproportion in the ordinary experience of cryptomnesic phenomena. A forgotten thing is either remembered and then we have absolutely clear recognition that we have the same thing we were looking for; or it cannot be remembered at all because its generic feeling is too weak or has been distorted by something. Here—in religious states—generic feelings cannot be recalled, despite the fact that they are very strong, despite the fact that they have crossed the threshold of consciousness, as intense, completely absorbing emotion. This is an exceptional situation of the mind. Something similar happens only in aesthetic contemplation, especially under the influence of music; and it occurs also sometimes in recalling strong dreams, right after waking, when the dream is still vividly perceived as something very important and beautiful, but we cannot mentally formulate it, and what is organized by thinking and recounting seems quite impoverished and worthless in relation to the dream experience itself. The reason the emotional equivalents that occur during religious concentration cannot be recalled is the question of a non-mental reality, the existence of a Platonic world. Here we will limit ourselves only to the general answer that the strong and intellectually inaccessible emotional equivalents, which are the source of humanity's eternal seeking in the field of art and religion, prove that there have been and are experiences of things that could never be imagined and adapted to the activities of the intellect, even though they have a strong effect and penetrate deeply.

We find that the feeling of *presence* is described by mystics in the same way and in the same terms as if they were describing strong generic feelings. "You see nothing," says St. Teresa, "either inside yourself, or outside; and yet the soul, having no vision, possesses an object and feels where it is more clearly than if it had seen it; without the help of a word the soul knows perfectly what this object that has appeared is, from what side it comes, and what it means." This

26 * Joseph Jastrow (1863–1944) was Polish-born American psychologist, noted for inventions in experimental psychology and psychophysics.

presence may last for days. "It also happens," she continues, "that during prayer we are suddenly suspended, and in this suspension the Savior shows us a great mystery, which our soul seems to see in itself. [...] It is an intellectual vision through which the soul knows how all things see themselves in God and how they all exist in him." "Great truths and deep secrets are shown in these hidden nooks." "Once in awe, I saw one truth that is the fulfilment of all truths, but I could not know what it was like because I could not see anything." In this nameless and emotional form, St. Teresa recognizes the presence not only of Christ, but also of the Holy Trinity. In other kinds of "intellectual visions," as she calls them, she also met a demon: "He appeared to me often," she says, "without any form, as happens in intellectual visions, when the soul clearly sees someone's presence, although it does not perceive any shapes." Elsewhere, she describes this state as follows: "Seeing continued, although I could not say that I saw anything. But I must have seen an object if I can compare it with others. But this seeing is so subtle that the mind cannot reach it. I do not understand those visions that seem to have no images. Some may have images, but because they are formed in a state of wonder, our powers cannot then grasp the way God shows us things."²⁷

This character of a thing that is close, emotionally defined, and inaccessible to the intellect is found in various descriptions of the state of mystical contemplation. Delacroix, in speaking of experience of the presence in the case of Madame Guyon²⁸ and of Malaval,²⁹ uses the same term we created for cryptomnesic phenomena: "It is," he says, "not so much an idea or image that appears, but an *emotional equivalent*, if one may speak thus, of Christian representations. In place of the idea of Jesus Christ, for example, they substitute what they call *un certain goût de Jesus-Christ*³⁰ (Guyon); it is a kind of stimulatory abstraction, a musical theme, a leitmotiv that comes to represent specific ideas,"³¹ and he further concludes that "terms that mean the removal of intellectual cognition, consciousness, and self-knowledge, when the I is opposed as the subject to experienced states, do not necessarily exclude *a certain kind of more shapeless and nameless consciousness*."³²

27 Ibidem, p. 100–103.

28 * Jeanne-Marie Bouvier de la Motte, known as Madame Guyon (1648–1717), French quietist mystic.

29 * François Malaval (1626–1719), French philosopher and quietist mystic.

30 * *Un certain goût de Jesus-Christ*—French, a certain taste of Jesus-Christ.

31 Ibidem, p. 373–374.

32 Ibidem, p. 384.

In Saint John of the Cross³³ the descriptions of contemplation confirm the same: “This contemplation is so simple, so spiritual, and general, that the intelligence accepts it without the aid of any images or representations that the senses can provide. [...] It is a general and dark cognition by which our reason cannot clearly define what has been given.”³⁴ “When God Most High,”³⁵ says blessed Angela of Foligno,³⁶ “visits the soul, it sometimes receives the grace of seeing him; then it sees him in itself, without any bodily form, though seeing more clearly than one person sees another. The soul’s sight then has a spiritual fullness about which I cannot say anything because neither words nor imagination are capable of expressing it.” Alvarez de Paz³⁷ points out the same: “The soul knows God deeply and sees him, so to speak, more clearly than eyes see material light. [...] But neither the senses nor the representations have any part in this seeing; everything takes place at the summits of the soul. [...] The mind neither makes a denial, saying, for example, that God is not limited and finite, nor claims anything—that he is, for example, good and wise—it sees only greatness itself, without admixture, in the peace of a clear day. When you see light through the eyes of the body, you don’t need to juxtapose concepts, ideas. [...] you just see light. Likewise, the soul, in a contemplative state, claims nothing, denies nothing, defines nothing, pushes nothing aside, but only, at full ease, sees God.”³⁸

The object of contemplation, however, is not always of a solely emotional genre. Just as a strong feeling of the forgotten, in seeking a representation, creates memory hallucinations, hiding in a representation with which it has any emotional affinity, so the generic feelings occurring in religious concentration earnestly seek their signs, their conceptual points of support, and create what is called in the literature of mystics *imaginary visions and inner words*. It is a phenomenon where religious experiences and aesthetic creativity, and to a certain extent the domain of dreams, meet.

33 * Saint John of the Cross, Spanish: Juan de la Cruz (1542–1591), Spanish priest and mystic, one of the major figures of the Counter-Revolution in Spain.

34 *La Nuit obscure de l’âme*, in: *Les Oeuvres spirituelles du bienheureux Jean de la Croix*, Paris 1849, Lecoffre, p. 405–406.

35 *Le livre des visions et instructions de la bienheureuse Angèle de Foligno*, translated by E. Hello, Paris 1868, A. Tralin Éditeur, p. 200.

36 * Angela of Foligno, Italian: Angela da Foligno (1248–1309) was an Italian Franciscan tertiary and mystic.

37 * Álvarez Diego de Paz (1560–1620), Spanish mystic and Jesuit.

38 A. de Paz, *De inquisitione pacis, sive studio orationis*, Lugduni 1611, Book v, part III, chap. XIV, p. 1459–1460, quoted after J. Pacheu, *L’expérience mystique et l’activité subconsciente*, Paris 1911, Perrin, p. 139, p.142.

Elsewhere,³⁹ I described a characteristic phenomenon where the emotional form of hypnotic thoughts, in looking for its reminder, finds a symbolic image in which it has been preserved and thanks to which remembrance is then produced. It is also possible that the dreams we remember and recount did not really have, i.e., in the dream experience itself, those images that we remember—that they were only emotional equivalents, strong, nameless reductions, which, upon awakening, sought their representations, and were preserved in stimulationally adapted images and which organized themselves then and there into a logical whole. Something similar also occurs in moments of artistic creation: a poet or artist experiences the psychological process of *remembrance*; what he has first and what serves him as the basis for creation is a certain stimulatory abstraction, a certain yet almost nameless pattern which he carries within himself, and this abstraction, this pattern, seeks its images, its representation, its embodiment available to the intellect and the senses. And here, just as in remembrance of the forgotten, it is sometimes necessary to pass through errors and illusions, through false substitutions, which, however, are recognized immediately afterwards as being not what was sought and is still being sought. Rarely does an artist immediately find a representation for his inner vision; he makes an attempt, destroys it, and starts again before finally finding the closest equivalent; and the recognition of a false representation occurs here in the same way as in remembrance, without reasoning and without any representatively defined basis; the falsity is felt intuitively; it is recognized in trying the found thing against the nameless template in the soul. When the artist finally finds a true representation of this template, he knows perfectly well that the representation is only *a symbol* of what he had, that he did not depict everything, that he created only the most perfect visible sign in which he could concentrate and record that nameless reality.

The “imaginary seeing” of mystics is of a similar nature: the stimulatory abstraction then finds its symbolic images, its points of support, however accessible to the intellect. If, though, they encounter a certain mental culture and the gift of expression, they turn into the poetic works that we find in the biblical prophets, in the books of the *Upanishads*,⁴⁰ in the works of the Areopagite,⁴¹ Suzo,⁴² John of the Cross, Ruysbroeck,⁴³ and many others.

39 See: E. Abramowski, *Badania doświadczalne nad pamięcią*, Vol. II, chap. II: *Czucia rodzajowe i opór zapomnianego*, op. cit., p. 50–76.

40 * *Upanishads*—the most recent texts of *Vedas*.

41 * Dionysius the Areopagite, 5th–6th century Christian neo-Platonist.

42 * Henry Suso (1295?–1366), German mystic.

43 * John Ruysbroeck (1293–1381), Flemish mystic.

For St. Teresa, imaginary visions appeared shortly after the first “intellectual seeing” (i.e., nameless seeing) of Christ. They developed gradually. One day, she recounts, while she was praying, she saw Christ’s hands, and a few days later, his face; later, during the mass, he appeared to her in his entirety “as portrayed by painters at the moment of resurrection, in all his beauty and unspeakable majesty.” From that time, she saw him in various scenes of his life. These were not hallucinatory, sensual visions, but purely internal, just as strong memories are seen. “I have never seen anything with the eyes of the flesh,” says St. Teresa, “but only through the eyes of the soul.” Delacroix lists the following features of imaginary visions—features found in St. Teresa’s descriptions:⁴⁴ 1) their content exceeds the bounds of imagination (as results mainly from the symbolic, representative nature of these visions); 2) they appear suddenly, are short-lived, and are independent of thought; 3) they can occur equally well with open or closed eyes: “When God wills,” says St. Teresa, “this light is seen in spite of ourselves, and no distraction, or resistance, or evasions and activities, will prevent it from appearing”;⁴⁵ 4) these visions, despite their short duration, are active, penetrate deeply, and have a powerful influence on life. They leave an indelible memory; they also impart a strong emotion, at first a certain fear, then a losing oneself in love, and delight.

