

The Ambivalence of *Gewalt* in Marx and Engels: On Balibar's Interpretation

Luca Basso

University of Padua
luca.basso@unipd.it

Abstract

This article is a reflection on Balibar's account of the concept of *Gewalt* in Marx, Engels and Marxism. The German term contains both the meanings of power and violence. At the centre of the analysis is the structural link between the notion of *Gewalt* and the capitalist mode of production and state-form. The problem is whether *Gewalt* can be understood in relation to the actions of the working class. Balibar rightly refuses any sort of counter-politics of power set against the power of the state which would retain the same overall logic as the latter. However, the question is how such a critique of the ahistorical ontology of violence can interact with Marx's idea of capital as a constitutively violent entity which threatens to subordinate to itself any stance of non-violence.

Keywords

Balibar, *Gewalt*, power, violence, capital, state, class-conflict

In actual history, it is a notorious fact that conquest, enslavement, robbery, murder, in short, violence [*Gewalt*], play the great part. In the tender annals of political economy, the idyllic reigns from time immemorial.¹

The right to work is, in the bourgeois sense, an absurdity, a miserable, pious wish. But behind the right to work stands the power [*Gewalt*] over capital; behind the power over capital [...], therefore, the abolition of wage labour, of capital and of their mutual relations.²

1. Marx 1976, p. 874 (translation modified).

2. Marx 1975–2005, p. 78.

Because of the (apparent or real) ambiguity in the theoretical trajectory of Marx and Engels, reflection on the structure and meaning of *Gewalt* has always constituted a controversial question within Marxism. Marx and Engels's treatment of this concept is somewhat ambivalent and characterised by a complex articulation which makes it irreducible both to *Gewalt* as the 'lever of history', and, conversely, to its elimination on the basis of an 'irenic' conciliation between Marxism and pacifism. A contribution that provides us with a stimulating occasion for deeper study of such themes is the article by Etienne Balibar on the notion of *Gewalt*, which first appeared in *Historisch-kritisches Wörterbuch des Marxismus* and was published in the previous issue of this journal.³

It is worth underlining the range of meanings contained in the German term *Gewalt*, a term which is marked by its ambivalence: *Gewalt* is, at the same time, violence and power, *violence et pouvoir*, *violenza e potere*. This word does not limit itself, therefore, to connoting violence *stricto sensu* but invests a wider field of action. It does not refer only to violence in the strict sense, such as that exercised in the public sphere, state-violence, but, rather, violence-power in its complexity, in the problematic intertwinement of such elements. As is evident examining various German lexicons, we find ourselves faced with a structural connection between *Herrschaft*, *Macht*, and *Gewalt*.⁴ These notions, though with different nuances and peculiarities, are the signatures of the state-sphere, that is, of the immense concentration of power that is capable of forcing single individuals to submit to it, inasmuch as they have consensually chosen to cede all their rights to the political body so as to receive peace and security in exchange. The institutional order so-formed is characterised by legitimacy: every act of the possessor of legitimacy, if it is in harmony with the legal order in its entirety, is revealed to be *a priori* legitimate, since it is the fruit of the consent of the citizen-subject. Even violence in the proper sense is justified by such a mechanism of legitimation. From this point of view, the two famous statements by Karl Marx and Max Weber are shown to be

3. Balibar 2001a and 2009. Balibar's analysis focuses on the category indicated in Marx and Engels, and then, in a more cursory way, on the subsequent development of Marxism and of currents linked in some way to it. Those taken into consideration include: Sorel, Bernstein, Lenin, Gramsci, Italian workerism (Tronti, Negri), Adorno, Fanon, Reich, Bataille, Benjamin, Gandhi. We have focused our attention on the part of Balibar's article that involves Marx and Engels. For previous treatments by Balibar, on the question of violence, see especially Balibar 1996a, Balibar 1997, pp. 397–418, and 2002, pp. 129–45.

4. One should note Faber, Ilting and Meier, 1982, in particular. On the notion of power in the modern epoch, see Duso 1999. On the various approaches to the concept of *Gewalt*, including in relation to the contemporary political-philosophical and political-science debates, see Heitmeyer and Soeffner 2004.

compatible. The state, according to the first, is ‘the concentrated and organized force of society [*die konzentrierte und organisierte Gewalt der Gesellschaft*]’;⁵ and, according to the second, it is ‘a human community [*menschliche Gemeinschaft*], that (successfully) claims the monopoly of legitimate physical force [*das Monopol legitimer physischer Gewaltamkeit*] within a given territory’.⁶ From these considerations arises the fact that *Gewalt* (and related terms such as *Gewaltsamkeit*) has greater scope than does the English *violence* not only because it includes *power*, but also because each component term is shown to be structurally ambivalent. The article by Balibar picks up precisely this problem and, therefore, confronts the multi-faceted character of the concept in question. Such reflection does not lead to a dualism between non-violent power and extra-institutional violence, given that the state also includes the continuous possibility of violence, even if legitimate. The definitions of Marx and of Weber agree in their identification of the *Gewalt*-character of the state. The recognition of the nexus examined leads in a direction that is irreconcilable to that of Hannah Arendt, who developed a contrast between violence and power, intending the latter in a sense that is radically other than the former.⁷ The two main paths of investigation are the following: first, an analysis, starting with the treatment by Balibar of the notion of *Gewalt* in Marx and Engels, intended to demonstrate its connection with the capitalist structure, on the economic level, and the statist dimension, on the political level. As we will see, the relationship between the economic viewpoint and the political one does not appear to be defined once and for all. The second, more problematic path, consists in examining whether such a concept can be used ‘positively’ or only as critique and deconstruction. In the affirmative case, it is a question of understanding if proletarian *Gewalt* turns out to be asymmetrical with respect to capitalist *Gewalt*, or if, on the contrary, the same basic characteristics present themselves, even if reversed.

Let us begin with the first issue. Marx, in various writings, brings to light the link between *Gewalt* and *Herrschaft*, *Macht*, *Staat*: the idea of the state as ‘concentrated and organized violence’ continually reappears, even if differently nuanced, throughout Marx’s corpus. In particular, the whole of *Capital*, as shown by Balibar, can be defined as a sort of analytic of *Gewalt*:⁸ from the

5. Marx 1962a, p. 779 and 1976, p. 915. On the intrinsically violent character of the political order, see: Sofsky 1996.

6. Weber 1946, p. 78.

7. See Arendt 1970, p. 46: ‘Violence... is distinguished by its instrumental character. Phenomenologically, it is close to strength, since the implements of violence, like all other tools, are designed and used for the purpose of multiplying natural strength until, in the last stage of their development, they can substitute for it’.

