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MARX'S *PAMPHLETIST*: CHARLES WENTWORTH DILKE AND HIS TRACT ON *THE SOURCE AND REMEDY OF THE NATIONAL DIFFICULTIES* (1821)

GIANCARLO DE VIVO

Università di Napoli *Federico II*

This paper considers a largely unknown pamphlet, originally published anonymously in 1821, and assesses its place in the history of classical and Marxian thinking about value, surplus value and profits. It identifies its author and outlines his career and background in the context of nineteenth-century British politics.

JEL Classifications: B12; B14; B31; B51

1. In the chapter on 'Conversion of Surplus-Value into Capital' in volume I of *Das Kapital*, Marx (1867, Engl. ed. 1887, p. 598) quotes a virtually unknown pamphlet entitled *The source and remedy of the national difficulties, deduced from principles of political economy, in a letter to Lord John Russell*, anonymously published in London in 1821. Marx simply quotes the pamphlet's identification of capital with 'surplus produce', making no comments on the pamphlet itself. No other quotation of this pamphlet appears in any of the writings of Marx published in his lifetime, to the best of my knowledge.

In his preface to the posthumously published volume II of *Das Kapital*, Engels (1885, Engl. ed. 1907, p. 12 ff) refutes Rodbertus's claim that in his first volume Marx had 'robbed' the explanation of 'the source of the surplus value to the capitalists' from a work Rodbertus himself had published in 1842. Referring to Marx's quotation of the 1821 pamphlet, Engels pointed out that Marx had acknowledged that its author had already recognized surplus produce as the source of capital, so there was no question of Marx's originality, let alone of a theft from Rodbertus's 1842 book on Marx's part.[1] Indeed, Engels had in front of himself Marx's bulky

[1] K. Popper in *The open society and its enemies*, misreading Engels's quotation of the pamphlet, goes to the extreme of writing that *The source and remedy* already contained *all* the main ideas later to be found in Marx's theory of surplus value, except the distinction between labour and labour-power (Popper, 1945, II, p. 346).

manuscript entitled 'A contribution to the critique of political economy',[2] from which he quotes extensively Marx's comments on the pamphlet, in particular Marx's statement that

> the little known pamphlet … directly designates surplus-value or 'profit', or interest, as the author of this pamphlet calls it, as surplus labor … the author is limited by the economic theories which he finds at hand and which he accepts… He advances beyond Ricardo by reducing all surplus-value to labor (Engels, 1885, Engl. ed. 1907, pp. 20–1).

As a matter of fact, in the chapter of vol. III of *Theories of Surplus Value* entitled 'Opposition to the economists (based on Ricardian Theory)', Marx deals at great length with the *pamphletist* (as he calls him), stating that his work

> contains an important advance on Ricardo. It bluntly describes *surplus-value*[3]—or 'profit', as Ricardo calls it (often also '*surplus produce*') or '*interest*', as the author of the pamphlet terms it, —as '*surplus labour*', the labour which the worker performs gratis, the labour he performs over and above the quantity of labour by which the value of his labour-power is replaced, i.e. by which he produces an equivalent for his *wages*. Important as it was to reduce *value* to labour, it was equally important to present *surplus-value*, which manifests itself in *surplus product*, as *surplus labour*. This was in fact already stated by Adam Smith and constitutes one of the main elements in Ricardo's argumentation. But nowhere did he clearly express it and record it in an *absolute form*…. the pamphlet and the other works of this kind to be mentioned seize on the mysteries of capitalist production which have been brought to light in order to combat the latter from the standpoint of the industrial proletariat (Marx, 1861-3, III, pp. 238–9).[4]

Engels had written that, by quoting the pamphlet, Marx had 'saved [it] from being forgotten'; and in fact virtually all the quotations one finds of it seem to be somehow related to Marx. At the first appearance in print of that MSS, edited by Karl Kautsky[5] as *Theorien über den Mehrwert* in 1905–10,[6] the pamphlet was noticed by some of the reviewers, notably Otto Bauer (1910, p. 332),[7] and Rudolf Hilferding

[2] The initial part of the manuscript is the book with same title, published by Marx in 1859 (Marx makes no mention of the pamphlet in this book, but he already knew it by 1859: see below note 4).

[3] English in the original, as for the following italicized words of Marx's text, except the words 'absolute form'.

[4] Marx knew the pamphlet already in 1857–58, as it is quoted in *Grundrisse* (Marx, 1857-58, p. 397, and p. 706).

[5] Kautsky's work on the MSS had started when Engels was still alive, and Kautsky was acting as 'Engels's eyes' (Engels had almost gone blind), but the task of editing it for publication seems to have been formally entrusted upon him only after Engels's death, by Eleanor Marx (writing also on behalf of her sister Laura) in a letter of 22 August 1895, preserved at the International Institute of Social History of Amsterdam (Karl Kautsky Papers, D XVI 437; available online at search.socialhistory.org/Record/ARCH00712/ ArchiveContentList#Acf44083532).

[6] *Theorien über den Mehrwert* in Kautsky's edition was published (in Stuttgart) in four tomes: the first two volumes were published in 1905, the third volume (in two tomes) in 1910. It was never published in English (a one volume selection appearing in 1951). A French edition was published in 1925–26 (in six volumes, with title *Histoire des doctrines économiques*). An Italian edition was published in 1954–58 (in three volumes, with title *Storia delle teorie economiche*). The integral edition following the original manuscript was first published in 1954 (in Russian translation), then in 1956 (in the original German). An English translation (*Theories of Surplus Value*) was published in 1969–72.