“Inner words” have the same character. St. Teresa makes it clear that this is not a hallucination of the hearing. They do not reach “the ears of the flesh”; they are soundless; they are only heard internally, but they clearly also attract all attention to themselves. They differ from ordinary thought words in that they create what they say. When they proclaim tranquility, it comes immediately. When they announce a “presence” it is already felt. These are words which mystics call “substantial” or “divine.” The soul hears them when the mind is confused, distracted, when it cannot form any rational thought. They come suddenly and without anything to do with what is being thought, while engaging in a conversation, for example, or in times of weariness and semi-consciousness. Sometimes they also utter *truths* so great and thoughts so wonderful that the mind would take a long time to sort them in any way. Our mind feels completely alien to these words; we know perfectly well that they do not come from us. There is an absolute certainty of the truth in what they announce and of being temporarily in possession of a secret.⁴⁶

44 * H. Delacroix, *Études d'histoire et de psychologie du mysticisme*, op. cit., p. 107–108.

45 * Ibidem, p. 108.

46 Ibidem, pp. 84–96.

Here we see a striking resemblance to hypnotic thoughts and to the “anesthetic revelations” of James, Ramsay,⁴⁷ Davy,⁴⁸ Holmes,⁴⁹ and so on, when the “veil of eternity rose” and the mystery of being was formulated in a few words. Neither St. Teresa nor any of the mystics could ever utter these revealed truths afterwards; they could not develop what was contained in the “words of God,” even when these words were remembered and still fully reminiscent of their spell. In their works, apart from poetic beauties and often incomprehensible symbolic images, we encounter only the same truths as were already known—the dogmas of the religion to which they belong. The revelation of the mystery existed; it was experienced by St. Teresa and others; it was a real experience, not a mental delusion, but the mind could not make use of it; the intellect could neither comprehend it, nor translate it into its own conceptual language, nor even find any analogy with the categories and relations known to it. The mystery revealed itself, as usual, in the nameless and emotional form and thus it had to remain. “Substantial” words here act solely as points of support for this *namelessness*, representational points where it collects and is temporarily preserved, as ordinary words symbolize memories and moods, the small or large collection of spiritual experiences. However, since in the mystical experience the “forgotten,” which is symbolized, is out of the ordinary, both in regard to the strength of its “generic feelings,” as well as in its origin, the words or interior visions that take on themselves this representation acquire an extraordinary subjective value, with great depth and miraculous power. And separated from this symbolism, when they lose this representativeness, when the great namelessness is detached from them, they again become mere words or images; they cannot convey what they contained to other people. Only with the help of those means at the disposal of *art* can we find representational signs that are able to store in themselves a certain part of the generic namelessness that was subjectively revealed and to convey this nameless truth to other people. But this is the secret of artistic creation; with the present state of psychological knowledge, the objective conditions of this transfer cannot be formulated and defined; we can only suppose that a work of art, in relation to individuals who receive its influence, creates subjective conditions that favor

47 * William Ramsay (1852–1916), was a Scottish chemist who discovered the noble gases and received the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1904. See his report about anaesthesia: “Experiments with Anaesthetics,” *Journal of the Society for Psychological Research*, 1893, vol. 6, pp. 94–96.

48 * Humphry Davy (1778–1829), was a British chemist and physicist.

49 * Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809–1894), was an American writer and physician, author of the notion of “anaesthesia.”

agnosic concentration and move the usually hidden layers of cryptomnesia to the threshold of the intellect; thus they give a new vision, a seeing of things liberated from the intellect. Religious mystics do not have this gift of communicating the revealed mystery through sensual signs; they are unable to realize their subjective experience, whether in images, or in ideas, or in forms or sounds; there are only rare exceptions. But on the other hand, the experience they undergo is accomplished differently and is transmitted to people by other means. Instead of works of art, it creates a new personality and new moral forces; it becomes real in a person's most essential depths, making him the creator of new life. The fourth trait of prayer contains an element of this.

4) Experiencing the *influence* of a "presence," as something different from ourselves, is the most difficult phenomenon to explain in the psychology of religious states. We stand here almost at the end of the observation. What has been created in the course of religious life is closed ever more into some kind of unfathomable chasms of the subconscious; it separates itself from the self; it does not permit any perusal by the intellect. Mystics' descriptions of this "influence" are very vague and very poor in psychological clues. The whole description comes down to the joyful knowledge that everything has been resolved, a final liberation—a "union with God."

In ordinary prayer, in the first stage of religious concentration, there is only a certain inner reconciliation with oneself, the silencing of tiring dilemmas, a new supply of moral strength that gives a certain serenity and courage in life. These are the most common answers religious people give to the question about the effects of prayer. Those who know how to pray chiefly seek this result in prayer and know from frequent experience that they can obtain it; for them, it is an indispensable natural need, a very subtle medicine for the soul, without which they would feel weaker, less resistant, less healthy. This influence does not come, as some would have it, from any auto-suggestion; such a translation is psychologically completely wrong. When praying, a person does not convince himself of anything; if he approaches this act with a persistent, imposing idea that could play the role of suggestion, these are usually just bad and tiring ideas; they are worries, spiritual lowness, a sense of sin, fears, ideas that dominate and in essence insinuate and against which he seeks and finds help in prayer. The auto-suggestion, in so far as it existed, has been overcome, the aggressive idea has been repressed, the dilemma has been removed, and the state that follows does not have any trait of the confusion and dissociation that characterizes states of suggestion; on the contrary, it is a better spiritual synthesis, greater freedom and greater peace, an easier adaptation to the tasks of life. Such observations can be found in the ancient religious literature as well as in the contemporary American movement called the "mind-cure." Although

in church ceremonies, pilgrimages to miraculous places, and in all collective religious activities where the crowd is present, ordinary suggestion can and sometimes does work very strongly, creating psychological dissociation and automatism which then pass away quite easily afterwards, in proper prayer, when a person is alone and left to himself, the source of new action, the beneficial influence, is neither external nor in his mind. The effect of prayer does not depend entirely on what the person thinks at the time, nor on the type of feeling with which he approached the prayer: it depends only on that specific spiritual situation—passive concentration in which a presence is felt—that is described by various terms such as humility, surrendering to the action of grace, trust, faith, submitting one's suffering to God, self-forgetfulness, and so forth.

It is important for the psychology of prayer that its influences on a person are not transitory and short term, but on the contrary show *development*. Religious focus passes; states of ecstasy and rapture, which generally cannot be long, also pass; but after every such experience, even ordinary prayer, a permanent trace remains, that "refreshment," "renewal," "state of grace" which is the acquisition of religious moments and which continues to develop. This development is presented as the gradual *moral transformation* of a person, which sometimes goes very quickly, sometimes very slowly, over long years, sometimes with breaks and retreats. Mystics have named it variously: for Madame Guyon it is "the gradual taking of the self by God," "the progressive decline of personality that makes room for a new, wider life."⁵⁰ To work on "destroying oneself" is, in her terms, an essential Christian task, a necessary result of prayer. For St. Teresa, the same transformation, as the final goal of religious life, is called the *seventh chamber*. It is a fusion of contemplative life with active life, "identification with God" not solely in abnormal moments of ecstasy and delight but consciously, continuously, in everyday life, in all activities, in all relations with the surrounding world; it is a profound, essential transformation of life itself.

"This state," says Delacroix of the seventh chamber of St. Teresa, "is an inner, silent joy, while one is fully aware and in full possession of one's mind; the powers are not suspended here, as in ecstasy; only when they turn to the very center of the soul do they seem puzzled and motionless. Knowing that God is among them, they no longer seek states of grace; they do not need consolation or rapture. It is enough for them that they have God. [...] When such a condition becomes permanent, the others, the previous ones, disappear clearly; there is neither ecstasy nor delight anymore, or at least they become very rare.

50 * Ibidem, p. 130.

These violent delights, which captivated the soul even in public places, and to which the soul's modest nature could never grow accustomed, now lose all their external manifestations. Only the internal phenomenon, the essence of things, remains. The whole cortège⁵¹ of anesthesia, forgetfulness, attacks, cataplexy, paralysis, and spasms that accompanied it, the whole nervous side of the phenomenon, gives way completely; either because of age, which weakens such events, or because of the development of the mystical life itself, for which they were already superfluous and disturbing. What remains is the positive side of the ecstatic states, the peaceful awareness of the deity still present, living within the soul and in all activities. [...] The seventh chamber is the last stage of development, the final state, the synthesis of the previous ones, higher than ecstasy, which spreads over the whole soul and over life what ecstasy contained in itself temporarily, as if in moments beyond life. The seventh chamber is thus the deification of life."⁵²

The achievement of this degree of mystical development begins the most active, apostolic, creative period of life, the period of the strongest influence on people and the greatest flourishing of all the powers. It is characteristic of the biography not only of St. Teresa but also of most mystics: the last epoch of life, despite older age and the experience of many hard years, becomes the period of greatest fullness of life, of greatest serenity and greatest creative power. It seems as if, through many years of religious experience, a new personality was gradually grown and developed, a deeply distorted self a hundred times more powerful than the previous one, triumphant over the issues of life and death. It is as if in the secrets of religious concentration a new type of "superhuman" was born and bred, modeled on the legends of ancient gods walking the earth.