8. Balibar 2001a, p. 1284 and 2009, p. 109.

moment of its emergence, capital exhibits this element as a constitutive structure, and the state, the political form necessary to capitalist order, is responsible for an immediate violence, both domestic and foreign (colonialism), and for a mediated violence, in the legal and political dimension. Chapter Twenty-Four of *Capital*, focused on original accumulation, demonstrates incisively how, at the origins of the capitalist process, we find a *gewaltsame Expropriation der Volksmasse* and, therefore, a violent laceration. In this way, the liberal myth of the 'idyllic' origins of individual private property is deconstructed: if we examine the story in a disenchanting way, one cannot fail to observe that it is characterised by 'conquest... robbery, murder, in short, violence [*Gewalt*]'.⁹ *Wirkliche Geschichte* is marked, in the last instance, by *Gewalt*, in contrast to what is maintained, in a far from innocent way, by the proponents of political economy. In Chapter Twenty-Four then, we find a vivid portrait of the *Disziplin* imparted by capital on wage-labourers, in part by brute force, in part by legal means, that is to say by legal mediation.¹⁰ Original accumulation thus supports itself by 'methods [that] depend on brute force [*gewaltsame Methoden*]',¹¹ including both physical violence and a sort of reflexive *Gewalt*, related to what Althusser defined as the 'Ideological State Apparatus'.¹² In this other history proposed by Marx (contrasted to those 'official' versions), capital is interpreted critically, showing that 'capital comes dripping, from head to toe, from every pore, of blood and dirt'.¹³ 'The history of this expropriation [*Expropriation*] of the workers is written in the annals of mankind in letters of blood and fire.'¹⁴

It must be underlined that, from this perspective, accumulation is not understood as an initial and completed phase of capital but as a mode of extorting surplus-value that does not disappear from the scene of historical development. Besides, in the essay in *Reading 'Capital'*, Balibar focused precisely upon the fact that the accumulation of capital subsists only thanks to the existence of a surplus-value that can be capitalised. In this scenario, surplus-value appears as the result of a previous process of production that, in turn,

9. Marx 1962a, p. 742 and 1976, p. 874. See the quotation at the opening of this article. See Balibar 2001a, p. 1286 and 2009, p. 111.

10. See Marx 1962a, p. 765 and 1976, p. 885.

11. Marx 1962a, p. 790 and Marx 1976, p. 915.

12. See, for example, Althusser 1998, p. 288: 'Notwithstanding the acuteness of Gramsci's analysis, I believe that I can maintain the concepts of ideological State apparatus, in that it seems to me more precise than the Gramscian concept of hegemonic apparatus, which defines apparatus only through its effects (hegemony) without reference to that to which the apparatus is functional: ideology.'

13. Marx 1962a, p. 788 and Marx 1976, p. 926.

14. Marx 1962a, p. 742 and Marx 1976, p. 875.

refers back to an antecedent moment and so on to infinity.¹⁵ One is confronted by a sort of genealogy of the elements that go to make up the structure of the capitalist system. Thus, the originary violence of accumulation is repeated throughout capitalist development and constitutes the *condition sine qua non* of its dynamic.

Such a *Gewalt* is inscribed perfectly in the structure of the capitalist mode of production. Since the latter is dominated by money and its accumulation, social power becomes a private power of the private person. Moreover, in the *Grundrisse*, Marx frequently insists upon the fact that money constitutes a *soziale Macht*, even taking the place of the ‘real community’,¹⁶ bringing about a paradox in which a *dispositif* of domination is found ‘in the pocket’, on the basis of an ‘exchange’ between private and social spheres: ‘Its social power [*gesellschaftliche Macht*], as well as his connection to the society [*Gesellschaft*], he carries around in his pocket.’¹⁷ But, in this way,

the social character of activity . . . here appears as something alien [*Fremdes*], as an object [*Sachliches*] confronting the individuals: not as their relation [*Verhalten*] to one another, but as their subordination to relations which subsist independently of them and which arise out of collisions between mutually indifferent individuals [*gleichgültigen Individuen aufeinander*].¹⁸

Money, therefore, takes the form of a social structure and, at the same time, it is a cause of individual isolation from the moment that it subordinates the individuals to a *soziale Macht*, which is however *sachlich* [thingly] and *fremd* [alien]. It is *sachlich*, since it is materialised in a thing, and *fremd*, inasmuch as it opposes itself to the individuals as a force that is above them and that dominates them.¹⁹ Such a *soziale Macht* is defined also as a *fremde Gewalt*. For example, in order to highlight the same problem, Marx and Engels in *The German Ideology* state,

The social power [*die soziale Macht*], i.e. the multiplied productive force, which arises through the cooperation of different individuals as it is determined by the division of labour, appears to these individuals . . . not as their own united power [*vereinte Macht*], but as an alien force [*fremde Gewalt*].²⁰

15. Balibar 1966, pp. 281–91 and 1979, pp. 276–83.

16. Marx 1983, p. 149 and 1973, p. 225.

17. Marx 1983, p. 90 and 1973, p. 157.

18. Marx 1983, p. 91 and 1973, p. 157. On this point I take the liberty of citing Basso 2008, pp. 153–215.

19. On the relevance of the theme of social and abstract domination, see Postone 1993.

20. Marx and Engels 1960b p. 34 and Marx 1978a, p. 161.

The *soziale Macht*, materialised in an object, i.e. money, constitutes a *fremde Gewalt*, a violence-power that subordinates the individuals, preventing them from creating other relationships than those linked to money and its accumulation:

Thus, in the imagination, individuals seem freer under the dominance of the bourgeoisie than before, because their conditions of life seem accidental [*zufällig*]; in reality, of course, they are less free, because they are more subjected to the violence of things [*sachliche Gewalt*].²¹

Moreover, in the later critique of political economy, the notion of capital as ‘dead labour’, that, like a vampire, sucks ‘living labour’,²² takes the same form. Thus emerges the idea of a violent subjection, not only in the sense of brutal force, but also in that apparently more tenuous one of abstract and impersonal rule; both aspects are perfectly ‘captured’ by the term *Gewalt*. In this regard, Balibar defines *Capital* as ‘a treatise on the structural violence that capitalism inflicts’.²³ One stands before a true ‘phenomenology of suffering’,²⁴ with the goal of being able to utilise both of the following formulae: ‘violence of economics, the economics of violence’.²⁵ If the first expression indicates clearly the fact that the capitalist mode of production is founded on structural violence, the second expression reminds one of the need to further advance the analysis. The formulation: the ‘economy of violence’, recalls the problem of the political use of violence, in the sense that violence does not constitute a pure effect of economic laws, but can be deployed, made to explode, or finely calibrated.²⁶

We previously raised an aspect that is worth returning to: that is to say, that the state, in its entirety, presents itself as an element necessary to capitalist development and, therefore, to the exploitation of the labour-power found within it. We have shed light on the violence-power character of the state, which according to Marx is a true *konzentrierte und organisierte Gewalt der Gesellschaft*,²⁷ adding that Weber’s celebrated definition turns out to be

21. Marx and Engels 1962, p. 76 and 1978, p. 199.

22. Marx 1962a, p. 247 and 1976, p. 342.

23. Balibar 2001a, p. 1284 and 2009, p. 109.

24. Balibar 2001a, p. 1285 and 2009, p. 110.

25. Balibar 2001a, p. 1284 and 2009, p. 109.

26. See Michaud 1978, pp. 157–62: ‘Starting with the consideration of State violence as a force in the service of the ruling class, ... it [Marx’s analysis] had to move in the direction of an ever more refined reconstruction of the mechanisms of the exercise and the dissimulation of a domination that is the more effective the less it needs to enforce itself with overt violence’ (Michaud 1978, p. 157).