[7] Bauer quotes it also in his 1913 critique of Luxemburg's *Accumulation of capital* (Bauer, 1913, p. 720).

(1911, p. 310), who mention it among the anti-capitalist literature dealt with by Marx in the third volume of *Theories of Surplus Value*. The pamphlet is also discussed in some detail by Max Beer in his *History of British Socialism* (1929, I, pp. 245–250), at the very beginning of the chapter on 'Economics of anti-Capitalism'.

It was possibly because of its quotation in *Das Kapital*, that the pamphlet's title had appeared in Foxwell's extensive 'Bibliography of the English Socialist school' (Foxwell, 1899, p. 204), published as an appendix to the English edition of Anton Menger's book on *The right to the whole produce of labour*. Foxwell dubitatively attributes authorship of *The source and remedy* to John Gray, the author of the famous 1825 *Lecture on human happiness*, which he describes as 'the most striking and effective socialist manifesto of the time' (Foxwell, 1899, p. xlviii). However, in his lengthy introduction to Menger's book Foxwell does not discuss the contents of the 1821 pamphlet at all—in fact, he does not even mention it. The *pamphletist* is a neglected economist—he is even absent from Seligman's famous 1903 article 'On some neglected British economists',[8] which deals with many of his contemporaries, with the intention of rescuing them from undeserved oblivion.[9] All in all, we can say that the *pamphletist,* even though not completely forgotten,[10] has not received the attention it deserves if one accepts Marx's claims on his behalf.[11] In this section we will summarize the main points of the pamphlet, and then briefly discuss its relationship with Ricardo and with the economico-political thought of its time.

The source and remedy of the national difficulties was published in February or (more likely) March 1821;[12] even in its own time it received scanty attention. Only one (brief) review was apparently published, in *The Examiner* of 22 April.[13] Although praising the author's 'considerable acuteness', the reviewer criticised the pamphlet as 'utterly destitute of arrangement', and refrained from endorsing any of its positions.

[8] Seligman, however, had a copy of the pamphlet in his magnificent collection of rare economic books (now at Columbia University).

[9] The *leitmotiv* of Seligman's article was the unearthing of economists neglected because of their opposition to the allegedly crushing Ricardian orthodoxy, and precursors of later (marginalist) ideas, so the *pamphletist* would hardly fit in.

[10] The additional notices in print we can record here are, one by M. Blaug, in the chapter on 'Ricardian Socialists' of his 1958 *Ricardian economics*, and one by A. Ginzburg in his 1987 entry on 'Ricardian Socialists' in *The New Palgrave* (Ginzburg had also edited an Italian translation of the pamphlet in a collection of 'Ricardian socialist' texts, published in 1976, where the pamphlet is briefly discussed in his introduction). The only reprint I am aware of was edited by G. Claeys in 2005, in a ten volume collection of reprints of 'Owenite Socialism' pamphlets. (No discussion of the pamphlet is to be found in the editorial matter, nor any explanation of why it was regarded as Owenite.)

[11] Part of the explanation is also that it is extremely scarce: I have been able to trace only nine copies in libraries worldwide: no copy is recorded in French, German, or Italian libraries, no copy in the Library of Congress. It is of course difficult to say whether neglect derives from scarcity or *vice versa*.

[12] The pamphlet itself is dated February 1821; it was advertised in the *Morning Chronicle* of 14 March.

[13] *The Examiner* (a weekly paper of radical leanings) was then still edited by Leigh Hunt, the friend of Shelley and Keats, also a good friend of the *pamphletist* (as we shall see in the next section).

The pamphlet starts with an attack on political economy and the economists—indeed, the ostensible reason why it is addressed to Lord John Russell was that in a recent essay the Whig politician[14] had derided political economy ('an awful thing') and its practitioners, 'men who allow themselves to contradict the most sacred principles of their own laws … there is nothing so various as the opinions of political economists' (Russell, 1819, pp. 125–6). The *pamphletist* concurs with Russell's opinion that the political economists are 'contradictory', and adds: 'not only the one to the other, but to our best feelings and plainest sense' (p. 1). Though sharing Russell's dislike of political economists, the *pamphletist* could not share much of his reasons for attacking them: for Russell a major one was the economists' 'wish to substitute the corn of Poland and Russia for our own':[15] the *pamphletist*, as we shall see, was instead unreservedly for the repeal of the Corn Laws, which he regarded as one of the sources of the 'national difficulties'.[16]

As Marx had stressed, the *pamphletist*'s arguments revolve around the concept of 'surplus labour'. Starting from the premise that 'labour is the source of all wealth and revenue', the *pamphletist* goes on to say that it is possible to derive revenue not only from one's own labour, but also from the labour of someone else—*i.e.* from *surplus labour*, which he defines as 'all the labour of the individual beyond what is exclusively appropriated to the maintenance and enjoyment of himself and family'; 'the wealth of a nation consists in its reserved surplus labour' (p. 2). He then writes:

> When … [production] shall have arrived at [its] maximum, it would be ridiculous to suppose, that society would still continue to exert its utmost productive power. … [W]here men heretofore laboured twelve hours they would now labour six, and *this* is national wealth, this is national prosperity.[17] After all their idle sophistry, there is, thank God! no means of adding to *the wealth of a nation* but by adding to the facilities of living: so that wealth is liberty—liberty to

[14] Russell (1792–1878), the third son of the 6th Duke of Bedford, had entered the House of Commons (in April 1813, when still underage) as MP for Tavistock, a borough in the pocket of his father. As the son of a Whig grandee, he soon had a prominent position in the party, and was later Prime Minister (twice), proving rather a failure. Was created Earl Russell in 1861. Marx, who detested the Whigs, published a scathing profile of Russell as a politician (Marx, 1855), but seems not to have commented Russell's views on political economy and the economists (however, he qualified as 'balderdash' (*Lappalie*) Russell's 1821 *Essay on the history of the English government and constitution*). Ricardo, who disliked the Whigs no less than the Tories, registered (ironically) 'the wise observations of Lord John Russell on the little advantages to be derived from a knowledge of this science [Polit. Economy]' (*Works*, IX, 155; see also IV, 258).

[15] Russell, 'Letter to the Yeomanry and Farmers of Huntingdonshire on agricultural distress' (*Morning Chronicle*, 18 January 1822). Ricardo kept a cutting of this article, probably for its attack on 'the science' (see previous footnote), and because Russell criticised the report of the previous year's agricultural committee ('a report suggesting no relief'), of which Ricardo had been a member. In publishing Russell's letter, the *Morning Chronicle* prefaced it with a long article in defense of political economists.

[16] Russell's Letter was typically insubstantial: while decidedly siding with the farmers ('Political Economy is now the fashion; and the farmers of England … are likely to be the victims'), he did not propose any measures, only advised the farmers to 'keep a good look out': all in all, a 'stupid manifesto' (Halévy, 1926, p. 115).

[17] He had previously remarked: 'From all the works I have read on the subject, the richest nations in the world are those where the greatest revenue is or can be raised; as if the power of compelling or inducing men to labour twice as much at the mills of Gaza for the enjoyment of the Philistines, were a proof of any thing but a tyranny or an ignorance twice as powerful' (p. 1).

seek recreation—liberty to enjoy life—liberty to improve the mind: it is disposable time, and nothing more. Whenever a society shall have arrived at this point, whether the individuals that compose it, shall, for these six hours, bask in the sun, or sleep in the shade, or idle, or play, or invest their labour in things with which it perishes, which last is a necessary consequence if they will labour at all, *ought to be* in the election of every man individually' (p. 6).

But this is not what happens in a capitalist society:

our labourer, instead of having his labours abridged, toils infinitely more, more hours, more laboriously, than the first Celtic savage (p. 7).

The increased productive powers (which the *pamphletist* regards as also due to the capital accumulated) are not employed to reduce the labourer's toil, but to produce goods appropriated by the capitalists, including new machinery (p. 7). The accumulation of new capital would however tend to reduce interest on (and value of) capital, thus 'would hourly and daily tend to the removal of the grievance altogether' (p. 7).

It is not only the 'cravings of the capitalist' that the labourer must satisfy, however, but also those of unproductive labourers, and of people who do not work at all. Consumption by the capitalists, by unproductive labourers, and by people who do not work, according to him reduces the pace of accumulation, having thus the effect of increasing the 'grievance'.[18] The pretentions of the capitalist on the labourer's product also increase due to the creation of 'fictitious capital'—such as inconvertible paper money. But there is a limit to what the capitalist can appropriate:

the capitalist … can *only receive* the *surplus* labour of the labourer; for the labourer *must live;* he must satisfy the cravings of nature before he satisfies the cravings of the capitalist … The capitalist may eventually speculate on the food that requires the least labour to produce it, and eventually say to the labourer, 'You sha'n't eat bread, because barley meal is cheaper; you sha'n't eat meat, because it is possible to subsist on beet root and potatoes.' *And to this point have we come!* and *by this very progress have we arrived at it!* (pp. 23–4).

The *pamphletist* notices in fact that Patrick Colquhoun in his 1814 *Treatise on the wealth of the British empire* had remarked that the amount of land necessary to produce the subsistence of a worker's family living on bread is four times the amount necessary if they subsist on potatoes (Colquhoun, 1814, p. 11). In a sentence that has a Marxian ring the *pamphletist* comments:

if when [the labourer] fed on bread he was obliged to retain for the maintenance of himself and family the labour of Monday and Tuesday, he will, on potatoes, require only the half of Monday; and the remaining half of Monday and the whole of Tuesday are available either for the service of the state or the capitalist (p. 26).

[18] Another limit to the accumulation of capital would occur '*if the happiness of the whole, and not the luxuries of a few, is the proper subject for national congratulation*' (p. 4). *The Examiner's* reviewer wrote: 'There is some ingenuity in the Author's theory in regard to the accumulation of capital'.