How can such an evolution be explained? An evolution that is completely confined to the inner experience of the individual, the dark abyss of the self? To call it the development of a new psychic personality, and to look for analogies to the formation of the pathological personalities known to us, does not explain the phenomenon. It is just another name for something that remains unknown. And all the analogies that can be found between this evolution and pathological facts end precisely where the essential feature of religious evolution begins, a personality arising not from decay but from an even more perfect synthesis, a personality not less but more capable of living, and of that total, creative life. This result is never achieved by hysterical dissociation, or by any intrusive idea developing in a context of degeneration.

51 * Cortège—French, retinue, procession.

52 Ibidem, pp. 55–71.

Today it is still premature to seek a complete explanation for the evolution of mystics. We see gaps in the problem that cannot be filled by any existing science. We will limit ourselves to pointing out some of the paths that can be seen in the light of understanding prayer as a phenomenon of cryptomnesia.

We have already discussed memory in our previous work⁵³—that the forgotten, accumulating gradually over the course of a life, creates the individuality of a person, the type of his character, the moral type. In this personality, which we feel cenesthetically as a sense of self, so close and undefined, all the experiences of an individual and even of the species are concealed and live, as component parts, in their nameless and emotional reduction; it is the current past, a history enchanted into stimulatory equivalents and still alive. It is known, however, that the individuality of a person can never be reduced completely to the features acquired in the course of a personal life. A huge part of this individuality, and the most basic, lies behind personal experience as inherited traits. This inheritance consists not only of morphological features which develop completely during the embryonic life but also of *dispositions* which appear gradually later and constitute the main material from which the character of the individual, the whole moral personality, the receiving and active self, are formed. From the psychological point of view, a “disposition” or concealed feature, a potential phenomenon, must also be a certain psychological reality, something actual and of the same “spiritual,” subjective, perceptible nature as its manifestation, a visible, kinetic form. Moreover, in seeking in psychological experience for an analogy to the relation that physics calls the state of stress and state of motion—potential and its transition into active energy—we only find two basic forms of subjective phenomena, which represent the same attitude: the nameless and stimulatory state, and the intellectual, representational state. The representation is reduced to its emotional equivalent, as we have seen in various mental processes; and, vice versa, the emotional equivalent changes into its representation, into its form revealed to the intellect. In the first case (forgetfulness and agnosia of all kinds), active energy turns into potential; in the second case (reminders, memory hallucinations, the disappearance of agnosia, aesthetic creativity) potential turns into active energy.

It is this stimulatory reduction of all kinds of experienced events that is inherited from generation to generation and lies at the basis of a person's individuality as a great psychological potential from the life of their ancestors, as the “forgotten,” which the individual has never known. The forgotten

53 See: E. Abramowski, *Badania doświadczalne nad pamięcią*, vol. II, chap. IV, op. cit.

may reach as far back as the continuity of the reproductive idioplasma, which stores all these stimulatory reductions within itself. Thus, not only the life of ancestors, to the most ancient generations, but also the entire evolution of species, through the vertebrates, insects, echinoderms, and coelenterates, reaching back to the protozoa, has deposited in itself a testimony of its existence, an emotional and nameless reduction of eternal events. The biological affinity of the human being with all living nature corresponds closely with the mental affinity: not only a similarity but also a living, essential continuity.

Thus, in a religious experience, which is, so to speak, a *cryptomnesic storm*, when a mass of the forgotten, which is usually deeply concealed, bursts into the intellectual vacuum created by the contemplational focus, and when the lower layers of cryptomnesia come to the surface, pushing new and fresh layers into the depths, then what has never been revealed mentally now reaches the threshold of the intellect and crosses that threshold. There is a retrograde experience, an experience of more and more ancient "equivalents," which are increasingly distant from personal life, in the direction from which the entire evolution of life in general proceeded, i.e., toward its *beginning*, toward *the unknowable, the thing in itself*.

The pantheistic nature of religious experience corresponds to this, drawing very close to the animal world and to all nature, which appears so strongly in Hindu religions and in the case of many Christian mystics (such as St. Francis of Assisi):⁵⁴ a special kind of pantheism, not formulated in dogmas, often even avoiding intellectual formulation, but appearing very strongly as a subjective experience. "I was," says St. Teresa, "so benighted at first that I did not know that *God is in all beings*. It was only since the time of that prayer when I found him present in me and saw him so clearly, that I could no longer doubt." "I knew one person," she continues, "who did not know that *God is in all things*, that he is present and essential, and who, having experienced the very state of grace of which I am speaking, believed it to the utmost. In vain did one of those supposed scholars whom she asked how God could be in us explain to her that it could only be by way of grace; she could not agree—she was so sure of the truth." We find the same in John of the Cross, in the Areopagite, in Madame Guyon, in Ruysbroeck, in Plotinus⁵⁵ and his disciples, in the Hindu

54 We find fully conscious expression of this pantheism of mystical experiences in the works of [Juliusz] Słowacki (1809–1849, a Polish romantic poet, one of the "National Prophets") and especially in *Genesis from the Spirit*, *Letter to Rembowski*, and *Conversation with Helion and Helois*. In the *Letter* the task is expressed in these words: "From our soul we will rebuild the entire past."

55 * Plotinus (c. 203–269/270), neo-Platonist philosopher.

Upanishads, and in many other testimonies of religious psychology, including in most recent times, where we find the same, changed in form only, in Słowacki, in his “science of genesis”⁵⁶ deriving from his experience. The experience is universal and is repeated in an astonishingly uniform way regardless of race, culture, epoch, or dogma, and therefore the argument can be made that it is an objective experience and based on the thing itself.

XII Things Beyond Thought

The psychological analysis we have conducted on perception and nameless states forces us to formulate a new philosophical concept: the concept of “things beyond thought.” We are forced to do so not in order for the notion to be an auxiliary for analysis—to be its methodological tool—but because new facts have emerged that require such a concept. In the analysis itself, we have always avoided any assumptions, as being inconsistent with the nature of psychology, which is a strictly natural science. We also adhered everywhere to the descriptive method and to the principle that the explanation of a phenomenon, the natural explanation, is only its most complete description. Such a description is obtained in two ways: by direct reporting on what is experienced, and by experimental analysis of direct experience, which is based on the fact that by changing the conditions of a fact we also obtain changed direct reports, which allows us to look deeper into the nature of the fact and to know its components. As a result of adhering to this method, we have had to reject the views adopted in psychology regarding feeling, perception, attention, unconscious states, and so on, as views that cannot be justified by the descriptive method, and that derive from certain philosophical assumptions, having nothing to do with psychology as a natural, experimental science. These assumptions, even if they are logically proven and supported by the observation of facts, cannot be introduced into the description and guide the analysis, because their mere presence in the cognition of a fact can easily transform the analysis of a fact into an analysis of concepts and make psychology a reasoned, dialectical science, and then we lose the purpose and object of research.

The problem of “things beyond thought” appears to us in a completely different nature from the philosophical problem arising from the theory of cognition, from an analysis of concepts. Its genesis is purely experimental. The study

56 * Science of Genesis—metaphysical concepts of Juliusz Słowacki (see: footnote 115 on page 59).

of perception has shown us that there is a certain *unknown* in it, as a permanent, *objective*, and *unknowable* element. This element, under conditions conducive to agnosis, which weaken or paralyze intellectual activity, even becomes a direct, more or less pure sensation which has no definite value for our mind, although it has the value of a certain nameless feeling; to use a term known in philosophy, we can say that it is a reality that we only have in *intuition*.

We have seen further that the same “unknown” of perception survives psychologically for an unlimited time as the *forgotten*, and that it then has the nature of “generic feelings,” that is, nameless emotional states, which conceal in themselves representations, which are the emotional equivalents of former or possible representations, and they seek those representational equivalents. In our inner experience, they appear more or less strongly in various forms, beginning with recognition and the sense of the forgotten, and ending with memory hallucinations and paramnesia.⁵⁷ Further, we have also seen that in aesthetic and religious experience emotional states behave very much like the generic feelings of the forgotten, and the mental activity of these states mimics in many ways the *remembering* of the forgotten that has a strong degree of vitality. The same symbolization appears here, the same comparison to a pattern indeterminate in the mind but defined intuitively, the same agnostic focus which facilitates both artistic and cryptomnesic creativity and prayer. In some cases, we can even observe experimentally that the forgotten becomes an aesthetic element, and the forgotten of dreams, which are still almost present, and forgotten strong emotional experiences can become a religious element and participate in the genesis of religious experience.

In a word, the psychological analysis of aesthetic and religious states has shown us that these states are not feelings in the usual sense of the word (feelings without object, or rather embracing all objects existing contemporarily with them), but on the contrary, *generic* feelings conceal something in themselves and are equivalent to objects that cannot be imagined or recalled. Psychologically speaking, everything is done in the artistic and religious activity of the human mind as if we were in possession of *something* which we cannot conceive of imaginatively and conceptually, or as if we had some important experience, living very intensely in the forgotten—still remembered, but unable to be recalled. As with the perceptions from which we build the external world, we have a side that is passive and independent of our intellect, that has for us the value of *external reality*, even though it is not intellectually available

57 * Paramnesia—Greek, memory disorder, remembering things that one did not experience. Studies of these cryptomnesic phenomena were presented in detail in volumes I, II, and III of *Badania doświadczalne nad pamięcią*.

to us, so in the whole of our cryptomnesia, as in the realm of our aesthetic and religious experience, we have a reality concealed from our mind, something that opposes the mind as independent of it, and is generic and defined emotionally, experienced intuitively and inaccessible to the mind.

The psychological discovery of these states, which combine an objective and *nameless* (i.e., non-intellectual) nature, forces us to look for a new philosophical concept of “things beyond thought.”