27. Marx 1962a, p. 779 and 1976, p. 915.

anything but incompatible with this position, since the distinctive sign of such *Gewalt* when compared to other *Gewalten* is precisely that of legitimacy. It is a question of violence, force, power, but with the mark of legitimacy. This framework allows us to identify a homology between capitalist expropriation, to which we have already referred, and the expropriation derived from mechanisms of the modern state. It is useful to keep in mind this parallelism, but without falling into the trap of interpreting it as a kind of identity of the two planes, that is, without deducing the ‘political’ from the ‘economic’ on the basis of rigid determinism adopted by a part of Marxism.

The theme of exploitation allows the complex relationship between the ‘economic’ and the ‘political’ to appear in Marx. Even if the economic structure strongly conditions the political dimension, there is no immediate derivation of the latter from the former. Indeed, there is no merely economic process of exploitation operating without political domination. On the contrary, the very idea of ‘pure’ exploitation founded on the difference between the value of labour-power and of surplus-value is a mystification present in the contractual form, where a ‘buyer’ stands before a ‘seller’ of labour-power in an apparently symmetrical relation.²⁸ In this sense, exploitation assumes an eminently political character, where the political is understood in its continual interlinkage with real economic processes and not on the basis of an abstract separation from them. If there is no such thing as a ‘pure’, solely economic, form of exploitation, equally one cannot speak of a ‘pure’, solely political, form of antagonism. The result is the problematisation of the way in which ‘orthodox’ Marxism has articulated the relation between the ‘economic’ and the ‘political’.

Elsewhere, though with various difficulties, Marx’s analysis of Bonapartism moves in the direction we have just discussed, seeking to interpret the problem of the possible autonomy of the state from economic relations; thus, the connection between the ‘economic’ and the ‘political’ presents itself as anything but linear. For example, in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Marx stresses that, with the ascent to power of Louis Bonaparte, the ‘social power [*gesellschaftliche Macht*]’ of the bourgeoisie is sustained, but its ‘political power [*politische Macht*]’ is negated. That is, economically, it remains the *herrschende Klasse* but only at the price of a complete ceding of political domination to Bonaparte.²⁹ Friedrich Engels found himself faced with an analogous difficulty when he sought to examine the age of Bismarck in the text *Die Rolle der Gewalt in der Geschichte* (written in 1887–8), which was supposed to be part of *Anti-Dühring*. Balibar spends considerable time on this work that presents

28. See Balibar 1997 and 1994.

29. Marx 1978c, p. 154 and 1978b, p. 605.

an ample treatment of the problem of *Gewalt*.³⁰ Its interest is also linked to the fact that, in Marx, this notion is never systematically developed despite playing a decisive role.

In the above mentioned text, the connection with the question of Bonapartism and, therefore, of the autonomy of the state, is clearly stated. Bismarck is characterised as a Louis Bonaparte ‘in Prussian dress’³¹ that, with his centralist and authoritarian management, performed the important task of making Germany a unified national state, a necessary condition for capitalist development in the full sense.³² Here emerges, first, the link between the capitalist structure and the state-dimension. But to this ‘classic’ theme in the Marxist tradition is added another problem derived from the ever possible fracture between the holder of *politische Macht* (or *Herrschaft*) and the bourgeois class. Taking up again for several pages Marx’s analysis of Bonapartism, Engels emphasises that Bismarck ‘violently [*gewaltsam*] dissolved the liberal illusions of the bourgeoisie, but fulfilled their national needs’.³³ The path chosen was to reinforce the *soziale Herrschaft* of the bourgeoisie, but to annihilate their *politische Herrschaft*.³⁴ Bismarck backs up this class, which is decisive for the national question and for economic growth, but retains political power solely for himself. In this way, Bismarck appears to Engels as a ‘Prussian revolutionary from above [*preußischer Revolutionär von oben*]’.³⁵ ‘revolutionary’, inasmuch as he guided Germany towards the formation of a national state and, consequently, gave an impulse to capitalist development, a necessary condition for the proletarian class-struggle and, therefore, for communism.³⁶ In this process, Bismarck used *Gewalt*, which was absolutely necessary to carry out a *revolutionäre Umgestaltung*; even the resulting *Diktatur* was, in some measure, necessary in a disunited country that was not yet capitalist in a full sense.³⁷ His limit consisted mostly in the fact that he carried

30. Balibar 2001a, pp. 1270–9 and 2009, pp. 100–7.

31. Engels 1962b, p. 426. [Editorial Note: the closest English version of this passage appears in Engels 1975–2005b, p. 475. The expression ‘in Prussian dress’ is a translation by the author from the German.]

32. Engels 1962b, p. 411 and Engels 1975–2005b, p. 459: ‘German unity had become an economic necessity’.

33. Engels 1962b, p. 429 and Engels 1975–2005b, p. 477 (translation modified by the author).

34. Engels 1962b, p. 413 and Engels 1975–2005b, p. 461.

35. Engels 1962(b), p. 433 and Engels 1975–2005b, p. 481.

36. Engels 1962b, p. 460 and Engels 1975–2005b, p. 509: ‘The service that in this way Bismarck rendered to the revolutionary socialist party is indescribable and deserves every thanks’.

37. Engels 1962b, p. 431 and Engels 1975–2005b, p. 479: ‘It [the German bourgeoisie] carried out a revolutionary transformation [*eine revolutionäre Umgestaltung*] of Germany that

out the revolution ‘from above’, in a vertical manner: ‘Rather than on the people [*Völk*], he in fact relied on manoeuvres conducted behind the scenes.’³⁸

Engels’s analysis is based upon a schematic philosophy of history,³⁹ as is evident from his identification of the sequence: national state-capitalist development→class struggle→communism. In the case of Germany, it was a question specifically of overcoming political and economic backwardness, pushing it resolutely towards a capitalist structure. Both the capitalist mode of production, on the economic level, and the state, on the political level, play a revolutionary role, in that they break down a series of preceding privileges, creating the conditions for a proletarian revolution. Even if this approach has some relevant aspects, its ‘systematic’ assumption reveals itself to be very problematic, founded as it is on a teleological idea of history. In the text, Engels valorises the Iron Chancellor as the interpreter of this necessity conceived, on the one hand, as capitalist, and on the other, as national, conceiving him as a revolutionary, even if ‘from above’. Justifiably, Balibar asks if such an expression is not misleading:

Is a ‘revolution from above’ a revolution? Is not the term ‘revolution’ irremediably equivocal, precisely to the extent that it embraces references to several kinds of force, which cannot be included in the same schema of class struggle?⁴⁰

It is the use of forms of philosophy of history that allows Engels to consider the Bismarck régime revolutionary, attributing to the revolution an ambiguous status. In this way, the self-representation of Bismarck as a ‘revolutionary from above’ is uncritically accepted.

