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## Hegel's Theory of the Syllogism and Its Relevance for Marxism

In this chapter I examine Hegel's theory of the syllogism. The chapter on the syllogism in Hegel's *Logic* has been mostly neglected by Marxists, and yet it has considerable interest. After some remarks on the *Logic* in general and on the section on the syllogism in particular, I discuss two ways in which this part of Hegel's theory is relevant to the theoretical foundations of Marxism. Then three practical issues are considered, issues that have provoked considerable debate within contemporary Marxism. I argue that Hegel's theory of the syllogism has interesting implications regarding all three issues.

### General Reading of the *Logic*

Hegel's *Science of Logic* is surely one of the most difficult books in the history of philosophy. (As a result this chapter is probably the most difficult in the present work.) As we shall see later, a variety of different interpretations have been proposed that attempt to explain exactly what Hegel was up to. In the present section I shall propose the reading I feel best captures Hegel's project. The three basic features of this project will be sketched, followed by some examples that illustrate these features.

Any brief account of the *Logic* is bound to be unsatisfactory in many respects. Those not already familiar with the *Logic* are likely to find

the following obscure; and those who are familiar with it will surely find the following oversimplified. My goal is not to provide a complete view of Hegel, but rather to present as simply as possible those aspects of Hegel's *Logic* that are of greatest importance to Marxism.

### *The Isomorphism of Principle and Principled*

In all our theoretical and practical endeavors we continually attempt to make sense of the world. We do this by employing principles. It is possible for us to then reflect on the principles we use, considering them in themselves, apart from any specific application. These principles define general explanatory frameworks. If we think that these principles do indeed help us make sense of the world, then we must hold that the explanatory framework matches the specific framework of what is to be explained.<sup>1</sup> If we term that which is to be explained *the principled*, then we may say that the structure of a principle and the structure of what is principled are isomorphic. The structure of an explanation and the structure of what is to be explained must map onto each other. Once one has been specified the other is specified as well; they are two sides of the same coin.

A principle for Hegel is not simply a category we employ to make what is principled intelligible to us. A principle is not to be taken as something merely subjective. It captures the intelligibility of what is principled in itself. In other words, the term *principle* is to be taken in an ontological sense, rather than an epistemological one.

Hegel's *Logic* is made up of a progression of categories. Some of these categories define principles, that is general explanatory frameworks; others define general frameworks of what is to be explained; and still others define both at once.

### *Different Levels*

In the previous subsection I noted that Hegel's *Logic* is made up of a series of categories. How is this series constructed? In answering this question one key point must be kept in mind. Not all principles, and not all ways of categorizing what is to be principled, are on the same level. Some principles are simpler than others, capable of grasping only abstract structures. Others are more complex, capable of grasping more concrete explanatory structures. The same holds for the structures defining what is to be explained. In other words, concrete structures include the struc-

tures defined by abstract categories, while simultaneously adding some further content to them. Hegel's *Logic* captures this difference in levels through its systematic ordering of categories. It begins with the categories on the most abstract and simple levels and proceeds in a step-by-step fashion to progressively more concrete and complex stages.<sup>2</sup>

### *Unity of Unity and Difference*

Before turning to some examples to clarify the preceding points, one last bit of Hegelian jargon must be introduced. What is principled is always a manifold, a set of differences. A principle that grasps its intelligibility unifies that manifold in thought. The dialectic of principle-principled thus can be described in terms of a "unity of unity in difference." To say that the dialectic is played out on different levels is to say that there are different ways the unity of unity and difference can be categorized, some more complex and concrete than others.

### *Examples*

These above points can be illustrated with the help of the following categories taken from *Logic*: being; ground and existence; and correlation and actuality.<sup>3</sup>

#### *Being*

The category of "being" at the beginning of the *Logic* is the most simple and abstract of all categories. It simultaneously fixes in thought both the most elementary way of employing a principle and the most elementary way of describing what is to be principled. *Being* taken in terms of what is to be principled is what simply and immediately is. When it is taken as a principle, it is the simple assertion that the principled is. In this initial stage in Hegel's progression of categories we have simple unity without any difference.

#### *Ground and Existence*

Matters are much more advanced if we skip ahead in the systematic ordering to the level of "ground" and "existence." The former is a type of principle, whereas the latter is a way of categorizing what is to be

principled. The structure isomorphic to both can be diagrammed as follows:

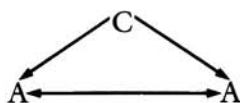


When the simple category of “being” is employed, the items in question are viewed as groundless, as simply given in immediacy. Here, in contrast, grounds are to be specified for each individual item in existence. Each existence has its own unique intelligibility, captured in its own set of grounds. Given Hegel’s terminology, the pair ground and existence is on a higher level than mere “being” precisely because what exists is mediated through its grounds. It is united with what grounds it, while remaining distinct from these grounds.

