

Guidelines for Contributions to the Historical-Critical Dictionary of Marxism

Introductory Comments on the history of the project

The *Kritisches Wörterbuch des Marxismus* (KWM), appearing since 1983 under the Argument Verlag, was originally planned to consist of two parts:

1. The eight-volume translation of the Dictionnaire Critique du Marxisme (DCM), edited by Georges Labica and Gerard Bensussan, based on the second edition, published in 1985.
2. A series of supplementary volumes to the German edition, at first only (West-) German marxists were invited to participate. The refusal of the German Communist Party (DKP)¹ led us to rethink the project and as a result we decided to internationalise it. Subsequently, the response was so positive that the conception of a mere "supplement" transcended. In agreement with the editors of DCM the project became an "independent" one.

After two years of preparatory work with innumerable consultations the conception of a comprehensive conceptual dictionary of Marxism had been developed. At the end of 1985 a "workshop on Marxism" was founded at the Philosophical Institute of the Free University of Berlin and a secretariat set up. An International Board of Editors is in Preparation.

The following "guidelines" have been discussed at several public meeting; they were published in *Das Argument*, followed by the statements and suggested alterations that were sent in. As a consequence of these discussions the "guidelines" were reworked; as far as possible, the suggested alterations ere taken into account.

The present draft formulates the binding consensus of the collaborators. The editorial reworking of the articles will also be guided by it.

Basic Orientation

The *Historical-Critical Dictionary of Marxism* (HCDM) is not a work intended to take an "ideological" or "political" position. It is in the first place a historico-critical collective work by representatives of various orientations and regions in World Marxism, which is intended to review scholarly and make available an enormous mass of material.

Key Words

The HCDM is set up as a conceptual dictionary. The material entered in it will consist primarily of theoretical and political-strategic concepts which have acquired a special meaning in the work of Marx and Engels or in one of the traditions of Marxism. Personal names will not be entered as key words, but names of tendencies derived from proper names (for example, *Trotskyism*, *Mao Zedong thought*, *the Brecht line*) will be entered. The contributions of individual authors to Marxism will be treated under the corresponding concepts (for example, Ernst Bloch under *Utopia*). An index of names will assist in finding references to persons.

New concepts which were unknown to the Marxist traditions or don't yet have a general domicile in present-day Marxism will also be taken up in cases where recently-arisen

problems and demands are articulated in them or where they tend to advance neglected aspects of Marxism into the foreground (for example, *ecology*, *feminism*, or *discourse*). There are double treatments where concepts – such as, primarily, in relation to the women's movement – show a "split" history. Historical events and geographical designations will in general not be included unless they have become concepts for strategic problems (for example, *Auschwitz*, or the *Long March*).

Metaphors, images, manners of speech, and stereotyped expressions (*topoi*) will be entered if they have become important for the articulation of theoretical or strategic ideas (*surface/depth*, *mole*).

The Structure of the Articles

The articles follow, unless the subjects requires otherwise, a common structural model. On the basis of reasons given by Labica in the preface to KWM (Vol. I, pp. 12) the articles begin not so much with a definition as with the reconstruction of a problem-area – the embedding of a concept in the struggles and contradictions of its time. The articles as a rule consist of the following elements:

1. The key word

Besides the German, the Chinese (both ideogram and transcription), Arabian (in transcription only), English, French, Russian (in transcription only), and Spanish equivalents are noted.

2. Historical part

2.1 Occurrence and development of the concept in question in the writings of Marx and Engels (M/E) with consideration of the *contextual problematique*. If necessary, comments are made on the traditions which Marx and Engels adopted or criticised, or whose functions they changed. In the case of new concepts which were unknown to Marx and Engels (such as *ecology*) it is stated how the problem-area in question is articulated in Marx and Engels (*status of nature*, *plundering of natural resources*, the Question of *domination of nature*, overcoming of the relations of ownership with reference to nature, and so forth).

2.11 This part also serves as a guide to the works of M/E. An important value of the HCDM will consist in stimulating the reader to refer to the works of the marxist "classics", and puts in their hands the references needed for this. There is no usable index whatsoever for the Marx-Engels-Works (MEW)², this is especially necessary.