But let us examine how such an element has repercussions in relation to the question of *Gewalt*. Over and above the risk of making too-immediate a deduction of the ‘political’ from the ‘economic’ (if the ‘political’ moved in a direction opposed to the ‘economic’, it heads straight towards a sure defeat, as in the case of Louis XVI; if it goes in the direction of capitalist development, as in the case of Bismarck, it heads toward a sure victory), the greater problem consists of the fact that the category of *Gewalt* is influenced by the ambiguity of the concept of revolution and is, therefore, totally justified if it turns out to be functional to the modernisation of Germany (as in the political action of Bismarck). The question of the relationship between capitalist *Gewalt*, with its

could be brought about only by violence [*Gewalt*], and therefore only with an effective dictatorship [*tatsächliche Diktatur*].’

38. Engels 1962b, p. 456 and Engels 1975–2005b, p. 505.

39. Balibar 2001a, pp. 1275–7 and 2009, pp. 103–5.

40. Balibar 2001a, p. 1274 and 2009, p. 103.

brutal character,⁴¹ and proletarian *Gewalt* remains open. Having treated the first theme, it is worth stating that the link between this category with the capitalist mode of production and with the state-structure, while presenting grey areas and difficulties (one thinks of the non-linearity of the nexus between political state and bourgeois class), reveals rather clear paths the moment we identify in *Gewalt* a central element in understanding economic and political dynamics. The problem of the relation between the critique of such violence-power and the delineation of another concept (or of another practice) of *Gewalt* appears, instead, as rather complex. Can a 'positive' meaning of *Gewalt* be discovered in Marx and Engels, and, if so, is it presented as a mere reversal of capitalist *Gewalt* or does an asymmetry exist between the two modalities?

To explore this question more fully, let us take up again the analysis of the text *Die Rolle der Gewalt in der Geschichte* by Engels:

In politics there are two decisive forces [*Mächte*], the organized power of the State [*die organisierte Staatsgewalt*], the army, and the unorganized power [*die unorganisierte Gewalt*], the elementary force of the popular forces.⁴²

Here are identified two different modalities of *Gewalt*: to the institutional, *organisierte*, legal violence-power is contrasted one of a different kind, one that is *unorganisierte*. But the direction taken would seem to conform, or in some way be compatible, with the principles of anarchism and of revolutionary syndicalism (for example Sorel) and, therefore, with the valorisation of the spontaneous element versus that of the state-structure. Elsewhere, the same approach taken by Engels appears in contradiction with such a viewpoint: it is sufficient to recall, for example, the importance attributed to the organisation of the working class. Balibar reveals the presence of a theoretical difficulty on the part of Engels and, at times, in Marx, which leads them to oscillate in an ambiguous way between the anarchism of Bakunin and the 'statism' of Lassalle.⁴³

This last consideration demands further consideration, for the argument exhibits a constitutive ambivalence: Marx and Engels never provided a complete, definitive theory of organisation and, at the same time, they founded various political structures at different moments of their activity. If we try to identify some distinctive aspects of their reflections on the question, we might indicate that in their earliest writings, up and till at least 1848, Marx and Engels tend to conceive the 'political' from a merely 'negative' perspective: the

41. Engels 1962b, p. 446 and Engels 1975–2005b, p. 495.

42. Engels 1962b, p. 431 and Engels 1975–2005b, p. 479.

43. Balibar 2001a, p. 1274 and 2009, p. 103. For an analysis of Marx's critique of the statism of Lassalle, see Löwy 1970 and 2003.

state appears as an alienated and illusory representation. Thus, in substantive continuity with utopian socialism, the ‘social revolution’ of the self-organising producers is opposed to the ‘political’, state-centred revolution of the bourgeoisie. With the passing years, one can observe a ‘complication’ of this logic. This occurred both via a re-articulation of the question of the state, no longer reducible to an illusory element or to the status of an unmediated reflection of the dynamics of production; and also by a strengthening of the theme of organisation, through the elaboration of the concept of the party that would be able to give political effectiveness to the ‘real movement’ of communism.⁴⁴ Despite this, even in the ‘mature’ writings (think, for example, of the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*) there remain ‘oscillations’ between anarchism and ‘Lassallean’ statism, without the question ever being truly made explicit. On the other hand, Marx’s entire trajectory is configured as a ‘thinking within the conjuncture’: politics is understood in its character of radical contingency, in its eccentricity when compared to all-encompassing laws. The analysis of the political situation in its specific determination means that the articulation of the argument undergoes perpetual modification: one is confronted with a ‘singular’ logic that is commensurate to the contingent event in the immanence of its self-constitution.⁴⁵ In this sense, the problem of statehood and, hence, of the relationship with the opposed conceptions of anarchism and ‘Lassallean’ statism, cannot be resolved once and for all, since they are subjected to this ‘metamorphic’ character of politics. Notwithstanding this rootedness in the specificity of the conjuncture, a constant element of Marx and Engels’s development is the attempt to produce a ‘disconnection’ between the political dimension and that of the state, but not on the basis of an abstract indication of a ‘beyond’ of the ‘statal’ and the ‘juridical’.

To return to Engels’s thematisation of the notion of *Gewalt*, it is necessary to stress that the specific difference between the two types of *Gewalt* does not reside in the choice between spontaneity and organisation. Even in the ‘Theory of Violence’ in *Anti-Dühring*, he considers the possibility of it playing a different role compared with capitalist *Gewalt*:

That force [*die Gewalt*], however, plays another role in history, a revolutionary role; that, in the words of Marx, it is the midwife [*Geburtshelferin*] of every old society which is pregnant with the new, that it is the instrument by the aid of which social development forces its way through and shatters the dead, fossilised, political forms – of this there is not a word in Herr Dühring.⁴⁶

44. See Balibar 1997 and 1994.

45. See Basso 2008.

46. Engels 1972, p. 171 and 1962c, p. 203.

Violence-power presents a structural duplicity, especially inasmuch as it does not constitute a sort of metaphysical *primum* but rather an instrument, as the entire analysis of *Anti-Dühring* tends to demonstrate:⁴⁷ it can be used even by the working class to defend its own rights against the dominant bourgeois class. For example, in the text ‘On the Political Action of the Working Class’, Engels states,

The revolution is the highest act of politics. . . It is said that every political action means recognizing that which exists. But if that that exists furnishes us with the means for protesting against that which exists, the employment of these means is not a recognition of that which exists.⁴⁸

It is clear here that violence possesses an ambiguous value and, therefore, though it is typically used by the bourgeoisie, it can in fact be used also by the proletariat; it is not, however, altogether clear whether proletarian *Gewalt* is or is not asymmetrical with respect to bourgeois *Gewalt*.