There are several thought elements in the concept of a *thing* and, depending on which of them comes to the fore, the value of that concept changes slightly as well. Thus, we can speak of a thing as opposed to the thinking subject, that is, to the active side of our perception and cognition, and then the “thing” is everything, all the content of experience and thoughts, both the objects of the external world and our subjective states, which are also objects, only direct ones, for the subject. Second, we can speak of a thing as opposed to our consciousness in general, to our internal experience as a whole, without distinguishing between the subjective and objective sides, the active and passive sides, and then we are talking about an external, indirect experience, which, as the physical world, is opposed to the internal direct experience. Third, we can speak of a thing as opposed to all experience, both external and internal, which excludes any element of cognition that derives in one way or another from ourselves and is connected with our mind and feeling, and then we are speaking of Kant’s “thing in itself,” about noumena about transcendental beings, about the substance of the phenomenal world.

All three of these conceptual situations have actually the same basic common property—the exclusion of the phenomenon of subjectivism, ourselves—only in varying degrees. And thus, in the first understanding of things, only the active side of the experience is excluded, the subject; in the second, both the active and passive side of experience are excluded, but the latter only to a certain extent, within the limits of consciousness and individual feeling, leaving what is common to all consciousness subject to cognition, as if inferred from direct experiences. In the third understanding, not only the aspect of active experience is excluded but also the entire passive side: both states which are direct and individual and those which are indirect, inferred, and common, both of consciousness and its organic and external complement.

The concept of “things beyond thought” would not strictly fit any of these three kinds of understanding. The thing beyond thought is opposed to the thinking subject, but since it itself is not the proper object of thought, this boundary becomes somewhat blurred here; it becomes a less clear, less strict demarcation line, as if broken here and there. It is opposed to inner experience but only as long as we limit this experience to intellectual consciousness, to

subjective states in which the element of thought still retains its meaning. It is opposed to total experience, but only because of its unknowable, agnostic nature, as the *reverse and negative* side of any intellectualization in experience. The thing beyond thought is, therefore, a “thing in itself” which does not go entirely beyond experience but, on the contrary, participates in it. I write these words with full awareness of the “contradictions” they contain, and I will proceed to clarify this apparent contradiction.

Philosophy is the understanding of the world through the analysis of that understanding itself; this is what distinguishes it from all sciences and what allows it to create their methodology. Science is occupied with the analysis of things, that is, objects of total experience, as if they existed without our cognition; our mind, as an object, is then excluded from analysis. Philosophy, on the other hand, puts concepts in the place of things, reduces everything that is to the matter of the mind, and seeks answers to everything by analyzing concepts. Thus, these answers depend not only on whether the analysis is logically complete and correct, but also on the nature of the concepts themselves.

The concepts by which philosophy operates, as research material, are of necessity abstract concepts, *purified* of the experiential mutability that constantly occurs depending on the time, place, and individual. Any concept of a thing or a relation, quantitative or qualitative, must first get rid of all individuality before it enters into general judgments, and exact reasoning must first rid itself of all individuality and become completely independent of the various, diverse, concrete content which represents their foundation and experiential source; for as long as it does not free itself from this burden of reality, it cannot become a logical concept, nor an element of reasoning. But on the other hand, the same necessary condition of *purification* makes the concept *incomplete*—that it is never identical with the reality of experience, that it is an incomplete and as it were symbolic substitution of that reality alone. This is where the fundamental defect of the human mind is, the reason why we cannot know the secret of being: on the one hand, we must cleanse concepts as much as possible from the content of concrete experience, so that they become suitable for logical reasoning, while on the other hand, the more we purify them, the more they become less complete as equivalents of the reality of experience.

This is the case when we look at abstract concepts from the perspective of formal and, so to speak, “static” logic. But the same is not true of the position of “dynamic” logic, when considering abstract concepts in their becoming, in their living movement, in their psychology. In taking any concept in isolation as an object of psychological study we will easily be convinced that this cleansing of the concept from the content of experience is only apparent, as if the result of a conventional agreement between people. In the most distant

degrees of abstraction, in the most advanced purification, there is always a *sediment*, the intuitive side of abstraction, directly connected with the total experience of perceptions and emotional experiences and equivalent to it. This aspect, the dynamism of abstraction, is immediately revealed as soon as we liberate it from the mental synthesis, from the logical connections it has in various judgments and conclusions, fixed by speech, by conventional terms, in which the abstract is limited by reasoning and assumptions set from above. However, when this synthesis loosens and the abstraction from the component becomes a free concept, then it shows its diverse potential capacity and creates self-born syntheses, which are completely similar to the natural systematization of perceptions and emotions—to the original experience from which it arose. We also know that the whole mental value of abstractions and the value of the logical connections they make rests solely on the potentiality they possess—that they can at any moment turn into their experiential surrogates, that is, they never lose their innate, intimate relationship with them. If this is the case then it means that the concepts are never completely purified, that the intuition of original experience always resides in them, and that, consequently, the concepts which enter reasoning as elements of logic are not complete concepts, because they behave as if this intuitive remnant were not there at all.

From this viewpoint, the fundamental question of philosophy—the question of the *thing*—must also change. We say that a “thing” cannot be known, because our mind, which we cannot go beyond, stands between it and us. Everything we know, name, define, or place in any relation will always be just a matter of our mind, a spinning in an enchanted circle. We can therefore speak of “things in themselves,” of “noumena” only by negating all attributes, not excluding the attribute of existence; it is an extreme concept, a simple denial of the totality of experience, the formal side of thought, which is derived, and therefore does not contain any content. Nevertheless, in such a presentation of the question of the “thing,” there is a certain fundamental philosophical error. For when we claim that nothing can get into our cognition from “the thing in itself,” we forget about the sediment that always remains at the bottom of the most purified concepts; we forget about the intuitive side of abstraction, about the self-born continuity that is retained between them and the original, total experience; we forget that our mind does not create but *only remakes*—that it possesses not only its products but also what it produced them from. In every attribute, in the subjective constructs of our mind, there is also something of the *thing* itself, just as in any perception; apart from the intellectual reworking of the “unknown” there is also the “unknown” itself. Only this “something,” this “unknown,” never reaches a conceptual form; it cannot enter into logic

and reasoning, precisely because it is the remainder of total experience, which remains from the purification of the concept and which cannot pass into the process of abstraction and cannot be transformed intellectually. What has passed, what could be transformed, we already have in perception and concept; the rest remains itself and remains as the necessary complementary side of the products of the intellect, as the intuitive, nameless, unknowable aspect of phenomena. In other words, it is the *passive* side of phenomenality, that which in the (internal and external) experience is opposed to the active element of the experience, to the intellect forming perceptions and concepts. It does not belong to thought, and it cannot enter into the process of reasoning, but it belongs to the primary and total experience; it is what unites the world of thoughts and the world of things, and identifies internal and external experience.

In the entirety of our intellectual activity, that remainder, which is non-reducible to the intellect, nevertheless plays a dominant role. It is the cement of all conceptual relations and connections; it is the source from which comes the unity of judgment and thought. The simplest apperceptive duality—the subject and the predicate—could not arise in the nature of a mental synthesis, if at the base of it there was not an intuitive unity, a certain totality of experience, which in any case determines itself in two ways, giving two different concepts, combined in one judgment. I have also shown elsewhere⁵⁸ the result of that intuitive unity of the primary experience: all judgments, viewed from the psychological position, are always analytical judgments, where the subject and the predicate present the same thing—that same entire experience—only variously processed by our mind. This principle, which I have called “the subjectivity of the predicate,” can be traced in all kinds of judgments, and then can also be traced as a proper basis for inference, which then takes the form of substituting equal elements. Even in the a priori laws of logic—the principle of identity, of contradiction, and of the excluded middle—the same source of the intuitive unity of primary experience can be found. Hence comes the compliance of our thoughts with the surrounding reality, the ability to discover and predict material changes by way of understanding, the co-creation of the intellect with the surrounding nature, which would be impossible if at the bottom of our perceptions and concepts, in the intuitive side of experience and cognition, there were nothing of the thing itself. In this respect, the position of science and the philosophy of “common sense,” which equates our experience

58 See: E. Abramowski, *Teoria jednostek psychicznych*, Warszawa, 1899, Wilanowski, pp. 127–139.

with the things in themselves, is closest to the theory of cognition based on psychological analysis. And it is significant that it also agrees with the view of the extra-subjective reality found in religions, mysticism, and theories of art.

The whole issue of these different positions develops around the same question of whether “the thing in itself” enters our experience or does not do so completely. If it penetrates in any way, does it come to our cognition, and in what form? We answer these questions affirmatively from the standpoint of psychological analysis, which shows us that the original, complete experience is never completely intellectualized—there is always a certain part that *does not belong to our mind, but which, however, enters, as a constituent part, into all mental products, beginning with concrete perceptions, down to the most purified abstractions*. This part, which is intellectually irreducible—the remainder arising from intellectualization—obviously belongs to the organism and the environment, i.e., to what remains of total experience when we subtract the intellect from it. But this is an almost non-phenomenal field, if we are talking about the organism and the environment, excluding all thought processes; it is the realm at the border of which the proper phenomenon appears, insofar as there is an activity of the intellect and any possibility of thought, and if this is not there, we are in the “thing in itself,” in the state of noumena and Platonic ideas, or, in the language of religion, we are on the side of God or Nirvana. According to what we have learned as a result of psychological analysis, the activity of the intellect does not really exist here, nor the possibility of thought conditioning the *phenomenon*, because it is *the remainder of an experience which is not subject to intellectual analysis*.

