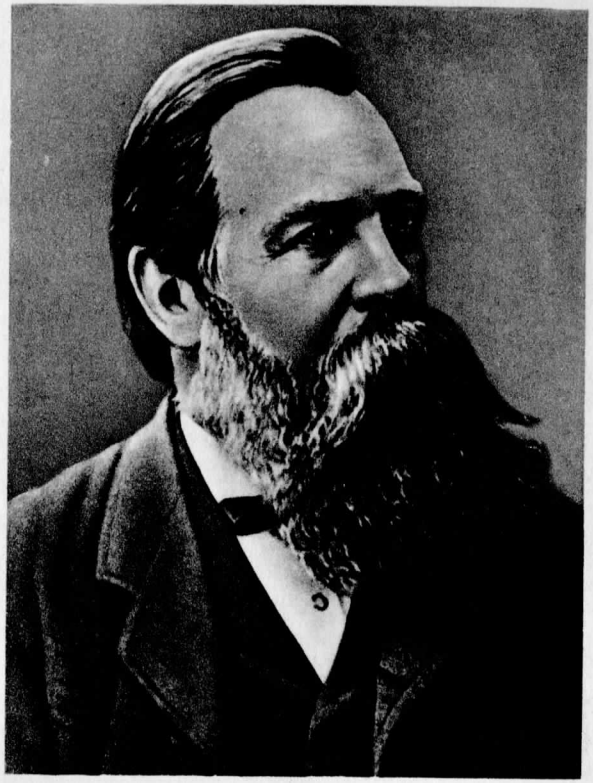
FREDERICK ENGELS

LUDWIG FEUERBACH AND THE END OF CLASSICAL GERMAN PHILOSOPHY

WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!



F. Engels

FREDERICK ENGELS

LUDWIG FEUERBACH AND THE END OF CLASSICAL GERMAN PHILOSOPHY

FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS
PEKING 1976

First Edition 1976

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The present English edition of Frederick Engels' *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy* is a translation of the Foreword and text of the German edition of 1888, including Karl Marx's Theses on Feuerbach. This translation follows that of the English edition of *Selected Works of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels,* Vol. II, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1951, with corrections where necessary on the basis of the original German text in Marx and Engels, *Werke,* Vol. 21.

The Appendices consist of Plekhanov's Forewords to the first and second Russian editions of *Feuerbach* and of his Notes to the Russian editions. The translation of Plekhanov's Foreword to the first Russian edition and of his Notes to the Russian editions follow that of the English edition of *Selected Philosophical Works of Plekhanov,* Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, with numerous and often drastic revisions and corrections where necessary. Plekhanov's Foreword to the second Russian edition was translated from the Russian original in the *Selected Philosophical Works of Plekhanov,* Vol. III.

The notes on Engels are based on those in the above-mentioned German and English editions. Those on Plekhanov are largely based on those in the English edition of *Selected Philosophical Works of Plekhanov,* Vol. I and in the Russian edition of *Selected Philosophical Works of Plekhanov,* Vol. III.

Printed in the People's Republic of China

CONTENTS

LUDWIG FEUERBACH AND THE END OF CLASSICAL GERMAN PHILOSOPHY

Written in early 1886

Original in German

Published in *Die Neue Zeit*, Nos. 4 and 5, 1886, and printed in book form in Stuttgart, 1888

FOREWORD TO THE GERMAN EDITION OF 1888

In the preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, published in Berlin, 1859, Karl Marx relates how in 1845 the two of us, then in Brussels, undertook "to set forth together our view" — the materialist conception of history which was elaborated mainly by Marx — "as opposed to the ideological one of German philosophy, in fact, to settle accounts with our former philosophical conscience. The resolve was carried out in the form of a critique of post-Hegelian philosophy. The manuscript, two large octavo volumes, had long ago reached its place of publication in Westphalia when we were informed that owing to changed circumstances its printing was not permitted. We abandoned the manuscript to the gnawing criticism of the mice all the more willingly since we had achieved our main purpose — self-clarification."*

---

* Karl Marx, *Preface and Introduction to "A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy,"* Eng. ed., Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1976, p. 5. Marx is referring to *The German Ideology*. — *Ed.*

Since then more than forty years have elapsed, and Marx died without either of us having had an opportunity to return to the subject. We have discussed our relation to Hegel in one or two places, but nowhere in a comprehensive, connected account. Nor did we ever return to Feuerbach, who after all in many respects forms an intermediate link between Hegelian philosophy and our conception.