2.12 Method of Citation: Where possible, the *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe*, MEGA² (complete edition of the works of M/E), will be cited; however, the *Marx-Engels-Werke* always function as (where the MEGA is quoted, an additional) reference. Only in cases where the passages in question are not to be found in either of these as yet, may other editions be cited. The purpose of this rule is to make reference easier for nonspecialists and also to make it possible for users outside of the German-speaking areas to locate needed passages.

2.2 Continuation, working out, or innovation in Marxism of the Second International up to 194 (Kautsky, Bernstein, Plechanow, Labriola, Rosa Luxemburg, and others).

2.21 Special consideration of Lenin.

2.3 Developments and changes in the main lines which split apart after 1914-1917.

2.31 Communists and Marxism-Leninism, with consideration of Stalinism and Trotskyism. The major creative and controversial differentiations in the communist line should be considered – not the least of these being the Yugoslavian path. An important stress should be placed on the contributions of the large western Communist parties ("Euro-Communism").

2.32 In the socialist line Austro-Marxism takes on a particular importance, because it was the last major Marxist formation of the socialist workers' movement in the German-speaking area. In addition, along with contributions of minority social-democratic Marxists, Marxist positions in the trade unions will also be considered. Recent Marxist approaches of eco-socialist orientation should also be described.

2.33 Finally, developments in thought and strategy which have become increasingly important in "Western Marxism" or in culture and science and have come to the fore outside the parties and trade unions (critical theory, contributions of independent Marxist theorists, etc.) should also be worked in.

2.4 Developments in Marxism in the third world (primarily China, India, and Vietnam; Latin America with Mariátegui, Castro, etc.; Africa with Cabral, etc.).

3. Current "problematique"

Here, the present-day state of the problem should be shown, along with a survey of differing or controversial approaches. Divergent readings of theoretical concepts also find their place here. It is important above all to show the real practical problems to which particular concepts and theories are intended to respond.

4. Bibliography

Additional literature; along with titles in German above all titles in English should be cited, also titles in other word languages.

5. Cross-references to other key words

Size of the Articles

It is important for the conception of the Dictionary that the decision has fallen in favour of dividing the material into a large number of individual concepts ("conceptual dictionary"). Accordingly, the individual articles will be brief. The cross-references will assist in establishing broader contexts. Three groups of articles can be distinguished:

- a. "Large" key words (over 20.000 characters [including blanks])
- b. "Regular-size" key words (approx. 10.000 - 20.000 char.)
- c. "Small" key words (approx. 5.000 - 10.000 char.)

Relations to Other Reference Works

Overlapping with the *Dictionnaire critique du Marxisme* (DCM, respectively, translated into German: the KWM) cannot be avoided but should be reduced to a minimum. Both works are supposed to complement each other for basically the identical readers. Differences of opinion should be remarked on.

In addition to that, a debate with the most important other reference works should also take place.

Handling of Controversies

As was already formulated by Georges Labica for the DCM, the collaborators undertake to carry out a primarily informational treatment of controversies. Emphasis is on the fact that in the HCDM being worked on representatives of different currents are putting together a "tool kit" which can be used in common. No one has to deny his/her standpoint, but competing positions must also be represented – and in "dialogue" form. The entries should not be treated like fortresses in a war of positions.

The final part of each article provides space for the presentation in survey form of controversies on a particular problem-area, here the authors can accentuate their own positions more strongly.

The bibliography should enable the readers to inform themselves in greater depth on various positions. The fact that related concepts are often treated by representatives of various currents results in the desired "stereoscopic) effect.

Wolfgang Fritz Haug (1985)

P.S.: The bibliography should only contain titles which are quoted in the article. In the entry itself mere name-dropping has to be avoided in favor of relevant quotations.

-
1. From the beginning the theoretical journal *Das Argument* has regularly informed about the development of the project since its beginning in 1983. Thus the controversy with M.Buhr (SED/GDR) and the research institute of the DKP has been documented in the following issues of *Das Argument*: 142, 143, 146, 148, 149, 154. [↩](#)
 2. See the review of the MEW index and the review of volume II.5 of the MEGA in: *Rezensions-Beiheft zum Kritischen Wörterbuch des Marxismus*, Argument Verlag, 1985. [↩](#)