Scorn is then poured on Colquhoun ('that wretched man'), but the data furnished in his *Treatise* are put to good use by the *pamphletist*. Indeed, Colquhoun had an interesting table (1814, pp. 124–5) entitled 'An attempt to exhibit a general view of society', which showed the whole social structure in 1812—essentially, how that year's revenue was distributed among the various classes.[19] This was a very inspiring table,[20] which the *pamphletist* rearranges (p. 34) in a table of his own, to show for the various social groups, from the king and the royal family downwards, how much 'interest on capital' they earn at the expense of the workers:—*i.e.* what they receive above what they would receive if they were simply paid a subsistence of £45, equal to the yearly wage of agricultural workers (the lowest paid of workers, apparently regarded as the producers of subsistence). The total 'interest' paid to the non-labouring classes is shown to be more than seven times what is received by the agricultural labourers as their total wages (p. 35). The *pamphletist* avows not to be a 'leveller',[21] but—he adds—the calculation shows the 'amount of the total exactions of the capitalists, and [its] extravagance' (p. 35).[22]

Workers not employed in agriculture are not contemplated in the *pamphletist*'s table, and disregarded in his calculations, but he nonetheless notices that 'even the high wages of mechanics and other artizans, inasmuch as it exceeds [the agricultural workers' wage], is interest of capital' (p. 33).

The *remedy* to the 'national difficulties' would be on the one hand getting rid of 'fictitious capital', which increases the pretentions of 'interest' on the labourers's product, and on the other 'leaving as far as practicable the new made capital to accumulate, and consequently to reduce the interest paid on all capital' (p. 36). The main sources of 'fictitious capital', to be done away with, are inconvertible paper money (as already noticed), and protection to agriculture: the Corn Laws cause rent to rise,

[19] This table, of which a first version is already to be found in Colquhoun 1806 *Treatise on indigence,* was explicitly derived from Gregory King's famous 1688 'estimates' (printed in 1802 by George Chalmers). Foxwell (1899, p. 199), and Beer following him, regard Colquhoun's *Treatise on wealth* as an important source of the English Socialist school. Beer has an interesting discussion of Colquhoun in his chapter on 'The economists' (1929, pp. 143–7). He asserts that Colquhoun was personally acquainted with Ricardo, but this seems unsubstantiated. Colquhoun had however contacts with Adam Smith and with Owen, as Beer writes (p. 143), but in any case he was 'a staunch adherent of the existing order' (*ibid.*).

[20] And in fact it inspired many critics of the social order, in particular John Gray, who reproduced it in his *Lecture on human happiness* (1825, p. 11 ff.), and derived from it conclusions similar to those of the *pamphletist* (hence presumably Foxwell's dubitative attribution of *The source and remedy* to Gray). We cannot say whether Gray knew *The source and remedy*, which to the best of my knowledge is not mentioned in any of his works. Marx did not comment on similarities between *The source and remedy* and the *Lecture on human happiness*, as he did not apparently know the latter work (scarcity is probably to blame: there was no copy 'in the Museum').

[21] This is a point of difference between the political position of the *pamphletist* and that of Gray, who in *Lecture on human happiness* was for absolute equality (1825, p.6). We may notice however that in his later works Gray was much more moderate, and against complete equality.

[22] This calculation seems to imply that all people who receive an income (including for instance the king and the royal family!) are producing something, only that they are overpaid. Similarly, Gray considers the king and the royal family as unproductive, but still 'useful'; he even states that they give an equivalent for what they receive (but does not explain what this equivalent is: 1825, p. 18).

hence an artificial increase in the price of land[23]—a 'fictitious' increase of capital (land for the *pamphletist* counts as capital).

We may briefly comment on the relationship between the *pamphletist* and Ricardo. No doubt the *pamphletist* has studied his Ricardo, whom he explicitly quotes twice (p. 16n and p. 21n), but rather dissenting from him. Also in (tacit) dissention from Ricardo, he claims that foreign trade adds nothing to the wealth of the country (p. 17), whereas of course Ricardo had maintained that foreign trade does not add to the *value*, but does add to the *wealth* of a country (Ricardo, *Works*, I, 128).[24] The *pamphletist* in fact somehow merges the two notions.

Another non-Ricardian (perhaps anti-Ricardian) idea of the *pamphletist* is that '[i]n this country … agricultural and all other necessaries are produced in sufficient quantity; *foreign trade is mere … exchange for the convenience and enjoyment of the capitalist*' (p. 18).[25] Ricardo was of course against protection to agriculture mainly in order to allow importation of cheaper wage goods. This was an argument which could have no appeal to the *pamphletist*: importation of cheaper wage goods would have simply increased *surplus labour*. As we have seen, the reason why he was in favour of repealing the Corn Laws was instead that this would reduce 'fictitious capital'.

The *pamphletist* does not explicitly discuss the determination of value, and although a labour theory of value could perhaps be attributed to him, his main reasonings do not appear to be based on any idea that value is proportional to labour embodied. In particular, the concept of *surplus labour*, so central in the pamphlet, is not based on any *theory of value*, it simply derives from the rather obvious point that (if there is profit) the workers who produce subsistence work beyond the amount of time necessary to reproduce their own necessaries—to put it in the *pamphletist*'s words, they only work for themselves on Monday and Tuesday (if they subsist on bread, only half of Monday if they subsist on potatoes), the rest of the week they work to produce subsistence for others.