From this standpoint, the answer to the second question will also be clear—in what form does the “thing in itself” penetrate our experience and how does it come to our cognition? It cannot, of course, be expressed in any imaginative or conceptual terms, nor can it be reasoned and analyzed intellectually, since it is only the remainder of intellectualization. On the other hand, we possess it in an intuitive, nameless feeling, wherever there is a minimum of intellect, wherever there is agnosis in some form. There are degrees of this possession, on a very extensive scale. First of all, we deal with the “thing in itself” *indirectly* in all facts of everyday experience; it is the unknown of perceptions, the existence of which we have demonstrated through psychological and experimental analysis. In the developed and normal activeness of the mind, we sense the “unknown” only as the “objectiveness” of perceptions, that is, of the surrounding world, as their passive side, independent of us, and at the same time having an element of compulsion, of a necessity from which our mind cannot free itself. The more we distance ourselves from perception by means of abstract thought, creating partial and purified concepts, the more we move away from

the “unknown” of perceptions and from the “thing” hidden in it, at the same time going further and further into the world of pure intellect and striving as if to be in contact with ourselves only, with our own mind. Conversely, the more mental activity is reduced, the closer we come to total and primary experience. When mental activity reaches zero, then we cross the threshold of perception and face the unknown. These are moments when the activeness of attention is suspended under the influence of the various agnostic factors we have discussed: moments when the veil of the intellect is lifted to reveal the mystery of things. These agnostic moments appear in our inner experience as a feeling of a specific nature, which I have called a *generic, nameless* feeling.

In forgetting, the same agnostic thing repeats itself: perception loses its intellectual side, de-thinks itself, and passes into cryptomnesia in a form closer to the total experience, in the form of an emotional equivalent of a nameless nature. Hence the entire field of latent memory, i.e., the subconscious, where the mental activity is reduced to almost zero, is that area of the human soul where it most frequently contacts the “thing in itself,” and where beats the constant source of the “intuitive cognition” that manifests itself in aesthetic and religious experience. And we also have varying degrees of directness in contact with the “thing” because the intellect rarely and with difficulty yields completely. The “forgotten,” which in its pure form is virtually *identical* to the “thing in itself,” rarely crosses the threshold of consciousness in this form. The most common of its intellectualizations are memories and dreams, where nameless things already have a strong advantage over mental activity and the conceptual aspect. When the latter is reduced even more, we have pure intuitive cognition, occurring in artistic inspiration, in prayer and in its higher stages of development, that is, in mystic experience.

It is clear, however, that such intuitive cognition of “things” has no similarity with proper, intellectual cognition and that it is even its complete antithesis. It is cognition based on suspension of the activity of the intellect and its complete removal from experience! Thought then becomes distorted and seemingly dies; apperceptive series cease to form; the movement of concepts ceases; and the whole awareness of experience is reduced to a completely new state which we call inspiration, ecstasy, oblivion, etc. In the farthest degrees of this “conscious” immobility of thought, even the most general and essential apperceptive duality is lost: the self as a subject as opposed to the object of contemplation. A “unity,” which is completely unknown to the intellect and is absurd in relation to it, is created: the merging of the self and non-I, which mystics call a state of “Union,” the “seventh chamber,” or “nirvana.” These states, however, though unique and abnormal in relation to everyday life, essentially represent the same matter—suspension of the intellect—that we find on the

lower levels in various agnoscs caused by distraction or weariness of attention, its maladaptation, emotion, drowsiness, etc., as we find in forgetfulness, in hypnotic thoughts, in recalling moods, and so many other phenomena of cryptomnesia. Everywhere in these states there is the same intuitive cognition with the same characteristic features: resistance to representational and conceptual terms, a sense of having direct truth and therefore not needing any evidence, and finally, a sense of the extraordinary value of this "cognition." For example, the generic feeling of the forgotten, which we cannot recall, if it is more intense, as often happens, represents a characteristic element of such intuitive cognition. We cannot change it into any definite memory, or any word, and yet we have infallibly the truth of this forgotten fact, for we reject without hesitation and firmly all false reminders, even those which are very little different from the real. We never have any rational justification in answer to the question as to why we reject the suggestions given; we reject them because they do not conform to the true pattern we have in us, although we cannot say anything about this pattern, nor can we define it in any way; we know it intuitively, namelessly, but with complete certainty. If, on the other hand, the forgotten relates to the facts of a strong experience, and especially to childhood events, then recalling, representing, and comparing them with reality evokes a feeling of disappointment: the forgotten seemed to be something much more important; it had some unusual value that has vanished in its intellectualization. This feature is especially strong in recalling dreams and hypnotic thoughts, in abnormal experiences under the influence of anesthetics (so-called anesthetic manifestations), and to a lesser degree in the agnoscs of everyday experience, such as, for example, in seeing without paying attention, in "first" impressions, and in emotional distractions. Here, however, as soon as the attention adjusts, there is the disappointment that it was only this.

This out-of-the-ordinary value of agnosic experiences, or intuitive cognition, can only be called an "illusion" if we take the subsequent intellectualizing of the same experiences as a true model. But such a comparison is not proper, because we group together quite varied or even fundamentally incompatible things, such as nameless experience, which excludes intellect, and its intellectual transformation, about which we judge compulsorily to the exclusion of that non-intellectual factor. And in the experience itself, as a psychological fact, there can never be an *illusion*; everything that is subjective in experience is a psychological truth; it is a direct reality that cannot be questioned, because it is only from it, as directness, that all movement of thought begins, and it is the starting point for all testing and evaluation.

We can not thus consider the subjective value of agnosic experiences—which for artists takes the form of beauty, in religious experiences appears as

the sense of a “presence,” in mystics as a revelation of a mystery, and on the lower levels is marked by a feeling of disappointment in intellectualization—to be an illusion, since the concept has no sense in terms of internal experience, and we cannot try it on another category of this experience, on intellectual consciousness, that is, we cannot equate this “value” and compare it either with perceptions or with notions of objects. The only thing left (with which to seek and establish a relationship) would be a non-phenomenal reality, “a thing in itself.” We know nothing about it, however, except that which gives us intuitive cognition: direct agnostic experience. Therefore, we can suppose that the extraordinary subjective value which we experience in agnostic experiences of various degrees and kinds is nothing but contact with the “thing in itself,” a viewing it “face to face.”

The penetration of a *thing* in our experience and our having it in our intuitive, nameless-emotional cognition, leads to a new way of understanding a phenomenon, namely as an ontological phenomenon. This term strictly corresponds to the philosophical position which we are developing, that “noumena” are not and cannot be outside our experience but, on the contrary, they are in experience itself, and they reach our consciousness, although they stop at the threshold of the intellect. Only our mind, our intellectual consciousness, the *anima cerebralis*,⁵⁹ deals with phenomena. Our “intuitive cognition,” our nameless, non-intellectual consciousness, the *anima abdominalis*,⁶⁰ encounters noumena. Consequently, not only metaphysics, but even *experimental metaphysics*, to which the psychology of nameless states opens the door, is possible and legitimate.

59 * *Anima cerebralis*—Latin, literally: cerebral soul. Here: conscious soul.

60 * *Anima abdominalis*—Latin, literally: abdominal soul. Here: subconscious soul, that is connected with nature as a whole. These concepts appear on a piece of paper with Abramowski's quotation from Jakob Böhme's work *De Vita Mentali oder Vom übersinnlichen Leben*: “Wenn du von Sinnen und Wollen deiner Selbheit stille stehest, so wird in dir das ewige Hören, Sehen und Sprechen offenbar, und höret und siehet Gott durch dich” (E. Abramowski's notes, Rps.II.II.059, National Library in Warsaw: 99). In the Polish context, we can find these two notions in Jan Gwalbert Pawlikowski's mystical works, for instance, in *Studia nad „Królem Duchem,”* part I: *Mistyka Słowackiego*, Warszawa-Lwów, 1909, Nakład Jakóba Mortkowicza, G. Centenrszwer i S-ka.

Afterword: All the Best!

Andrzej Mencwel

Edward Abramowski was both present and absent in Polish culture during his life (1868–1918) and after his death. He has been present because his numerous works have been periodically published and discussed, and because his activities have continued to be supported and remembered, though rather among a chosen few than by the general public. He has been absent because he withdrew himself from the political scene quite early; then he was marginalized and there were even top-down attempts to eliminate his work. He has never become a canonical personality of Polish culture, though the tendency to sanctify artists has been widespread in our country since the period of the romantic poets called seers. In the second half of the twentieth century, the glorification of the “Polish Pope” exceeded all earthly measures; his monuments have become an endemic horror, and thus it is better that they do not loom over any bust of Abramowski. While not a monumental figure, Abramowski was yet a kind of “gray eminence” of our culture. It is impossible to comprehend the entire sweep of Polish social and cultural life, or even political life, without recognizing and acknowledging his presence.

First, he was a youthful political enthusiast, one of the first socialists, a prolific theorist and committed practitioner. He co-founded early, ephemeral workers’ parties before contributing to the establishment of the Polish Socialist Party, which was an epochal and politically first-class enterprise for over half a century. Perhaps he might have been one of its leaders at the beginning of the last century—a rival of Józef Piłsudski or Ignacy Daszyński—had he not abandoned all parties and subjected political activity itself to radical and piercing criticism (*Issues of Socialism*, 1899). Even at the time, he was warning against the alienation of the political apparatus, though the future deeds of the Leninist party were as yet unknown, because the party had barely been established (1898).