On the other hand, the differences among the existences are categorized as immediate within this structure. They are simply given. In other words, the existences are mediated with their respective grounds, but not with each other. In this sense there is difference without unity.

### *Correlation and Actuality*

Two categories found later in the *Logic*, “correlation” and “actuality,” specify a different structure.



Here the principle is a correlation that mediates a number of different actualities; and the actualities are what is principled. For example, when one entity exercises a casual effect on another, the underlying casual law provides the principle, the correlation, whereas the two entities in question are in Hegel’s definition of the term *actualities*. The ontological structure of that which is principled is as follows. The different actualities are not taken in their immediacy apart from each other, as was the case in the framework Hegel defined with the category “existence.” Instead each actuality (e.g., that which is the cause and that which is the effect) is what it is precisely through its mediation with other actualities. In this

structure we do not have mere unity or mere difference, but rather a unity of unity and difference.

For Hegel it is clear that the principle "correlation" is more complex, more capable of capturing the intelligibility of that which is concrete, than the principle "ground." Similarly, he also held that defining what is to be principled as "actuality" is a more complex way of categorizing it than the category of "existence." Each actuality has its own set of grounds; in addition, it *also* is correlated with other actualities.

Both of these orderings are two sides of the same coin. Both allow a fuller description of the concrete. Any argument that justifies seeing one sort of principle as more complex and concrete than the other simultaneously justifies the assertion that one way of categorizing what is to be principled likewise is more complex and concrete than the other.

## **The Systematic Place of Hegel's Theory of the Syllogism**

There are two basic ways of reading Hegel's theory of the syllogism. The first may be termed *the stuffed dresser reading*. In this view Hegel starts off with the traditional theory of the syllogism with its lists of different syllogistic figures, along with a number of empty "slots" in the architectonic of the system he has constructed. He then proceeds to stuff the different parts of the traditional theory of the syllogism into these slots in his system, as if he were stuffing different sorts of clothing into the different drawers of a dresser. This sort of taxonomic exercise may inspire an admiration for Hegel's inimitable virtuosity in such matters. But it has little intrinsic interest for Marxists (or anyone else for that matter).

Another sort of reading is more fruitful and more in harmony with Hegel's own statements of his intentions. This reading sees the theory of the syllogism as a further stage in the ordering of different structures of principle-principled, with "syllogism-object" being yet more concrete and complex than "correlation-actuality."<sup>4</sup> This reading will be presented here.

For our purposes we do not have to trace Hegel's ordering of the thirteen different sorts of syllogisms. Instead we may move directly to the conclusions of his theory. They will first be presented in fairly abstract terms that may not immediately be intelligible to those not familiar with Hegelian jargon. The examples given in the following section may clarify things.

As a principle the syllogism connects three moments: universality (*U*), particularity (*P*), and individuality (*I*). As principled, objects are individuals mediated by particularities that are essential to them qua individuals, and these particularities in turn are mediated through a universal that is essential to the particularities. As a principle no single syllogism is sufficient to capture the intelligibility of its object. Any attempt to conclude that there is a connection between *I* and *U* through premises asserting a connection between *I-P* and *P-U* leaves these latter assertions unjustified. Likewise any attempt to derive *P-U* from *P-I* and *I-U* leaves the latter two premises unmediated; and any attempt to connect *I-P* through *I-U* and *U-P* treats those premises as simply given immediately. For syllogisms to operate as principles, a system of all three sorts of syllogism is required *I-P-U*, *P-I-U*, and *I-U-P*. Only the system of syllogisms as a whole serves as the principle of explanation on this level of the theory.<sup>5</sup>

There are two key points here. First, each determination is thoroughly mediated with the other two.<sup>6</sup> Second, each determination takes in turn the role of the middle term, whose function is to mediate the extremes into a single totality.<sup>7</sup>

Turning to what is to be principled (the object, in Hegel's sense of the term), Hegel writes that "everything rational is a syllogism."<sup>8</sup> That is, everything intelligible, insofar as it is intelligible, is a "universal that through particularity is united with individuality."<sup>9</sup> The same two features hold for the principled (the object) as characterize the principle (the syllogism). Each determination of the object is thoroughly mediated with the other two. And one cannot claim any ultimate ontological priority for the individual object, or for the particularities essential to it, or for the universal essential to those particularities. Ontologically each of these moments is itself the totality, each equally requires mediation with the other two.