The concept of surplus labour in fact can even be seen as a tautology: that the workers who (directly or indirectly) produce subsistence, work more than the time necessary to reproduce their own subsistence is an undeniable *fact*. The point is to explain why this fact occurs, *i.e.* why workers work more than just the time necessary to produce what they need for themselves. The *pamphletist* would side with Smith,[26] according to whom 'the masters', who 'have an advantage' in the dispute with the workers about the level of wages, can 'force [workmen] into compliance with their terms', thus managing to 'share in the produce of their labour' (*Wealth of Nations*, Bk. I, Ch. viii). But the concept of 'surplus labour' is also found in other authors, in

[23] 'If now, by some legislative enactment, by the decreased value of money, or by any other regulating circumstances, the price of agricultural produce shall be so raised as to enable the landholders to double their rental, and the *interest of money continue the same after as before*, the whole capital of the country vested in lands is doubled in amount' (p. 34).

[24] Sraffa (1951-73) will be quoted as *Works*, followed by volume and page number.

[25] On this point, Marx sides with the *pamphletist*, but does not comment on the anti-Ricardian implication of his position.

[26] Smith is never quoted by the *pamphletist*, who arguably shares more with him than with Ricardo.

completely different contexts—and seen in a completely different light. It appears for instance in a work by the same 'wretched' Colquhoun, his *Treatise on indigence* (1806), which the *pamphletist* almost certainly knew.[27] Here, property is identified with stored surplus labour, which for Colquhoun means labour beyond that necessary to produce subsistence. He writes:

> *Poverty* is that state and condition in society where the individual has no surplus labour in store, and, consequently, no property but what is derived from the constant exercise of industry in the various occupations of life; or in other words, it is the state of every one who must labour for subsistence.

And he sees nothing wrong in this:

> *Poverty* is therefore a most necessary and indispensable ingredient in society … it is the source of *wealth*, since without poverty there would be *no labour* (1806, pp. 7–8).[28]

The *pamphletist* of course saw things differently from Colquhoun, and was certainly helped in this by having pondered over Ricardo's theory. However, in Ricardo there is no conception of surplus labour, and he is of course far from the radical conclusions reached by the *pamphletist*[29]—and, we may add, by the other critics of capitalist society who came after him, like Gray, Thompson, Hodgskin, or Marx himself. Following Myrdal,[30] we might say that the surprising thing is not that the critics drew socialist conclusions from the Ricardian system, but that Ricardo himself did not do so. However, he didn't; to have made the point is a significant advance.

The real source of inspiration for the *pamphletist*, we may notice, was William Godwin, whose follower he avowedly was for the whole of his life (Keats who—we shall see—was one of his friends, described him as a 'Godwin Methodist'). Indeed, although this seems to have gone unnoticed, Godwin appears to have had a conception of *surplus labour*, and of its injustice—much as the *pamphletist* had. In the *Enquirer* (the reading of which, significantly, had sparked the Reverend Malthus's reaction against the very idea of social progress)[31] Godwin had in fact the same reasoning the *pamphletist* had derived from Colquhoun's table, writing:

> Is any man entitled to claim through life, that he should be maintained by the industry of others? Certainly not. The injustice I suffer, is not in the actual labour, but in the quantity of that labour. If no man was absolutely compelled to perform a greater share of labour than, multiplied by the number of members in the community, was necessary for the subsistence of

[27] Indeed, in his 1814 *Treatise* Colquhoun quotes from his own 1806 work.

[28] According to Colquhoun, '*Indigence* … not *poverty*, is the evil... It is the state of any one who is destitute of the means of subsistence' (1806, p. 8). This is quoted by Colquhoun himself in his *Treatise on wealth*.

[29] Ricardo is also far from Smith. His reason for the fixing of wages at a level which allows the masters to share in the workers's product is of course the principle of population.

[30] See Roll (1938, p. 243).

[31] Only his strong bias against Ricardo could bring Keynes to couple Ricardo with Malthus as a provider of 'an immensely powerful intellectual foundation to justify the *status quo*' (Keynes, 1935, p. 104–5).

the community, he would have no right to complain on that account. But the labour then required, would be diminished to a tenth, perhaps a twentieth part of the labour now imposed upon the husbandman and artificer (Godwin, 1797, p. 163).

And also:

It is a gross and ridiculous error to suppose that the rich pay for any thing. There is no wealth in the world except this, the labour of man. What is misnamed wealth, is merely a power vested in certain individuals by the institutions of society, to compel others to labour for their benefit. So much labour is requisite to produce the necessaries of life; so much more to produce those superfluities which at present exist in any country. Every new luxury is a new weight thrown into the scale. … The poor … are paid no more now for the work of ten hours, than before for the work of eight (1797, p. 177).

Marx did not notice the *pamphletist*'s debt to Godwin. Indeed, Godwin seems to have been almost completely by-passed by both Marx and Engels, in whose works I have been unable to find any significant discussion of his conceptions.[32]

We can perhaps say that the *pamphletist* fired the initial shot (together with Ravenstone, whose *Few Doubts* were published more or less at the same time)[33] in the 'Splendid tournaments' held 'from 1820 to 1830, … [a period] notable in England for scientific activity in the domain of Political Economy' (Marx, 1873, p. xxii). It is however with some surprise that we find that 'at the head' of these splendid tournaments there was Godwin. People who, like Foxwell and Menger, put Godwin 'at the head' of the English School of Socialism (1899, p. xxvii), praised his *political philosophy*[34] (though with the qualification that it was 'the most chimerical of all Utopias': Foxwell, 1899, p. xxx), but never dreamed of praising his *economic* conceptions.