Abramowski devoted himself instead to scientific research, in accord with his own needs and ideas, and to creating circles of ethicists and friends. However, when historical turns occurred in Polish socialism, such as during the revolution of 1904–1906, then Abramowski was again thinking on the broad scale (“A General Conspiracy against the Government,” 1905). Similarly, at the end of the 1930s, the Abramowski’s ideas were referenced when the Polish Socialist Party was elaborating its social program. The “specter of Abramowskiism” [*Abramowszczyzna*] was ruthlessly combatted before the so-called unification

of the workers' movement (1948), which in actuality involved the liquidation of the PPS and strengthening of Stalinism. Abramowski's ideas were then rejected and condemned, but after the thaw of October 1956 it would be revived semi-openly, in an elitist manner, and, in a sense, powerlessly. Surprisingly, however, during the first congress of the nearly universal Solidarity movement (September 1981), a program was adopted of building a "Self-Governing Republic," conceived from the spirit of Abramowski's thought. A few years later, a book was published abroad (beyond regime censorship) with the telling title *Edward Abramowski: Forerunner of Solidarity*.¹

When Abramowski relinquished direct political activities, he devoted himself to social and psychological research. Although he studied in Krakow, Paris, and Geneva, he did not formally complete any course of studies and remained a comprehensively self-taught scholar, starting with physics and biology. He published his first serious scientific work in French; though his essay was innovative, it did not prove to be foundational for any academic school. Under the title "Les bases psychologiques de la sociologie," it appeared in the *Revue Internationale de la Sociologie*, the leading periodical at the time, and in a separate printing (Paris 1897). The work introduced a psychological perspective to the social sciences, but its author was unknown and isolated, and French sociology at the time was dominated by anti-psychological Durkheimism.

Psychology became a distinctive feature of Abramowski's research; he devoted many years to it and was employed as a professor of psychology at the University of Warsaw when that institution was being revived after decades of Russification (1916). His lectures were rather philosophical and enjoyed more esteem among enthusiasts than among the compulsory student attendees. He called his philosophy "experimental metaphysics" and based it on the kind of introspection that leads to a deep agnostic experience. His theory constitutes a separate chapter in the history of Polish thought—as is confirmed by studies and textbooks—but I cannot find that it had an influential continuation. Professor Abramowski, in his inspirational orations, evoked a metaphysical aura and stimulated artistic activity, but he was not concerned to establish a scientific school. In the universities of independent Poland—which he did not live to see, as he died in June 1918—the departments of philosophy were taken over by adherents of the Lviv-Warsaw school, that is, the analytical philosophy of the time. According to them, the domain of philosophy was logic, while metaphysics belonged to poetry.

1 W. Giełżyński, *Edward Abramowski. Zwiastun „Solidarności,”* London 1986, Polonia Book Fund.

A similar duality occurred in the reception of Abramowski's ideas in the fine arts and in literature, although here his influence has been more strongly attested. His sole text on aesthetics was titled "What is Art?" (1898), on account of Leo Tolstoy's work by that name, which, like almost every production of the "Sage of Yasnaya Polyana," had achieved world renown. Tolstoy, who was already rising to the heights of "Tolstoyism," contrasted moral good with artistic beauty, which he rejected in the name of ethical absolutism. Abramowski thought the opposite and could not remain silent, although a further discussion of Tolstoy's idea did not occur. This essay is one of the best he wrote and was original and idiosyncratic for the aesthetics of the time. Polish modernism, which had been initiated in the last decade of the nineteenth century, opposed art both to science—an opposition that was an anti-positivist reaction—and to society, which was identified with the philistine bourgeoisie. According to the modernists, artistic beauty was autotelic and not servile. It was inexpressible in colloquial and cognitive language, and thus required sophisticated special, metaphorical, and symbolic means. It could also only be accessible to elite aesthetes and not to common dilettantes and the benighted masses.

Abramowski was, in a way, the most radical modernist, because through art he was aiming at the essence of humanity. He believed that our essence is deeply—somehow psycho-physiologically—hidden, and therefore it is infra-rational and infra-intellectual. It can be reached through an agnostic illumination expressed in real art, but not through scientific or philosophical discourse. In his polemic with Tolstoy, however, he systematically went beyond the elitism of modernism and promoted faith in a New Renaissance, whose creators would not be artistic heroes, but the working masses reborn in beauty. Thus, he remained a kind of a socialist, both in writing and in social activities, gathering rather small groups of followers. The most outstanding personality among them was the writer Maria Dąbrowska (1889–1965), author of the famous series of novels *Nights and Days* (1931–1934), which—uniquely in modern literature—enjoyed both the favor of critics and popularity among readers. In the first twenty years of the People's Poland, Dąbrowska was a cultural authority. She remained faithful to Abramowski, whom she had listened to and read in her youth, and gave a lecture on him at the Crooked Circle Club that changed how he was received.² The official erasure of his ideas ceased then, and he was again both present and absent.

² Subsequently published as an essay entitled "Non omnis moriar," *Nowa Kultura* 1958, no. 27. Crooked Circle Club was the independent discussion club of intellectuals (1955–1962).

It is impossible to list the indirect artistic and aesthetic inspirations deriving from Edward Abramowski's work, because they are countless. The avant-garde groups and circles that multiplied before the war competed in manifestations of "independent art," although some also declared their "engagement," which later became the standard of socialist realism. The most important literature of the entire twentieth century has recently been called "modernist" in emphasis of its artistic autonomy and social haughtiness. It can be assumed that it had a constant, covetous inclination toward metaphysical experience of various description. A large exhibition of the work of Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (1885–1939), better known as Witkacy,³ is currently on display at the National Museum in Warsaw. Witkacy was an extremely prolific painter, art theorist, novelist, playwright, and philosopher. As an extreme individualist, his philosophy was devoted to Individual Existence (*Istnienie Poszczególne*, the title of a book of essays), and in this sense he clearly differed from Abramowski. However, he was very concerned about "the disappearance of metaphysical feelings in connection with social development"; he also developed a "theory of pure form in art," which was supposed to express and stimulate these feelings, and he painted in "agnostic" excitement produced by drugs and other stimulants. The basic—unconcealed—structure of his views is symmetrical to Abramowski's philosophy: metaphysical experience achieved through an artistic form. However, he never referred directly to Abramowski's works, nor did he acknowledge any relation or inspiration. On the other hand, in his most famous drama, *Shoemakers* (1931–1934), which was wildly applauded at the end of "real socialism," "Comrade Abramowski" suddenly appears on stage as the embodiment of revolutionary totalitarianism. This was clearly a substitution: instead of revealing his affinity with Abramowski's aesthetics, the playwright made him into a Bolshevik. Those times are past: *Shoemakers* has not been produced for a long time, and Poland's most luxurious fashion salon is named Vitkac, after that arch-modernist.

In contrast, the writer Stefan Żeromski (1864–1925) brings us closer to the essence of Abramowski's work. In the novel *The Coming Spring* (1924)—whose symbolic title has endured because a progressive spring is still awaited in our country—Żeromski has one of the characters say, "Here is Edward Abramowski. He taught and we believed him blindly; thanks to his teaching we created many things and works of great value. We organized a mass of people into perfect associations." Żeromski's novel aroused disputes of a fierceness

3 "Witkacy: Sejsmograph of the Acceleration Age," National Museum in Warsaw, July 8–October 9, 2022.

unknown in Poland in regard to a literary work, either before or after. It infuriated the right wing that the writer was sometimes considered “the father of the fatherland,” who evoked “the courage of Lenin” in the country. The question of Abramowski and the cultural group associated with him, which Żeromski called the “Varsovians,” was not as controversial and probably for that reason passed without proper publicity.

It is a historical fact that between 1895 and 1915, in the part of Poland that had been incorporated into the Russian Empire after the fall of the January Uprising,⁴ independent social forces created an educational, scientific, cultural, and social reality which, without much exaggeration, could be called a “self-governing republic.”⁵ Its ideas were expressed in Abramowski’s above-mentioned pamphlet *A General Conspiracy against the Government*, which was smuggled into the country and widely read during the period of revolutionary fervor (in 1905). The plan of creating a grassroots network of independent social associations was directed against tsarist rule, which was foreign and imposed. However, the program also stimulated a vision of the social self-organization that is needed in an independent state if it is not to be an alienated political apparatus. Żeromski, in recalling that laudatory past—that “mass of people in perfect associations”—was deliberately addressing his contemporaries, while having in mind a truly self-governing Republic of Poland.

“Conscience is the generator of the social world,” said the supposed patron of this Republic, that is, Edward Abramowski. Any future collective reality that is going to be better than the present must be conceived in individual personal attitudes. As proper comparative research on the subject has not yet been conducted, I cannot claim that Abramowski’s social philosophy was a model of the alignment of psychology and sociology in the modern humanities. This alignment, however, has been enduring and unbreakable, as might be demonstrated by reference to Gabriel Tarde’s psychologism, Georg Simmel’s interactionism, John Dewey’s social pragmatism, Abram Kardiner’s American psychoculturalism, and neopsychoanalysis, headed by Eric Fromm. These trends or styles of thinking about humans and society were created without Abramowski’s participation, but they are clearly akin to his thinking. Although his work has not been accorded its proper place in the general anthology, Abramowski had one trait that gives him a distinct superiority over the above and other classic thinkers. He was not only a researcher and theoretician, the author of original dissertations and books, he was also an activist and practitioner, and not a

4 1863–1864.

5 See: A. Mencwel, *Etos lewicy. Esej o narodzinach kulturalizmu polskiego*, Warszawa 2009, Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej.

cultural or academic one, but a social activist in the most elementary sense of the word—he worked at the foundations.

He personally founded and animated “ethics clubs” and “friendship unions” which were not intended to bring together solely intellectuals, but also craftsmen and workers, in order to create links in a transforming society. During the revolution (1904–1906), he headed the Union of Social Self-Help Societies, the first such a national organization in Poland. As part of this association, he established the Cooperative Society, to which he devoted the text “The Social Idea of Cooperativism” (1907). With Stefan Żeromski and Stanisław Wojciechowski, later president of the Republic of Poland (1922–1926), he founded the periodical *Spółem*, an organ of the cooperative movement. This name, which was suggested by Żeromski and is a sonorous synonym for the word “together,” can still be seen on a few remaining consumer cooperative shops.