Why does this stage count as an advance over that of correlation-actuality? Correlations capture a mediation that unites different actualities. But some correlations are external to the actualities correlated (e.g., the correlation connecting a rise of mercury in a barometer with a change in weather). Other sorts of correlations are not external. What makes the latter distinct from the former is that external correlations do not stem from the essential nature of that which is correlated. When a mediation is based on the essential nature of that which is mediated, the relation is more complex and concrete than a mere correlation that may or may not be external to what is correlated. A system of syllogisms

mediating *I*, *P*, and *U* captures mediations rooted in the essential nature of objects.<sup>10</sup> "Syllogism-object" thus is an advance over "correlation-actuality" from both a conceptual and an ontological standpoint.

## **Theoretical Importance of Hegel's Theory of the Syllogism for Marxists**

### *The Systematic Imperative*

It would be a mistake to believe that substantive theoretical positions can be derived from Hegel's *Logic*, at least in the present reading. The *Logic* consists in an ordering of progressively more complex structures of principles and what is principled. As such it provides a set of canons to follow in theoretical work rather than some magic formula automatically churning out theoretical pronouncements like sausages in a factory. Among these canons are the following. If we wish to grasp a reality in its full complexity and concreteness we cannot simply take it as made up of immediately given beings. Nor can we simply take it as made up of isolated existences with their own unique grounds. Nor can we simply see it in terms of actualities externally mediated with other actualities through various correlations. Instead we must employ a framework in which objects are united in difference with other objects through the essential particularities and universalities that make these objects what they are. This cannot be done through a single assertion or through a series of isolated assertions. It can be done only through a theory in which a number of different sorts of arguments are systematically connected.

The relevance of this to Marxism can be brought out through an example. Marxists generally recognize that one of the key ways Marxist theory is distinct from most bourgeois social theory is its insistence that phenomena not be studied in isolation. A naive bourgeois economist may take a rise in unemployment as something given immediately, as something that just is. This is done for example, when it is identified with a "preference for leisure" that somehow simply just increased. A more sophisticated bourgeois economist might trace a rise in unemployment back to some set of grounds, such as previous demands for higher wages. Yet more sophisticated bourgeois economists treat a rise in unemployment as an actuality to be mediated with other actualities (e.g., a high state budget deficit) through a correlation (such as the thesis that

high budget deficits lead to high interest rates, which in turn slow down economic growth and create unemployment). Marxist economists, however, insist that these sorts of accounts at best contain only partial elements of truth. They insist that unemployment can be grasped only in its full complexity and concreteness if it is traced back to the inner structure of capital. It must be seen as an essential manifestation of the logic of capital accumulation and reproduction. In other words, under capitalism unemployment has a necessity to it that most bourgeois approaches to the topic miss. This cannot be established through any single argument. It demands a study of the essential nature of capitalism and the various mediations that connect that nature with an individual occurrence in which rates of unemployment rise. It demands a systematic theory.

What Marxists often do *not* recognize is that in asserting these things they are implicitly accepting Hegel's systematic ordering in the *Logic*, with its move from "being," to "ground" and "existence," through "correlation" and "actuality," to "syllogism" and "object." If Marxist economists were called on to justify in general philosophical terms their methodological approach to the study of a phenomenon such as unemployment, whether they knew it or not they would inevitably find themselves defending Hegel's two isomorphic claims: some sorts of principles are more capable of grasping a concrete and complex reality than others; some ways of categorizing the reality to be grasped capture its concreteness and complexity better than others. To put the point as provocatively as possible: the Marxist approach to political economy is correct *because* Hegel's theory of the syllogism is correct.

### *Antireductionism*

As we have seen, Hegel's theory of the syllogism does not just call for a systematic approach to what is to be explained. In this theory each term, *I*, *P*, and *U*, in turn must take the position of the middle term, constituting the totality that makes the object what it is. This may sound like typical Hegelian nonsense. But it easily can be translated into another important canon for theoretical activity: reductionism must be avoided. I shall first show how this canon is applied in Hegel's own social theory and then turn to its importance in Marxism.