To further investigate this problem, we return to Marx, referring above all to the passage in *Capital* cited by Engels:

Force is the midwife of every old society [*der Geburtshelfer jeder alten Gesellschaft*], which is pregnant with a new one. It is itself an economic power [*ökonomische Potenz*].⁴⁹

Such a reflection risks legitimising the view according to which violence in itself has agency. Obviously, one can come up with a different interpretation of the passage, valorising the expansive aspects, and *in primis* the recognition of the productivity of social conflicts, according to a dynamic vision of the political sphere. In any case, the risk remains of developing a sort of vitalism of violence that appears to be in contradiction with the distinctive character of the critique of political economy. On the basis of the principles of the latter, in fact, *Gewalt* can never constitute a *primum* nor a viewpoint toward which to tend, since it has developed out of given material conditions. But this is not the only one of Marx’s statements on *Gewalt* that creates difficulties.

Another problematic aspect is represented by the use of a category of *Gewalt* that is substantially homogeneous to that criticised, even if seen through a

47. Engels 1972, p. 148 and 1962c, p. 178: ‘The childish example specially selected by Herr Dühring in order to prove that force [*die Gewalt*] is “historically the fundamental fact”, in reality, therefore, proves that force is only the means, and that the aim is economic advantage [*der ökonomische Vorteil*].’

48. Engels 1962a, p. 415 and Engels 1975–2005b, pp. 417–18.

49. Marx 1962a, p. 779 and 1976, p. 916. See also Balibar 2001a, p. 1280 and 2009, p. 107.

reverse lens. A significant example of such a use is found in Chapter Ten of *Capital*, which is dedicated to the struggle between the two classes for the regulation of the working day:

Here we find an antinomy: right versus right, both consecrated by the law of exchange of commodities. Between equal rights [*zwischen gleichen Rechten*], force [*die Gewalt*] decides.⁵⁰

We find ourselves faced with a symmetry between the two classes: each of the ‘subjects’ in struggle retains their own *Recht* and, as a result, the winner will inevitably be the class that has the greater *Gewalt*. Here, the two classes constitute two armies at war, a war conducted within the state that elsewhere is called the ‘centuries of struggle’⁵¹ that forms a genuine *Bürgerkrieg*.⁵² Though there exists a strong imbalance, consisting in the fact that one is the dominant and the other the dominated party, the complex topography appears symmetrical. In a scenario of this kind, even the violence-power of the proletariat represents the ‘response’ of the dominated to the dominant. This question, however, turns out to be more complicated than the one previously analysed (the vitalism of violence), from the moment that, in regulating the working day, the struggle itself changes the terms of the debate, constantly moving the level of discourse and of political practice. Already with *The German Ideology*, the fact emerges that class has an intrinsically political character, unable to ever be hypostatised fully from either the sociological or the ontological point of view: ‘The separate individuals form a class only insofar as they have to carry on a common battle [*Kampf*] against another class’.⁵³ The idea that classes exist, firstly, in the dimension of practice and, in particular, in struggle, can put into question the identification of a homology between bourgeoisie and proletariat, for it is in the *Kampf* that the relationships between individuals and classes form and transform themselves constantly, along with their symmetries and asymmetries. This notwithstanding, to pose at the centre of analysis a *Gewalt* that decides ‘between equal rights’, risks trapping us in the paradigm we have already criticised, harking back to a horizon of force and the efficacy of its use, a scenario that inevitably remains ‘prisoner’ of capitalist logic.

50. Marx 1962a, p. 249 and 1976, p. 344.

51. Marx 1962a, p. 294 and 1976, p. 382.

52. Marx 1962a, p. 316 and 1976, p. 412.

53. Marx and Engels 1962, p. 54 and 1978a, p. 179. See also Balibar 1991, p. 169: ‘though “economic” concepts, class struggle and class itself have always been eminently *political* concepts, indicative of a potential recasting of the concept of official politics’. On the notion of class-struggle, see Balibar 1974.

The same can be said regarding Engels's *Condition of the Working Class in England* (1844), a text that sheds a Hobbesian light on the character of the *bellum omnium contra omnes* of modern competition, with its capacity to produce a radical separation between two classes:

This war [*Krieg*] grows from year to year, as the criminal tables show, more violent, passionate, irreconcilable. The enemies are dividing gradually into two great camps – the bourgeoisie on the one hand, the workers on the other.⁵⁴

In this contest, intrinsically marked by *Gewalt*, the split into classes takes on the semblance of perfect symmetry: we find ourselves faced with two 'armies' in struggle, each of which claims its own *Recht*, even if on the basis of a structure of domination of one class by another. The outcome of such a condition of extreme conflict is represented by the revolution that cannot but be 'violent [*gewaltsam*]'.⁵⁵ Here, too, it seems that we have a symmetrical portrait: to the violence of the dominant, the dominated must react with an opposed *Gewalt* in order to have their rights, which are trampled in the present, be respected. This work of Engels however brings up new elements: it refers, for example, to the idea that 'communism stands above the strife [*Gegensatz*] between bourgeoisie and proletariat'.⁵⁶ The notion (and the practice) of communism are shown to be irreducible to the political-military lines of conflict between two classes: it can never be 'captured' completely by the symmetrical logics of conflict. This consideration already points to a different rationale from that being subjected to critique, since it begins by referring to the possibility of a *Gewalt* that is situated 'above the strife between bourgeoisie and proletariat'. The reference to *Gegensatz* between the two classes fails to give is a complete grasp of the concept of communism, since the latter represents a destructive movement confronting the status quo, including the class articulation of society.

But, in Marx, even more than in Engels, one can find a development of *Gewalt* that is not a mere response to the violence-power of the bourgeoisie. The problem consists in the fact that, while in Engels it is possible to identify a somewhat 'systematic' treatment, in Marx this does not occur. As much as we find various references to this conception, and as much as, in particular, *Capital* can be interpreted as a genuine 'phenomenology' of *Gewalt*, there is no comprehensive analysis of the latter. We return, therefore, to the theme of the

54. Engels 1987a, p. 359 and 1987b, p. 156.

55. Engels 1987a, p. 472 and 1987b, p. 262: 'The only way out possible remains that of a violent revolution [*eine gewaltsame Revolution*], which certainly will not be lacking'.