2. We now come to the identity of the *pamphletist.* The catalogues of *all* the libraries which own a copy of the pamphlet ignore the name of its author.[35] Yet the authorship of *The source and remedy of the national difficulties* was disclosed as early as 1875 in a book edited by Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke, a prominent radical politician.[36]

[32] One of the few mentions of Godwin is in Engels's letter to Marx of 17 March 1845, where Godwin is criticised as 'anti-social', and in practice disregarded, 'despite the many excellent passages in which Godwin touches on communism'. (Significantly, Engels also writes: 'However, it was a very long time ago that I made excerpts from the book [*Political Justice*], when many things were still not clear to me, and I must in any case look through it again, for it may well be that there's more to the thing than I found at the time'; Engels failed to go back to Godwin, apparently).

[33] *The source and remedy* and Ravenstone's (1821) *A few doubts* were the earliest of the several anti-capitalist economic works which appeared in the 1820s. Marx, however, seems not to have known Ravenstone's book. Ricardo instead commented on it in his correspondence. He was clearly intrigued by the book, and noticed a similarity of Ravenstone's viewpoint with Godwin's (*Works*, IX, 59–60).

[34] On this, see the review of the German edition of Menger's book written jointly by Engels and Kautsky, who rightly remark that praise of Godwin and of W. Thompson (whom Godwin is said to have inspired) was made in order to '*drag down Marx*', who would have 'simply copied these old Englishmen' (Engels-Kautsky, 1887, p. 607).

[35] The British Library (whose catalogue gives Lord John Russell as the author), Oxford Bodleian, Cambridge University (Pryme), Trinity College Cambridge (Sraffa), UCL (Joseph Hume), Goldsmiths', Kress, Columbia University (Seligman), Royal Irish Academy (Charles Haliday).

[36] Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke, 2nd Baronet (1843–1911), served as a Cabinet minister under Gladstone, and might have been his successor, but his political career was destroyed in the mid-1880s by a

To honour his grandfather and namesake Charles Wentworth Dilke (1789–1864), he edited a two volume selection from his writings, under the title *Papers of a critic* (London, Murray, 1875). He prefaced it with a lengthy (but rather unsatisfactory) Memoir of the author,[37] where he wrote:

> It is difficult to trace Mr. Dilke's numerous writings, as he never put his name to anything: never kept a copy or a note of titles, and never told his son, or in later times his grandson. In 1821 he wrote a political pamphlet—which was published by Rodwell and Martin—under the title of 'The Source and Remedy of the National Difficulties, deduced from Principles of Political Economy,' in a LETTER TO LORD JOHN RUSSELL. … The tone of the pamphlet was extremely radical. [38]

It is remarkable that authorship of the pamphlet should have been unknown to virtually all XX Century students of economic and social thought[39], including as learned scholars as Foxwell and Sraffa.

Some of the papers chosen by the younger Dilke from the writings of his grandfather (on Pope, on Lady Mary Wortley Montague, and on Swift) were of a literary, some of a historico-political nature (on Wilkes, on the Grenville Papers, on Burke, on the authorship of Junius's Letters). His grandfather had been an important figure in the literary world of his time: he was a member of Leigh Hunt's 'circle', or 'Cockney School', together with (among others) John Keats, whose close friend Dilke was.[40] He also came to know Shelley, whose 'Lines written during the Castlereagh Administration' were later (1832) published by Dilke in *The Athenaeum* (also *The source and remedy* had of course been written during the Castlereagh Administration). Dilke was in fact best known as the stern editor (and proprietor)[41] of *The Athenaeum*, which was an important and successful Liberal weekly paper.[42]

sexual scandal. His name is known to economists also for his chairing the *Industrial Remuneration Conference* of January 1885 (a few months before the eruption of the scandal), at which Alfred Marshall was one of the main speakers.

[37] The biographical information on Dilke here given directly or indirectly relies on this Memoir.

[38] He gave no hints as to the grounds for attributing authorship of the pamphlet to his grandfather. At https://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/economics/dilke/1821/sourceandremedy.htm, one finds a (not fully accurate) transcription of the pamphlet, attributing it to Dilke. In its brief introduction it is stated: 'This pamphlet was published anonymously in 1821. Authorship was attributed to Dilke by his grandson who found an annotated copy of the pamphlet acknowledging authorship amongst his grandfather's papers'. It is not said whence the additional information comes from; it seems doubtful.

[39] The earliest notice in an economico-political text that Dilke was the author of *The source and remedy* is probably that in the 1990 MEGA edition (Berlin, Dietz Verlag) of the English edition of *Das Kapital*, which gives (without any explanation) his name as that of the author.

[40] Dilke and his then friend Charles Armitage Brown had built the twin Hampstead houses were Keats spent time before his last journey to Italy, and where his beloved Fanny Brawne lived after Dilke removed to the West End in 1819 (Brown's house is now the Keats Museum). The first biography of Keats (by R. Monckton Milnes, later Lord Houghton) was essentially based on documents provided by Brown and Dilke.

[41] He owned 75% of it. His grandson inherited it from him, and acquired also the remaining 25%.