In Hegel's own social theory, the theory of "objective spirit," Lockean individuals possessing both private interests and abstract rights form the moment of individuality; the socioeconomic institutions of



civil society provide the moment of particularity; and the state represents the highest level of universality attainable on the level of objective spirit. It is possible to construct three sorts of social theory, each of which is characterized by making one of these moments the middle term mediating the other two into a social totality. This gives us three forms of reductionism. First is the socioeconomic reductionism that comes from reducing individuality and the state to the particular interests of civil society. Social contract theory is interpreted by Hegel in these terms. Second is the methodological individualism that reduces sociopolitical reality to an expression of the private interests of individuals. Finally, there is the political idealism that reduces individuality and the particular interests of society to state imperatives. For Hegel, each of these social theories is based on a syllogism that is one-sided and hence inadequate. What is required is, therefore, a theory that captures the full complexity of the reality here, avoiding all one-sided reductionism.

In the practical sphere the state is a system of three syllogisms. (1) The Individual or person, through his particularity or physical or mental needs (which when carried out to their full development give *civil society*), is coupled with the universal, i.e. with society, law, right, government. (2) The will or action of the individuals is the intermediating force which procures for these needs satisfaction in society, in law, etc., and which gives to society law, etc., their fulfillment and actualization. (3) But the universal, that is to say the state, government, and law, is the permanent underlying mean in which the individuals and their satisfaction have and receive their fulfilled reality, intermediation, and persistence. Each of the functions of the notion, as it is brought by intermediation to coalesce with the other extreme, is brought into union with itself and produces itself: which production is self-preservation. *It is only by the nature of this triple coupling, by this triad of syllogisms with the same termini, that a whole is thoroughly understood in its organization.*<sup>11</sup>

Of course, no Marxist can accept Hegel's manner of categorizing the sociopolitical realm. State institutions may have a considerable degree of relative autonomy. However, in a capitalist society state institutions will generally tend to further the interests of capital. *Pace* Hegel, the state cannot be categorized as a neutral institution standing above the particular interests of civil society. The interests of capital exert a disproportionate influence on state policy, and this prevents the state from embodying the universality Hegel claimed for it.<sup>12</sup>

Similarly the level of civil society is not, as Hegel believed, simply a realm of particularity in which the particular interests of the agricultural

class, the business class, and the class of civil servants are in a fairly harmonious balance (with a small rabble standing off to the side).<sup>13</sup> Within the agricultural class is class antagonism between capitalist farmers and agricultural wage laborers. Within the business class is the same class antagonism between industrial capitalists and industrial wage laborers.

The social theory found in *Capital* from a substantive standpoint thus is quite different from Hegel's. Nonetheless, Marx's analysis also employs a framework taken from the theory of the syllogism in Hegel's *Logic*. It too explores the dialectical mediations connecting universality, particularity, and individuality. In Marx's account, "Capital" is the moment of universality. From the inner nature of capital a number of distinct structural tendencies can be derived. In Hegelian terms these form the moment of particularity. And finally there are the acts of individual capitalists, individual wage laborers, and so on, whose acts are structured by those particular tendencies and thus also mediated with the inner nature of capital.

The logical-ontological apparatus of Hegel's theory of the syllogism is incorporated into Marx's theory, even when Hegel's substantive sociopolitical theory is rejected. It follows from this that the Hegelian canon that reductionism must be avoided is clearly of relevance to Marxists as well. If this interpretation holds, then three forms of reductionism continually threaten Marxist theory. These reductionist options arise when one of the moments (universality, particularity, or individuality) is seen exclusively as the mediating term uniting the other two. First is the reductionism of a capital logic approach. This is a theoretical perspective based on a syllogism in which capital, the universal, is seen as the middle term directly mediating particular structural tendencies and individual acts. Second is the reductionism that dissolves the sociopolitical world into a diverse set of particular structural tendencies. Finally, there is the version of methodological individualism that calls itself Marxist. This standpoint reduces both the inner nature of capital and particular tendencies within capitalism to the intended and unintended consequences of the acts of individuals on the micro level.

Hegel's theory of the syllogism does not save us from the task of examining the strengths and weaknesses of these theoretical perspectives on their own terms. But it does provide reasons for supposing *prima facie* that each position will prove to be one-sided, that each will need to be mediated by the others if an adequate theory is to be constructed, a theory with a concreteness and complexity that matches that of its object. Of course, it would be foolish to think that Hegel's *Logic* could do

more than this and show us what such an adequate systematic theory would look like in detail. However the fact that it cannot do all our theoretical work ought not prevent us from acknowledging the aid it does provide.