56. Engels 1987a, p. 506 and 1987b p. 292. On the notion of communism, see Tosel 1996.

struggle between the working class and the bourgeois class to attempt to develop a different approach to the discourse. First, in Marx (and Engels) we can identify, even if not in a systematic way, two meanings of ‘proletariat’. One is the one we have just examined, in which a symmetry with the bourgeois class is posited. But there is also present a second approach to this concept, one that is asymmetrical with respect to the bourgeois concept, and its very class-status appears problematic and uncertain. Whereas the bourgeois class is a class in the full sense of the word, in that it defends determinate, particular interests, the proletariat constitutes a non-class class, in that it tends toward its own dissolution, and therefore toward the transcendence of the horizon of class. In the *German Ideology* we find a radical formulation of this question:

This subsuming of individuals under definite classes cannot be abolished [*aufgehoben*] until a class has taken shape, which has no longer any particular class interest to assert against the ruling class.⁵⁷

In the analysis of this work, one can apply this reasoning regarding class to other categories, such as those of the individual and the community. Just as there exists a ‘gap’ between the proletariat and the bourgeois class, ‘individuals *qua* individuals [*Individuen als Individuen*]’ are in contradiction to the ‘individuals *qua* members of a class [*Individuen als Klassenmitglieder*]’ of the present context; and the theorisation of the ‘real community [*wirkliche Gemeinschaft*]’ must break with the capitalist ‘illusory community [*scheinbare Gemeinschaft*]’ that is founded on the oppression of individuals by an objective social power.⁵⁸ The fact that we find ourselves faced with a break that cannot be mediated dialectically, between individual, community and class in the framework we have just outlined, with reference to their ‘capitalist’ form, appears very relevant to any investigation of violence-power.

Many years later, in the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Marx expresses clearly the discontinuity between the bourgeois and proletarian scenarii, from the question of work (not the ‘source of all wealth and civilization’, but something to be abolished)⁵⁹ to the concept of inequality (with is criticised, as

57. Marx and Engels 1962, p. 75 and 1978a, p. 198. On the status of the proletariat, Balibar 1993, p. 54 and 1995, p. 54: ‘In reality, the concept of the proletariat is not so much that of a particular “class”, isolated from the whole of society, as of a *non-class*, the formation of which immediately precedes the dissolution of all classes and primes the revolutionary process’; see also Balibar 1992, pp. 204–5; Rancière 1995, p. 127, according to which the proletariat constitutes ‘not the name of a universal victim, but rather the name of a universalizing subject of wrongs’.

58. See Basso 2008, pp. 106–30 and 2001.

59. Marx 1978c, pp. 15–16 and 1978b, p. 531.

assuming an equal measure for subjects that are not in fact equal).⁶⁰ In this sense, proletarian dominance cannot merely substitute adequately for bourgeois dominance, as soon as the discussion turns on the ends of the problem, namely the transcendence of the present wage- and legal horizons.⁶¹ Hence Marx, in *The Class Struggles in France*, faced with the struggle for *le droit au travail*, in itself a ‘social-democratic’ demand, turns to the radical transformation of the social structure:

The right to work [*das Recht auf Arbeit*] is, in the bourgeois sense, an absurdity, a miserable, pious wish. But behind the right to work stands the power [*die Gewalt*] over capital; behind the power over capital, the appropriation of the means of production, their subjection to the associated working class and, therefore, the abolition [*die Aufhebung*] of wage labour, of capital and of their mutual relations.⁶²

The situation is not homologous with that of the violence-power of capitalist society: it is not a question of reversing the existing situation, following up bourgeois rule with proletarian rule, while nevertheless keeping the same characteristics, however overturned, but rather of putting into crisis the forces that lie at the basis of the present situation. The ‘political movement’ of the working class⁶³ presents the apparent paradox, according to which one part, the proletariat, plays a universal role. Such universality is not, however, ‘pacified’, neutral, but is identified with the radical dissolution of the class articulation of society. A further problem consists of the relationship between the concept of working-class *Gewalt* and that of revolution and, within the latter, of the difference between the bourgeois revolution and the proletarian revolution. For Marx, the latter reveals its own specificity with respect to the former, even on the level of violence-power:

The proletarian revolution remained so free from the acts of violence [*Gewalttaten*] in which break the revolutions, and still more the counter-revolutions of the ‘better classes’ abound...⁶⁴

Notwithstanding this, the question of the relation between proletarian *Gewalt* and the construction of political structure, of the state-form, remains

60. Marx 1978c, pp. 15–16 and 1978b, p. 530.

61. On the necessity for transcending the limits of legality, see Tomba 2009.

62. Marx 1960a, p. 42 and Marx and Engels 1975–2005, p. 78.

63. Letter from Marx to Friedrich Bolte, 23.11.1871, in Marx and Engels 1955, p. 332 and 1975, p. 270.

64. Marx 1962b, p. 331 and 1993, p. 48.

controversial. The risk consists in surreptitiously assuming the model of the bourgeois revolution in the delineation of the proletarian revolution.⁶⁵

In any case, to understand the distinctive traits of the proletarian revolution, it is necessary to focus on the fact that, within Marx's argument, it remains unthinkable without the element of proletarian dictatorship. Firstly, as Marx and Engels already underline in *The German Ideology*, the concept of class assumes an eminently political form: individuals form a class at the moment they need to conduct a struggle against another class, so that classes exist in the strong sense in class-struggles, the veritable 'motor' of political practice. The spread and radicalisation of class-struggle flow into the delineation of the dictatorship of the proletariat.⁶⁶ Hence the latter is not only to be understood as the strategy for the capture of power but, more importantly, as a new form of politics that operates the 'disconnection' between the political dimension and statal dimension that we have examined. In that sense, underlying his argument is not the strengthening of the state-structure but its radical problematisation, its withering away. Despite the difficulties raised with regard to the oscillation between anarchism and 'Lassallean' statism, the attempt is to interpret the element not as a solution but as an open question, one that is continually determined anew in each particular situation in which it materialises.

To return to Balibar's reflections on *Gewalt*, and trying to summarise the conclusions at which he arrives, it is necessary to underline that the article possesses the remarkable merit of demonstrating the ambivalence that exists in Marx and in Engels. It fixes attention on the questions that remain open, at times because of the extremely complex articulation of the argument, at times because of the ambiguity that is pregnant with negative consequences. The goal is to 'relativise' the Marxist point of view.⁶⁷ In relation to the theme of *Gewalt*, Balibar's overall critique concerns the incapacity to understand 'the tragic connection that associates politics with violence from the inside, in a unity of opposites that is itself supremely "violent"'.⁶⁸ This attempt consists in distancing oneself from this approach to *Gewalt*, refuting the axioms that present themselves as unquestionable and, in particular, in challenging every simplification of the problem to a sort of war between two 'armies', the bourgeois class and the working class. In his *Prison Notebooks*, Antonio Gramsci explains that

65. See Krahl 1971, according to whom Marx considers the bourgeois revolution and, in particular, the French Revolution, as a point of reference for the proletarian revolution, with all the problems involved in such an equation.