The Polish cooperative movement was not as powerful as the Belgian or Finnish ones, but design centers such as Warsztaty Krakowskie and Warsaw’s Ład cooperative were established within it, as well as the best housing estates in Warsaw, Poznań, and Gdynia. The spirit of cooperation also animated theater and film circles. The first creative groups were created before the war, in the theater (Juliusz Osterwa’s Reduta), and in film (the Start association). Tadeusz Kantor was first leader of the artistic Krakow Group and later created spectacles that won world audiences (*Dead Class*, *Wielopole*, *Wielopole* and other theater pieces). Jerzy Grotowski, founder of Laboratory Theater, was considered to have restored contemporary theater. We owe the creation of the most outstanding works of the Polish Film School, formed by Andrzej Wajda, Andrzej Munk, Wojciech Jerzy Hass, Jerzy Kawalerowicz, and Kazimierz Kutz, to teams of directors, screenwriters, operators, and producers.

The unwavering conviction that the whole system of things in this world and the whole organization of humanity must undergo a thorough change permeated not just Abramowski’s ideas but the entirety of their practical expression. The system of things in this world is simply capitalism, of which Abramowski was a radical critic from an early age. The influence of Marxism on him was unmistakable at first, but his criticism only increased as he departed from the ideology. He rejected the then prevailing “necessarist” version of Marxism because he did not believe in an automatic “historical necessity.” He was convinced that the work of “liberating humankind” from the capitalist system could be accomplished solely by changed people.

The liberation of humankind is synonymous with liberation from property, exploitation, and egoism, which reign not only in the objective world but also in subjective emotions and rationales. A few decades later, György Lukács developed the theory of reification, that is, that the reification of interpersonal

relations, moral attitudes, and ideas, including philosophical ones, is inevitable in capitalism. Popularized in the middle of the century, the theory stimulated manifold refutations of the existence of a “market personality.” Edward Abramowski, however, was a penetrating critic of the instrumental rationality of our minds and believed it to be a mental representation of the domination of market calculation in the world of capitalism. He seemed to know this much earlier than the later Marxist revisionists and, as it were, on his own. The genesis of his original views involves an intricate biographical conjunction that I can only mention in passing.

While still a young man, he wrote a historical and theoretical essay which was meant to be the first part of a synthesizing exposition of the materialist understanding of history. *Tribal Societies*, which appeared in 1890, is not solely an introduction to Abramowski's work but also a key. The idealization of “primitive communities,” as Marxists of the time called original societies, actually constituted a certain form of thinking common to them: prehistoric communism did not know all the evil that governs the modern world—private property, social classes, economic exploitation, and omnipotent competition. Abramowski's *Tribal Societies* repeats basic themes that are critical of the present and idealizing of the past, but it also has its own moral tone. According to Abramowski, “the commonality of work and property in tribal societies” produced “appropriate concepts, customs, and morals.” Neither “selfishness” nor self-interest were known, but only “mutual aid and defense, and feelings of fraternity ruled the conduct and morals of the primitive people.” A whole decade filled with ideological and personal dramas would pass before Abramowski focused on “individual elements in sociology,” but the main direction of his research and practice had already been outlined. Where has this “feeling of fraternity,” which constitutes humanity, been preserved in each us and how can it be recovered and revived? How and with what can we ensure, in this all-round evil world of pillaged property, ruthless exploitation, and unbridled selfishness, that “fraternal cooperation” and “mutual aid and defense” prevail?

Abramowski's ideas on psychology, transformed into “experimental metaphysics,” answered the first question in regard to the individual. The task of his sociology—or in fact of the many social practices which he tirelessly cultivated—was to establish cooperation, reciprocity, and helpfulness. In a world of global capitalism and growing imperialist conflicts, it might have seemed that this was a moral utopia which could only animate personal sentiments. Yet Maria Dąbrowska, who was not inclined to exaltation, said more than a half a century ago that “Nothing wise or good happens in Poland, which is not consciously or subconsciously penetrated by Abramowski's ideas.”

Self-governance, associations, and helpfulness⁶ are still what we do best, and a real “self-governing republic” remains the historical task before us.

6 An excellent confirmation of this trait was the mass grassroots mobilization of Polish society to help Ukrainian war refugees.

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2 This work was started by the wife of E. Abramowski, Stanisława Motz. After her death, Abramowski completed and published the work under his wife's name. In 1917, Abramowski included both pamphlets in the list of his works (see: *Pisma*, vol. 1, p. xcvi).

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Index

- Abramowski, Józef Edward (father) 2
Abramowski, Edward *passim*
Agamben, Giorgio 14, 183n56
Álvarez, Diego de Paz 522n38
Angela of Foligno 522, 522n36, 522n37
Aschheim, Steven E. 253n21
Augustyniak, Małgorzata 2n2, 7m13
- Babeuf, François-Noël
(Gracchus) 128, 128m15
Bebel, August 298n4, 313
Beneke, Friedrich Eduard 475
Bergson, Henri 4, 28m8, 33, 33n33, 39, 40, 41, 53n99, 253, 471m9, 483n56
Bernstein, Eduard 253, 256n34
Bilewicz, Aleksandra 9n21, 16, 17, 168, 363, 363n2, 369n22, 369n23, 382n60, 382n61, 382n62, 383n64, 385n70
Błesznowski, Bartłomiej 1, 12, 13, 23, 55m103, 175n28, 263n60, 264n61, 268, 268n76, 269n79, 378n48, 381n59, 383n68
Blobaum, Robert E. 9m19
Bogdanov, Alexander 253
Böhme, Jakob 540n61
Bohn, William E. 140m1
Bohuszewiczówna, Maria 3
Borzym, Stanisław 33n33, 40n55, 254n23, 471m9
Bouglé, Célestin 84m10, 324m1
Brentano, Franz 476
Brown, Peter 173n21
Brown, Wendy 274, 274n91
Brzeziński, Stefan Julian 9
Budkiewicz, Janina 467m1
Burchell, Graham 52n93, 55m104, 185n62
Burton, Richard Francis 90, 90n4
- Campbell, George 106
Candea, Matei 46n78
Cantacuzéne, J.-A. 72n5
Caro, Adrian del 483n56
Cartwright, David E. 72n5
Cernesson, Joseph Edme 401, 401n7, 402, 402n8, 412
- Charlevoix, Pierre François Xavier
de 206, 206n6
Chmielewska-Szlajfer, Helena 24n4, 129m16
Chwedoruk, Rafał 55n104, 267n72
Chyra-Rolicz, Zofia 9n20
Cicourel, Aaron V. 43n66
Claparède, Édouard 10
Common, Thomas 175n28, 268n76, 269n79, 285, 483n56
Comte, August 23, 26
Cygielstrejch, Adam 10, 467m1, 469
Cywiński, Bohdan 247m1, 252m16, 254n24, 264, 264n62, 266n67, 266n70
Czczot-Gawrak, Zbigniew 468n7
- Dąbrowska, Maria 7, 7m14, 364n7, 370, 370n25, 370n26, 387, 387n74, 467m1, 543, 547
Dąbrowski, Saturnin 385, 386, 386n71
Darwin, Charles 3
Davy, Humphry 525, 525n49
Delacroix, Henri 517m14, 521, 524, 524n45, 527
Deleuze, Gilles 14, 34n36, 177n36, 178, 185n62
Desrosières, Alain 52n95
Dewey, John 53n99, 545
Dietrich, Auguste 64n3
Dionysius the Areopagite 523n42
Dobroczyński, Bartłomiej 467m1, 473n30
Dobrzycka, Urszula 364n6, 365m10, 366, 366m14, 370n24, 371n30
Donzelot, Jacques 52n93
Durkheim, Emil 26, 33, 35, 41, 88, 472
Dziedzic, Anna 4n9, 34n35, 36n42, 44, 44n71, 231m1, 244m13, 467n2, 471, 471m9, 471n23
- Eley, Geoff 250m10
Ellenberger, Henri F. 476n37
Engels, Friedrich 33, 62m1, 67n4, 156
Epstein, Jan 468n7
Erdmann, Edward E. 72n5
- Fechner, Gustav 475
Ferri, Enrico 293m1