In one way or another the chapters that follow all examine Marx's theoretical attempt to mediate the moments of universality, particularity, and individuality together dialectically. In the remainder of this chapter I turn to the role Hegel's theory of the syllogism might play when considering issues of practice.

## **Practical Importance of Hegel's Theory of the Syllogism for Marxists**

Hegel's *Logic* only suggests general canons for theoretical work; it does not provide a ready-made substantive theory Marxists can simply take over. It would be even more foolish to hope that substantive practical evaluations can be derived directly from the *Logic*. Nonetheless, Hegel's theory of the syllogism is not without its practical implications for Marxists, although they must be presented quite tentatively. In the previous section three one-sided theoretical options were sketched: methodological individualism, the capital logic approach, and theories concentrating exclusively on particular tendencies. For each of these options there is a corresponding practical orientation that is equally one-sided. Here too each of these orientations must be examined on its own terms. But here too Hegel does provide us with reasons to regard each one-sided perspective as *prima facie* inadequate.

Let us first take the syllogism underlying methodological individualism, which sees individuals and their acts as the middle term mediating both particular tendencies in capitalism and the system as a whole. An example of a practical orientation that corresponds to this would be an emphasis on the importance of individuals' electoral activity, for example, balloting on political matters and regarding strike actions. What is correct here is the importance granted to the moment of the individuals' consent to political and trade union activity. But what is missing is an acknowledgment of how both the inner nature of capital and particular tendencies within capitalism work to atomize individuals.

Consider a decision on whether to strike made by individuals privately through mailed-in ballots. Here the power of capital over each of them taken separately will generally lead to cautious and defensive voting. But if such decisions were made after a collective meeting in a public

space, a space where atomization could be overcome and where a sense of the collective power of the united work force could arise, voting would take on a bolder tone. Workers would be more prone to go on the offensive. Similarly, the practical orientation of building socialism through convincing atomized individuals to pull the correct levers once every few years is one-sided. It cannot substitute for a political mobilization of those individuals aiming at overcoming this atomization.

Let us turn to the syllogism underlying the capital logic approach. Here the universal, capital, is seen as the middle term forming particular tendencies and individual actions into a totality. The practical consequence of holding this syllogism exclusively is ultraleftism. If everything within the society is immediately reducible to a function or manifestation of capital, then the only possible practical orientation for socialists is to step outside society, to be in immediate and total opposition to everything that occurs within it. This practical perspective correctly sees how often measures supposedly designed to reform capitalism end up simply furthering capital accumulation. But a sectarian attitude toward all measures short of the immediate overthrow of capitalist social relations is no answer. That in effect leaves the reign of capital unchallenged in the here and now. It also fails to provide any convincing strategy regarding how to move from the here and now to a point where this reign might be successfully challenged. In other words, this practical orientation fails to see that between *minimalist demands* that are immediately accessible to a majority of people but that in principle do not touch the rule of capital and *maximalist demands* that are not accessible to a majority and therefore also do not threaten the rule of capital are *transitional demands*. These are proposals that the vast majority of people find intelligible here and now, but that ultimately are incompatible with the social relations defining capitalism. They are proposals that are plausible to nonrevolutionaries, but that have revolutionary implications.<sup>14</sup> If the fight for such transitional demands is successful, individuals are educated politically and specific movements are set up that shift the balance of forces away from the interests of capital. In contrast, the ultraleftism calling for the immediate revolutionary seizure of power concerns itself exclusively with the universal. Hegelian logic provides a reason for considering such an undialectical practical orientation as *prima facie* mistaken.

Finally, there is the syllogism that makes the moment of particularity the middle term constituting the society as a totality. A practical exemplification of this syllogism would be the turn from class politics to what might be termed the *politics of particularity*.<sup>15</sup> In this view the

struggles against racial and sexual oppression, against environmental degradation and the avoidable harm inflicted on consumers, against the militarization of society, and so on cannot be reduced to the struggle against capital. Accordingly, the women's movement, the antiracist movement, the environmental movement, the movement for consumer rights, the peace movement, and so on ought not to be made subservient to the labor movement. That would ignore the specificity of these movements. And it would be to take one particular struggle, the struggle against class exploitation, and elevate it to a universality it does not possess. From this perspective the attempt to reduce everything to the logic of capital expresses the inherent "totalitarianism of identity philosophy."<sup>16</sup> In this view the unfortunate legacy of Marx's Hegelian heritage leads Marxists to seek an illusory universality at the cost of ignoring the varied particularities that are truly constitutive of the social domain.