[42] The newspaper went on until 1921, when it merged with *The Nation* into a newspaper called *The Nation and The Athenaeum*. From 1923 J.M. Keynes exercised much power on this paper (of which he became a director), and in the 1920s published some 150 articles in it. When in 1931 it merged with *The New Statesman*, the *Athenaeum* name disappeared.

Dilke ran it from 1830 to 1846, when he left to become editor of *The Daily News*, a position he held for four years. In the 1850s he ceased his several editorial jobs, but remained very active as a writer. In 1862 he retired to the countryside, where he lived until his death 2 years later.

Dilke was also an antiquary, and a learned man; possessed a library of some 12,000 volumes.[43] In 1849 he founded, together with J.W. Thoms, *Notes and Queries*, conceived, according to its subtitle, as '*A Medium of Inter-Communication for Literary Men, Artists, Antiquaries, Genealogists, etc.*'. Having made it a rule not to go into society of any kind, he regarded his books as a substitute for the social life which he had renounced: 'I have a social life in my books', he wrote.

As already mentioned, it is difficult to trace Dilke's writings, which were very numerous, but all anonymous. However, his importance as a literary figure has caused research to be made on him, but basically because of interest for his literary activities, and mostly related to Keats. A result of this research is W. Garrett's (1981) checklist of his writings, which is basically confined to his literary works, essentially those published in *The Athenaeum. The source and remedy* is listed, but no other work of economic or political contents is mentioned. From the information we have,[44] however, it is clear that Dilke was extremely interested in politics for the whole of his life. For some years in the 1820s, he was one of the writers of the political column of the *London Magazine*, an unofficial organ of the 'Cockney school' (see Garrett, 1982, p. 118). He contributed to several journals, among which the *Westminster Review*,[45] then the organ of the Philosophical Radicals (Bentham, the Mills, and Francis Place). *The Daily News*, whose editorship Dilke took over from Charles Dickens, was a radical newspaper—the more so thanks to Dilke.[46] (It is intriguing that Thomas Hodgskin should have written for this paper under Dilke's editorship, but we know nothing of their relationship.)[47]

Just as a sign of Dilke's continuing and rather daring radical attitude, we may recall that he attacked the government in *The Daily News* on the very morning of 10 April 1848, the day of the famous Chartist meeting on Kennington Common, for which the ruling classes had gone into hysterical frenzy, fearing an armed insurrection: the government (headed by no other than Lord John Russell)[48] had put the Duke of

[43] At the very beginning of the pamphlet he tells us he renounces to cite authorities to avoid 'clog[ging] this inquiry with an eternal reference to the opinions of other men' (p. 3).

[44] Beside the Memoir in *Papers of a critic*, something is added in the biography of Dilke by W. Garrett (1982). See also the entry in the *ODNB*.

[45] On this, all the sources converge, but none gives any details. The most authoritative source on authorship of XIX Century reviews (the *Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals*) does not list Dilke as the author of any of the articles published in the reviews it covers (including the *Westminster*).

[46] The *Anti-Corn Law League*'s leaders were linked to the owners of the paper, but Dilke refused to make *The Daily News* into a mouthpiece of the *League*; in fact Bright and Cobden were often not happy with its editorials.

[47] See Stack (1998, p. 163). Stack unfortunately does not discuss this point; in fact, he limits himself to record the fact that Hodgskin was writing for a newspaper edited by Dilke, whose politico-economic ideas he does not even mention.

[48] Garrett (1982, p. 79) claims that Dilke admired Lord John; this appears to be wholly unwarranted.

Wellington in charge of 8,000 soldiers and some 85,000 specially sworn in constables to suppress the dreaded uprising.[49] Dilke's article that day opened with the following statement:

> The idea of a successful *émeute* in the streets of London is, whether in the shape of hope or fear, about as preposterous and impossible as could seize hold of a weak mind.

He went on dryly discussing the difficulties of bringing to London sufficient people for such an enterprise, the impossibility of building barricades and in general of organizing an insurrection in London withouth 'the union of the middle and lower classes'. (No wonder the article attracted criticism—from the proprietors, who were generally dissatisfied with the radicalism of the editorials,[50] and even from Dilke's own friends, like John Lindley, the great botanist, certainly not a reactionary.)[51]

What were Dilke's views on 'the union of the middle and lower classes', we can gather from a very long article in *The Athenaeum* of 21 October 1837 (which we can safely assume to have come from his pen—or at least to have been inspired by him).[52] Radicals *à la* Mill conceived this 'union' as one in which the middle classes took the lead, and had the task of instructing the lower classes—typical example the Mechanics' Institutions and their denouement at the hands of Henry Brougham and Francis Place and the *Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge*. For Dilke, the point was just the opposite, knowledge and social developments for him came *from below*:

> it would be difficult to mention a single instance of practical amendment of institutions, to which the istincts of the masses have not led the way, and preceded the reasoning of speculative politicians … the great body of the people … are thrown … in search of some species of knowledge, which … they intuitively perceive to be essential to their improvement. … for *they are* the voice of nature, a result of physiological laws, and independent of individual wills. When the people speak the language of their superiors, they but parrot their teachers; but when they pour forth the spontaneous prompting of their own hearts, then, indeed, is their doctrine all but infallible, and their desires not to be disregarded with impunity.