- Fichte, Johann Gottlieb 239, 239n9, 240
 Flis, Andrzej 39n50
 Flournoy, Théodore 10
 Fortlage, Karl 476
 Foucault, Michel 14, 44n70, 52n93, 55m104,
 168, 168n4, 169, 182n56, 185n62
 Fouillée, Alfred 4, 33, 34n34, 36, 39, 47m19
 Fourier, Charles 53n99
 Freud, Sigmund 18, 473, 473n29, 474, 475,
 475n35, 475n36, 476, 483
 Frevert, Ute 262n57
- Ganss, George E. 517n12
 Garfinkel, Harold 26, 53n99
 Garofalo, Raffaele 64n3, 314, 314n13, 314n14
 Gibson-Graham, J.-K. 16, 272, 273, 273n88
 Gide, Charles 6, 38n47, 379, 379n52, 402,
 402n9, 403m10, 407, 410, 411
 Giełżyński, Wojciech 268, 268n75, 382,
 382n63, 383, 383n66, 542m1
 Goethe, Johann Wolfgang 301n5
 Gogol, Sheila 51n90
 Gottl-Ottlilienfeld, Friedrich von 154, 154n3
 Gour, Jean-Jacques 4, 36
 Graeber, David 38, 38n48, 182n55
 Granas, Michelle 263n60, 378n48
 Grinstein, Alexander 473n29
 Guattari, Félix 14, 34n36, 177n36, 178, 185n62
 Guesde, Jules 256n35
- Habermas, Jürgen 52n92
 Hardt, Michel 16, 269, 269n78, 269n80
 Hartmann, Eduard von 476
 Harvey, David 33n32
 Hatfield, Gary 74n7
 Hay, Colin 43n66
 Heilbron, Johan 51n90
 Herbart, Johann Friedrich 475
 Herodotus 101
 Herzen, Alexandre 10
 Hillis, Faith 3n7
 Hobson, John Atkinson 94n7
 Høffding, Harald 239, 239n8, 240m10
 Holloway, John 16, 270, 270n82, 271,
 272, 272n87
 Holmes, Oliver Wendell 525, 525n50
 Holyoake, George Jacob 399, 399n3, 399n4,
 401n6, 407
 Hurley, Robert 177n36
- James, William 34, 53n99, 236, 236n6, 51n7,
 520n26, 525
 Janaway, Christopher 72n5, 309n8
 Janczyk, Tadeusz 386, 386n73
 Janet, Pierre 475n35
 Jastrow, Joseph 520, 520n27
 Jekels, Ludwik 474
 Jellinek, Georg 328n2
 Jesus of Nazareth 182, 182n55, 223, 226, 236,
 242n12, 313m12, 353, 356, 357, 372, 512n8,
 514, 521, 521n31, 524
 Jordan, Joshua David 175n29
 Jung, Carl Gustav 474, 475n36
- Kant, Immanuel 28m8, 32, 39, 40, 74n7,
 239n9, 533
 Karpińska, Ludwika 473n29
 Kasprzak, Marcin 4
 Kautsky, Karl 140n1, 141n2, 157, 157n4, 253
 Kelles-Krauz, Kazimierz 24, 24n4, 129m16
 Knorr-Cetina, Karin 43n66
 Kodisowa, Józefa 10, 469
 Konopnicka, Maria 3, 364, 364n5
 Kotsko, Adam 183n56
 Kozak, Łukasz 45n76
 Krauz, Kazimierz (Kelles-Krauz) 128m6
 Krawczyk, Zbigniew 24n5, 32n30, 35n39,
 40n56, 42n61, 43n67, 370n28
 Kropotkin, Pyotr 7
 Krusiński, Stanisław 24
 Krzeczkowski, Konstanty 4m10, 6, 6m12,
 10n24, 11, 36, 36n43, 42, 43n65, 248n5,
 253n19, 262n58, 267n73, 364, 364n3,
 364n4, 365, 365n11, 365n8, 367, 367m16,
 369, 376, 377n46, 379, 379n53
 Krzywicky, Ludwik 5, 23, 23n2, 24
 Kulczycki, Ludwik 7, 248
 Kuroń, Jacek 267
- Lamarck, Jean-Baptiste de 231m1, 483
 Lange, Oskar 43, 43n68, 368, 368m18,
 380, 380n54
 Latour, Bruno 12, 25, 25n8, 26, 26m10, 26m12,
 26n13, 26n9, 34, 46n78, 53n97, 53n99,
 54, 54m100, 54m102
 Lavrov, Pyotr 7
 Lazarus, Moritz 83n9, 84, 84m11
 Lazzarato, Maurizio 175n29
 Le Dantec, Félix 91, 91n5, 105

- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm 475, 498
 Lépinay, Vincent Antonin 26n12, 26n9
 Letourneau, Charles J.M. 104m10,
 106m11, 135n18
 Liebknecht, Karl 298n4
 Lipski, Jan Józef 267
 Łobodziński, Wojciech 180n44
 Lombroso, Cesare 294m1, 314m13
 Luxemburg, Rosa (Róża
 Luksemburg) 4, 298n4
 Lycurgus 136, 136n21

 Machiavelli, Niccolo 271
 Magnone, Lena 17, 19, 467, 474n31, 475n34
 Malaval, François 521, 521n30
 Mallarmé, Stéphane 503n4
 Mancewicz, Michał 3
 Marsh, David 43n66
 Marx, Karl 3, 26, 32, 33, 33n32, 39, 48,
 53n99, 62, 62m1, 156, 250, 294, 316m15,
 319m16, 419n22
 Marzec, Wiktor 2n4
 Massumi, Brian 34n36, 177n36
 Maternicki, Jerzy 2n5
 Mazur, Krzysztof 247m1, 249n9
 McGrath, Larry S. 34n34
 Mencwel, Andrzej 1, 1m1, 248n3, 250m12,
 541, 545n5
 Menger, Anton 377
 Mielczarski, Romuald 368, 368n20, 382,
 385
 Miller, Alexander 185n63
 Molska, Alina 23, 23m1, 24n3, 28m16
 Moore, Matthew J. 263n60
 Moraczewski, Jędrzej 366n12
 Motte, Jeanne-Marie Bouvier de la (Madame
 Guyon) 521n29
 Motz-Abramowska, Stanisława 4
 Münsterberg, Hugo 476
 Münzer (Müntzer), Thomas 126, 126n14
 Myers, Fredrick W. H. 511, 511n7

 Naish, Camille 52n95
 Natanson, Antoni 369, 369n21
 Negri, Antonio 16, 269, 269n78, 269n80
 Nietzsche, Friedrich 242m12, 253,
 331, 483n56
 Numenius of Apamea 244n13

 Okraska, Remigiusz 366m13
 Owen, Robert 306n6

 Pawlikowski, Jan Gwalbert 540n61
 Pazdan, Weronika 180n44
 Pierson, Stanley 253n20, 253n22
 Pietkiewicz, Zygmunt 3
 Piłsudski, Józef 365m12, 368m19, 541
 Piskala, Kamil 15, 16, 37n45, 168, 247
 Plato 481, 523n42, 530n56
 Pławiński, Józef 3
 Pławiński, Kazimierz 3
 Plekhanov, Georgi 67n4
 Plotinus 481, 530, 530n56
 Potkański, Waldemar 180n45
 Potocki, Józef Karol 102n9, 135n20
 Prószyński, Konrad (aka "Promyk") 3

 Rabinow, Paul 168n4
 Radlińska, Helena 7
 Ramsay, William 525, 525n48
 Ratajczak, Mikołaj 175n28, 268,
 268n76, 269n79
 Redner, Joachim 26m11
 Ribot, Théodule 476
 Rickman, John 473n29
 Rink, Hinrich Johannes 135m18
 Roosevelt, Theodore 340m1
 Ross, James Clark 135m18
 Roudinesco, Elisabeth 475n35
 Rousseau, Eugène 398n2, 402n8
 Rudnicki, Cezary 1, 14, 15, 167, 168n5,
 252, 252m15
 Ruysbroeck, John 523, 523n44, 530
 Rybczyński, Witold 174n25
 Rzepa, Teresa 467m1

 Saint John of the Cross (Juan de la
 Cruz) 522, 522n34
 Saint Teresa of Ávila (Saint Teresa of
 Jesus) 512n8
 Sartre, Jean-Paul 468n7
 Savage, Robert 26m11
 Schecter, Darrow 274n93
 Schelling, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph
 von 476
 Schopenhauer, Artur 72n5, 73n6, 240,
 307n7, 309n8, 476, 481

- Segond, Joseph L. P. 517n13
 Sembat, Marcel 256n35
 Sepczyńska, Dorota 168, 168n6
 Shaw, George Bernard 253
 Sheridan, Alan 182n56
 Sibeon, Roger 43n66
 Simmel, Georg 32, 33, 34, 83, 83n8, 88, 324,
 472, 545
 Sloterdijk, Peter 14, 262n56
 Słowacki, Juliusz 530n55, 531, 531n57
 Smith, William Robertson 135, 135n19
 Sokolnicka, Eugenia 474
 Solon 136, 136n22
 Sorel, Georges 253
 Sowa, Kazimierz 384, 384n69
 Spencer, Herbert 3, 23, 102, 102n9, 135n20,
 239, 240, 304, 506
 Spinoza, Baruch 53n99
 Steger, Manfred B. 256n34
 Stoker, Gerry 43n66
 Sully, James 507, 507n5
 Suso, Henry 523n43
 Świtalski, Zbigniew 367, 368n17,
 385, 386
 Szarfenberg, Ryszard 258n38
 Szmyd, Jan 467n1
 Sztompka, Piotr 39n50

 Taine, Hippolyte 3
 Tarde, Gabriel 26, 26n9, 33, 34, 35, 41, 42n61,
 46, 46n78, 53n99, 472, 545

 Tissot, Joseph 74n7
 Tolstoy, Leo 7, 12, 265, 479, 481, 543
 Traverso, Enzo 274, 274n92
 Tych, Feliks 2n5

 Urbanowski, Bohdan 8n17

 Vogl, Joseph 26n11

 Walicki, Andrzej 255, 255n27,
 255n30, 256n33
 Wallerstein, Immanuel 258, 258n40
 Waryński, Ludwik 248, 290n1, 365n9
 Wehrstedt, Wolfgang 467n1
 Weismann, August 231n4, 482
 Williams, Dana 54n101, 102n9, 135n20
 Wojciechowski, Stanisław 2n3, 8, 8n15,
 10, 10n22, 368, 368n19, 369, 369n22,
 385, 546
 Wolberg, Ludwik 240n10
 Wolff, Christian 128n16, 476, 476n38
 Wright, Julian 256n35
 Wundt, Wilhelm 30, 31, 469, 471, 476, 478

 Xenophon 101

 Zackiewicz, Grzegorz 267n73
 Żarnowska, Anna 9n20
 Żerkowski, Jan 8n18
 Ziehen, Theodor 476
 Żuk, Piotr 267n74

The *Metaphysics of Cooperation* presents the intellectual achievements of the Polish associative socialist and pioneer of social sciences, Edward Abramowski. The volume is divided into five sections, each of them contains an analysis of Polish philosopher's work according to the issues he dealt with: sociology, ethics, politics, cooperativism, and psychology. Each part also contains a selection of his writings. Its intention is to show Abramowski's works in the context of global intellectual history and to include them in the current political debates. Abramowski makes fraternity or cooperation the main concepts of his social metaphysics. The Polish version of cooperativism can be inspiring both for contemporary researchers and political activists in the post-economic-crisis Europe. It also opens up a space for creating more democratic political and economic institutions.

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