66. See Balibar 1976 and 1977.

67. See Balibar 2001a, p. 1291 and 2009, p. 114.

68. See Balibar 2001a, p. 694 and 2009, p. 99.

the analogies between the arts of war and politics are always to be established *cum grano salis*, that is as a stimulant to thinking... in military war, when the strategic objective is achieved, namely the destruction of the enemy army and the occupation of its territory, there is peace... The political struggle is infinitely more complex.⁶⁹

Here, we see the awareness of the risks present in an overdetermination or, even, in an identification of military and political dimensions. One wing of Marxism has insisted, starting with a ‘realist’ view, on the importance of a comparison with the conception of von Clausewitz on the politics-war nexus. It is not a question of denying the relevance of such a reference, even for understanding the connection indicated, but of shedding light on a *Gewalt* that goes beyond *Gewalt*.⁷⁰ Even the recent works by Balibar on Europe (in particular *We, Citizens of Europe?*) are characterised by dissatisfaction when facing a conception that counterposes to the politics of power another politics of power, even if in the opposite key.⁷¹ For Balibar, what is at stake is a ‘civilising politics’ that is able to decompose, disaggregate, the existing symmetries, such as the contrast between violence and non-violence.⁷² Violence must be investigated in its materiality, not as constituting evil, but neither as the object of a new theodicy:⁷³

[that] does not necessarily mean eliminating the question of a politics of violence. On the contrary, it means relaunching a politics of violence on a different basis⁷⁴

And this in the hope of ‘civilizing the revolution, the revolt, the insurrection’.⁷⁵ As a result, not all of the interpretations of *Gewalt* undergo a critique, rather only those that see in it a sort of foundation, both in the sense of exalting spontaneous violence and insurrection, and in the sense, closer to the experiences of the countries of actually existing socialism, of constructing a Communist state in opposition to the Western capitalist states, in reality sharing with them much more than would appear at first glance.⁷⁶ But, if

69. Gramsci 1975, Q1, §133–4, pp. 120–2.

70. See Balibar 2001a, p. 1279 and 2009, p. 106.

71. Balibar 2003, p. 75, which makes clear the ‘necessity to counterpose today, to hegemony, not the development of a new pole of power (economic, military, diplomatic), but an “anti-strategy” capable of disaggregating the symmetries and the polarisations instituted by globalization’. See also Balibar 2001b and 2004a.

72. Balibar 2001a, p. 696 and 2009, p. 100.

73. Balibar 1997, p. 134 and 1994, p. 64.

74. Balibar 2001a, p. 1306 and 2009, p. 123.

75. Balibar, 2001b, p. 150.

76. See Badiou 1985, pp. 15–19.

Gewalt is shown to be irreducible to any reference to violence properly speaking, connected as it is with the structures of dominance of bourgeois society, the question left hanging is then in what way it is possible to conceive of a 'politics of civilization' without surreptitiously falling again into a simplification of the notion of *Gewalt* as pure violence, to which one must react by mediating it through a political practice that is absolutely free of brutality. Balibar's absolutely correct identification of the ambivalence of *Gewalt* risks blurring into the positing of a 'moderate' revolution that 'rejects extremes'.⁷⁷ To oppose the model of the politics of power does not however mean counterposing moderation to extremism, civilisation to barbarism. From that point of view, Balibar's reading of Marx and Engels's development is extremely acute and convincing. The open question concerns, rather, the passage from the interpretation of the texts in question to the outlining of a theoretical and political perspective on the contemporary situation.

As for the comparison between Marx and Gandhi,⁷⁸ (and between Lenin and Gandhi),⁷⁹ a very interesting question outlined by Balibar, we limit ourselves to discussing only the main difference between their positions regarding the overall evaluation of capitalism, the political state, the theme of class-struggle and the revolution. Whatever it is, the Marxist critique of capitalist *Gewalt* cannot lead to an *a priori* assumption of non-violence, based on seeing the latter as inevitably subaltern in contrast with the *Gewalt* of the rulers. It is therefore a matter of interpreting the unfolding of events, starting with the fractures that intersect, and not merely of finding 'the good side'. As is evident in *The Poverty of Philosophy*, history travels along the 'the bad side',⁸⁰ in radical dissent with respect to those philanthropists who want

to conserve the categories which express bourgeois relations, without the antagonism [*Widerspruch*] which constitutes them and is inseparable from them.⁸¹

77. See Balibar 1997, p. 47: 'Civilization in this sense is certainly not a policy that suppresses violence: but it rejects extremes, in a manner that... allows the historicization of violence itself'.

78. See Balibar 2001a, pp. 1306–7 and 2009, p. 123. On the status of non-violence in Gandhi, see Collotti Pischel 1989, which sheds light on the radical difference of the Gandhi's approach compared to Marxism in relation to both the analysis of modernisation and to the question of class: Gandhi 'never called the Indian masses to engage in class struggle and revolution... because the principle of social equality lay outside of his world view' (Collotti Pischel 1989, p. 73).

79. Balibar 2004.

80. Marx, 1959, p. 140 and 1956, p. 136: 'It is the bad side that produces the movement which makes history, by providing a struggle'.

81. Marx, 1959, p. 143 and 1956, p. 140.

For Marx, the idea of the brotherhood of all man is criticised as a form of ‘idyllic abstraction from the class conflict’.⁸² That to deconstruct the notion of *Gewalt* involves distancing oneself from every ‘funereal’ hymn to violence does not mean writing a hymn to non-violence, but rather to grasp the necessity of re-articulating the question of *Gewalt*, conceiving it on the basis of a radical break with the ‘concentrated and organized violence’ of the state, and therefore recognising in it neither a solution nor a spectre but, rather, an open question.