This paean to 'the masses' was coupled with an attack on the 'failure' of institutions like the *Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge*. Against them Dilke maintains: 'When the people speak the language of their superiors, they but parrot their

[49] Of course account must be taken of the fact that this is April 1848, that France (as most of Europe) was also in the greatest turmoil, after the abdication in February of Louis-Philippe (and before the bloody repression of Cavaignac, which took place in June). The *Communist Manifesto* had been issued in February, and by April it had already gone through two or three editions.

[50] With *The Athenaeum* Dilke could move more freely, thanks to the fact that he was the controlling owner, and to the financial success of the paper, mostly due to him, which he was not able to replicate with the *Daily News*.

[51] The Memoir prints Lindley's letter to Dilke in full, but refrains from reprinting any part of Dilke's article. Lindley (1799-1865) was one of the members of the commission appointed in 1845 by the government to investigate the potato blight and the Irish famine, whose report was a major factor in the repeal of the Corn Laws the following year.

[52] We know from the Memoir that he had attacked the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge in *The Athenaeum*.

teachers'. And, significantly, also in view of the fact that Dilke later employed Hodgskin for *The Daily News*, he attacks the 'gentlemen' of the *Society* because they 'withheld the moral sciences, lest they should become political levers'—a clear allusion to those gentlemen's opposition to the teaching in the Mechanics' Institutions of a dangerous subject like political economy.[53]

Marx regards the *pamphletist* as representing 'the interest of the working class against capital' (1861–63, III, p. 254). Yet Dilke was certainly far from the working class *socially*: he came from the medium ranks of the middle class (his father, a colleague and friend of Dickens's father, was a chief clerk in the Pay Office of the Admiralty, and Dilke himself was a clerk in the Naval Pay Office from age 15 to age 47, when he retired on a pension). He retained throughout an aversion for the monarchy and the priviledged aristocracy—he was a staunch republican for the whole of his life.[54] He was rich, but had not been born rich, although his (handsome) income came from 'interest'—as the *pamphletist* would have said.[55] He was rather the XVIII Century rationalist than the XIX Century revolutionary, however: was always very proud of having been born in 1789, and for the whole of his life retained his admiration for the French Revolution—at difference from many British radicals, who wavered and recanted at the time of reaction. Dilke, his grandson tells us, was, 'like all Radicals, a violent Tory in everything but pure politics'.

We may last briefly comment on the fact that, apart from his grandson's statement, no other grounds have been provided for assuming that Dilke was the *pamphletist*, and indeed this seems to be often taken with a dubitative formula when the attribution is noticed.[56] We can add three points which have gone unnoticed, and that confirm that Dilke was indeed the author. One is that Dilke is known to have had a strong *penchant* for Shakespeare and Milton, as clearly also the *pamphletist*. The second is that a few years before the pamphlet, Dilke had edited (anonymously, but there is no doubt he was the editor) a collection in six volumes of *Old Plays*

[53] Hodgskin was of course the main victim of this opposition. In the *Manual for Mechanics' Institutions* issued in 1839 by the *Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge*, the books in political economy recommended for the formation of their libraries (Duppa, 1839, pp. 176–7) were all by *safe* authors (apart from Ricardo). They even included Charles Knight's attack on Hodgskin—but not Hodgskin, of course (on the Knight-Hodgskin exchanges, see Halévy, 1903, p. 112). Similarly, in the 'Outline of Lectures' given in the *Manual*, for those on political economy the theory of distribution and the theory of value were not even mentioned.

[54] His grandson tells us that Dilke was greatly disappointed in his only son. This son, also named Charles Wentworth Dilke (1810–869) was knighted for his role in organizing the Great Exhibition of 1851. His father's disappointment seems to have been generated also by his sycophantic attitude towards the monarchy (the father was against him accepting the baronetcy). Dilke's affections and attentions were reserved mainly to his grandson, who did not disappoint him (about republicanism among other things; republicanism was one of the main causes of the grandson's political difficulties: because of it, the queen went to the extreme of threatening to have him removed from the Cabinet).

[55] His income from ownership of *The Athenaeum* was substantial, sometimes it is said to have been £5,000 p.a., which is however impossibly high. He was not paid as editor, but as proprietor.

[56] See for instance Claeys's writing, in the reprint of the pamphlet, that the author is 'apparently' Dilke. Also the website http://econospeak.blogspot.com, which has some interesting remarks on the pamphlet, regards Dilke's authorship as not certain (it relies on the Memoir and alleged annotated copy found by Dilke's grandson).

(a continuation of Dodsley's collection of dramatic writers), which was issued by the same publishers as the pamphlet (Rodwell and Martin, of New Bond Street). The third is that we find that as late as 16 February 1862, in a letter to Hepworth Dixon (then editor of *The Athenaeum*), Dilke was still using the concept of surplus labour, expressing views very similar to those used in the pamphlet forty years earlier.[57] This third point appears to be decisive for confirming his grandson's attribution of authorship of the pamphlet to Dilke.

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[57] '[A] working man can earn … enough in a day to maintain himself … [this] is to me proof only that he was compelled heretofore for the interest of the planter, to give six times more labour than he received wages for' (letter reproduced in Garrett, 1982, pp. 154–5).

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