A brief digression on Hegel is in order here. The critics of "Hegelian identity philosophy" seem to be unaware that Hegel by no means insisted on there being a moment of identity (universality) always and everywhere. They overlook that in the *Logic* Hegel explicitly included the category of the "*negative infinite judgment*." Within the framework defined by this category the moment of difference, of particularity, is asserted exclusively. He gave as examples statements such as: "The mind is no elephant" and "A lion is no table."<sup>17</sup> Hegel would grant that when one operates on this categorial level, the theory of the syllogism — with its stress on the unity of identity and difference, the mediation of universality and particularity — is *not* relevant. So a global critique of "Hegelian identity philosophy" will not wash. Instead the question is whether in the present case the relation between capital and the particular social movements mentioned earlier is like the "infinitely negative" relationship between the mind and an elephant or a lion and a table.

There are two main arguments for insisting that in fact there is difference without unity here, particularity without universality. The first is based on the existence of sexism, racism, environmental damage, and so on in other modes of production besides capitalism. Hence they cannot be seen as merely particular manifestations of an underlying logic of capital.

With this move an ironic dialectical shift has taken place. The defenders of difference, those most against the tyranny of identity philosophy, now turn out to be insisting on the *identity* of the tendencies to sexism, racism, environmental damage, and so on across different modes of

production. And now the Marxists insist on the sense in which these phenomena are *different* within different modes. Marxists do not claim that these phenomena are always and everywhere mediated through the logic of capital, but insist that this *is* the case within capitalist social formations. The inner nature of capital is manifested in a tendency to seek divisions within the work force. This furthers racist and sexist social divisions and stimulates the rise of antiracist and antisexist social movements to combat these divisions. The inner nature of capital is connected with a specific tendency for firms to ignore externalities; that is, the social costs of production and distribution that are not part of the internal costs to firms. This leads to both environmental damage and to the production of commodities that impose avoidable harm on consumers. Environmental groups and a consumers' movement are responses to these tendencies. The inner nature of capital is connected to an imperative to employ the resources of the state both to avoid economic stagnation and to ensure that as much of the globe as possible remains a potential field for capital accumulation. The expansion of military expenditures accomplishes both goals, and so militarism too is a particular tendency that arises within capitalism. Peace movements arise in response. The connection between capital and these particular social movements seems quite a bit closer than that between the mind and an elephant!

A second argument for the politics of particularity asserts that viewing the struggle against capital as a principle of unity uniting the different social movements elevates one particular struggle — that of wage labor against capital — to a universality it does not possess. It is true that the labor movement can be (and has been) reduced to a struggle for higher wages, a struggle limited to white men and undertaken without much regard for either the sorts of products made or the environmental damage resulting from producing them. It therefore also seems correct that each social movement should have an independent organization, leadership, press, and so on. Still, it is also true that within capitalist societies the logic of capital tends to generate and reproduce racism, sexism, militarism, and so on; and so the struggles against these tendencies — when pushed far enough — fuse with the struggle against capital. As long as each specific social movement undertakes this latter struggle separately, its chances of success are slim. Progressive social movements must find a way to unite in this struggle against capital, without sacrificing the specificity of each particular struggle. And out of all the particular struggles it is the struggle of labor that confronts capital most directly. It

is capital's control of surplus labor that ultimately allows it to generate the tendencies these social movements struggle against. Therefore the struggle of labor can cut off these tendencies at their root. In the terms of Hegel's theory of the syllogism, the syllogism in which particularity is the middle term cannot stand alone, although it captures an important moment of the whole picture. It must be mediated with the other syllogisms. It must especially be mediated with a syllogism that acknowledges how the struggle against capital unites the different social movements, a syllogism in which the moment of universality is the middle term.

No doubt there has never been an activist who opted for political mobilization over exclusively electoral work, or for a transitional program over ultraleft demands, or for class politics over the politics of particularity, as a result of thinking about Hegel's theory of the syllogism! There are political reasons for taking these options that have nothing to do with the general dialectic of universality, particularity, and individuality. Nonetheless, when we try to spell out in philosophical terms what is at stake in such decisions, Hegel can be of help. Hegel insisted that neither a syllogism in which individuality is the middle term, nor one in which universality is, nor again one in which particularity takes that position, is adequate by itself. Only a system of syllogisms in which each is mediated by the others can capture the full concreteness and complexity of the sociopolitical realm. From this we can derive a *prima facie* case for considering some sorts of praxis as superior to others. More than this philosophy cannot do.