Translated by Steven Colatrella

References

- Althusser, Louis 1998 [1978], ‘Le marxisme comme théorie “finie”’, in *Solitude de Machiavel et autres textes*, edited by Yves Sintomer, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Arendt, Hannah 1970, *On Violence*, London: Penguin.
- Badiou, Alain 1985, *Peut-on penser la politique?*, Paris: Seuil.
- Balibar, Etienne 1966, ‘Les concepts fondamentaux du matérialisme historique’, in Louis Althusser, Etienne Balibar and Roger Establet, *Lire ‘Le Capital’*, II, Paris: Maspero.
- 1974, *Cinq études de matérialisme historique*, Paris: Maspero.
- 1976, *Sur la dictature du prolétariat*, Paris: Maspero.
- 1977, *On the Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, London: NLB.
- 1979, ‘The Basic Concepts of Historical Materialism’, in Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar, *Reading ‘Capital’*, London: Verso.
- 1991, ‘From Class Struggle to Struggle without Classes’, in Immanuel Wallerstein and Etienne Balibar 1990, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, London: Verso.
- 1992, *Les frontières de la démocratie*, Paris: La Découverte.
- 1993, *La philosophie de Marx*, Paris: La Découverte.
- 1994, *Masses, Classes, Ideas*, London: Routledge.
- 1995, *The Philosophy of Marx*, London: Verso.
- 1996, ‘Violence: idéalité et cruauté’, in *De la violence*, edited by Françoise Héritier, Paris: Odile Jacob.
- 1997, *La crainte des masses. Politique et philosophie avant et après Marx*, Paris: Galilée.
- 2001a, ‘Gewalt’, in *Historisch-kritisches Wörterbuch des Marxismus*, edited by Wolfgang Fritz Haug, *Volume 5. Gegenöffentlichkeit bis Hegemonialapparat*, Hamburg: Argument.
- 2001b, *Nous, citoyens d’Europe? Les frontières, l’Etat, le peuple*, Paris: La Découverte.
- 2002, ‘Violence, Ideality and Cruelty’, in *Politics and the Other Scene*, London: Verso.
- 2003, *L’Europe, l’Amérique, la guerre: réflexions sur la médiation européenne*, Paris: La Découverte.
- 2004, ‘Lénine et Gandhi: une rencontre manquée?’, in *Congrès Marx International IV, Guerre impériale, guerre sociale*, University Paris X-Nanterre, October 2004.
- 2009, ‘Violence’, *Historical Materialism*, 17, 1: 99–125.
- Basso, Luca 2001, ‘Critica dell’individualismo moderno e realizzazione del singolo nell’*Ideologia tedesca*’, *Filosofia politica*, 2: 233–56.

82. Marx 1960, p. 21.

- 2008, *Socialità e isolamento: la singolarità in Marx*, Rome: Carocci.
- Collotti Pischel, Enrica 1989, *Gandhi e la non violenza*, Rome: Editori Riuniti.
- Duso, Giuseppe (ed.) 1999, *Il potere. Per la storia della filosofia politica moderna*, Rome: Carocci.
- Engels, Friedrich 1962a [1871], 'Über die politische Aktion der Arbeiterklasse', in *MEW*, Volume 17, Berlin: Dietz Verlag.
- 1962b [1887–8], *Die Rolle der Gewalt in der Geschichte*, in *MEW*, Volume 21, Berlin: Dietz Verlag.
- 1962c, *Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science*, New York: New World Paperbacks.
- 1972 [1876–8], *Anti-Dühring*, in *MEW*, Volume 20, Berlin: Dietz Verlag.
- 1975–2005a, 'On the Political Action of the Working Class', in *Marx Engels Collected Works*, Volume 22, London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- 1975–2005b, *The Role of Force in History*, in *Marx Engels Collected Works*, Volume 26, London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- 1987a [1844], *Die Lage der arbeitenden Klasse in England*, in *MEW*, Volume 2, Berlin: Dietz Verlag.
- 1987b, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, London: Penguin.
- Faber, Karl-Georg, Karl-Heinz Iltting and Christian Meier 1982, 'Macht-Gewalt', in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, edited by Otto Brunner, Werner Conze and Reinhart Koselleck, Volume 3, Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta.
- Gramsci, Antonio 1975, *Quaderni dal carcere (1929–1935)*, edited by Valentino Gerratana, Turin: Einaudi.
- Heitmeyer, Wilhelm, and Hans-Georg Soeffner (eds.) 2004, *Gewalt. Entwicklungen, Strukturen, Analyseprobleme*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Krahl, Hans-Jürgen 1971, *Konstitution und Klassenkampf*, Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Neue Kritik.
- Löwy, Michael 1970, *La théorie de la révolution chez le jeune Marx*, Paris: Maspero.
- 2003, *The Theory of Revolution in the Young Marx*, *HM Book Series*, Leiden: Brill.
- Marx, Karl 1956 [1847], *The Poverty of Philosophy*, London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- 1959 [1847], *Misère de la philosophie. Réponse à la philosophie de la misère de Proudhon*, in *Karl Marx–Friedrich Engels Werke (MEW)*, Volume 4, Berlin: Dietz Verlag.
- 1960a [1850], *Die Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich 1848 bis 1850*, in *MEW*, Volume 7, Berlin: Dietz Verlag.
- 1960b [1852], *Der achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte*, in *MEW*, Volume 8, Berlin: Dietz Verlag.
- 1962a [1867], *Das Kapital. Kritik der politischen Ökonomie, Erster Band. Buch I: Der Produktionsprozeß des Kapitals*, in *MEW*, Volume 23, Berlin: Dietz Verlag.
- 1962b [1871], *Address of the General Council of the International Working Men's Association on the Civil War in France*, in *MEW*, Volume 17, Berlin: Dietz Verlag.
- 1973 [1857–8], *Grundrisse*, New York: Vintage.
- 1975–2005, *Class Struggles in France*, in *MECW*, Volume 10, London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- 1993, *The Civil War in France*, in K. Marx, V.I. Lenin, *The Civil War in France: The Paris Commune*, New York: International Publishers.
- 1976 [1867], *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Volume 1, Introduction by Ernest Mandel, New York: Vintage.
- 1978a [1852], *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, edited by Robert C. Tucker, New York: Norton.
- 1978b [1875], *Critique of the Gotha Program*, in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, edited by Robert C. Tucker, New York: Norton.
- 1978c [1875], *Kritik des Gothaer Programms*, in *MEW*, Volume 19, Berlin: Dietz Verlag.
- 1983 [1857–8], *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, in *MEW*, Volume 42, Berlin: Dietz Verlag.

- Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels 1955 [1870–4], *Briefe Juli 1870–Dezember 1874*, in *MEW*, Volume 33, Berlin: Dietz Verlag.
- 1975, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow: Progress Publishers.
- 1962 [1845–6], *Die Deutsche Ideologie*, in *MEW*, Volume 3, Berlin: Dietz Verlag.
- 1978 [1845–6], *The German Ideology*, in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, edited by Robert C. Tucker, New York: Norton.
- Michaud, Yves 1978, *Violence et politique*, Paris: Gallimard.
- Postone, Moishe 1993, *Time, Labour and Social Domination: A Reinterpretation of Marx's Critical Theory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rancière, Jacques 1995, *La mésentente. Politique et philosophie*, Paris: Galilée.
- Sofsky, Wolfgang 1996, *Traktat über die Gewalt*, Frankfurt am Main: Fischer.
- Tomba, Massimiliano 2009, 'Another Kind of *Gewalt*: Beyond Law', *Historical Materialism*, 17, 1: 126–45.
- Tosel, André 1996, *Etudes sur Marx (et Engels). Vers un communisme de la finitude*, Paris: Kimé.
- Weber, Max 1946 [1919], 'Politics as a Vocation', in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, edited by Hans Heinrich Gerth and Charles Wright Mills, Oxford: Oxford University Press.