In the meantime the Marxist world outlook has found representatives far beyond the boundaries of Germany and Europe and in all the literary languages of the world. On the other hand, classical German philosophy is experiencing a kind of rebirth abroad, especially in England and Scandinavia, and even in Germany people appear to be getting tired of the pauper's broth of eclecticism which is ladled out in the universities there under the name of philosophy.

In these circumstances a short, connected account of our relation to the Hegelian philosophy, of how we proceeded as well as separated from it, appeared to me to be increasingly in order. Equally, a full acknowledgement of the influence which Feuerbach, more than any other post-Hegelian philosopher, had on us during our period of storm and stress, appeared to me to be an undischarged debt of honour. I therefore willingly seized the opportunity when the editors of the *Neue Zeit* asked me for a critical review of Starcke's book on Feuerbach. My contribution was published in Nos. 4 and 5 of that journal in 1886 and appears here in revised form as a separate publication.

Before sending these lines to press, I have once again ferreted out and looked over the old manuscript of 1845-46. The section dealing with Feuerbach is not completed. The finished portion consists of an exposition of the materialist conception of history which proves only how incomplete our

knowledge of economic history still was at the time. It contains no criticism of Feuerbach's doctrine itself; for the present purpose, therefore, it was unusable. On the other hand, in an old notebook of Marx's I have found the eleven theses on Feuerbach which are printed here as an appendix. These are notes hurriedly scribbled down for later elaboration, absolutely not intended for publication, but invaluable as the first document in which the brilliant germ of the new world outlook is deposited.

Frederick Engels

London, February 21, 1888

Printed in *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of German Classical Philosophy*, published in 1888, Stuttgart

Original in German

LUDWIG FEUERBACH AND THE END OF CLASSICAL GERMAN PHILOSOPHY

I

The present work* carries us back to a period which, although chronologically no more than a generation or so behind us, has become as foreign to the present generation in Germany as if it were already a full hundred years old. Yet it was the period of Germany's preparation for the Revolution of 1848; and all that has happened in our country since then has been merely a continuation of 1848, merely the execution of the last will and testament of the revolution.

Just as in France in the eighteenth century, so in Germany in the nineteenth, a philosophical revolution ushered in the political collapse. But with what a difference! The French were in open combat with all official science, with the church and often also the state; their writings were printed beyond the frontier, in Holland or England, while they themselves were often on the point of landing in the Bastille. But the

* *Ludwig Feuerbach,* by C. N. Starcke, Ph. D., Stuttgart, Ferd. Encke, 1885. [*Note by Engels*]

Germans were professors, state-appointed instructors of youth; their writings were recognized textbooks, and the system rounding off the whole development — the Hegelian system — was even raised, in some degree, to the rank of a royal Prussian philosophy of state! Was it possible that a revolution could hide behind these professors, behind their pedantically obscure phrases, their ponderous, wearisome sentences? Were not the liberals, the very people who then passed as the representatives of the revolution, the bitterest opponents of this brain-befuddling philosophy? But what neither governments nor liberals saw was seen by at least one man as early as 1833, and indeed by a man called Heinrich Heine.[1]*1

Let us take an example. No philosophical proposition has earned as much gratitude from narrow-minded governments and wrath from equally narrow-minded liberals as Hegel's famous statement:

"What is rational is actual and what is actual is rational."[2]

That was tangibly a sanctification of all things as they are, a philosophical benediction bestowed upon despotism, the police state, arbitrary justice, and censorship. That is how Frederick William III understood it, and his subjects too. But according to Hegel everything that exists is in no wise also real, without further qualification. For Hegel the attribute of reality belongs only to that which at the same time is necessary:

"in its development reality proves itself as necessity."

* A bracketed numeral in the text indicates a note written by Plekhanov for the Russian editions and appearing on pp. 103-80 of this book. — *Ed.*

Therefore a particular governmental measure — Hegel himself cites the example of "a certain tax regulation" — is by no means real for him without qualification. However, that which is necessary proves itself in the last resort to be rational too; and, applied to the Prussian state of that time, the Hegelian proposition, therefore, merely means: this state is rational, corresponds to reason, insofar as it is necessary; and if it nevertheless appears evil to us, but continues to exist in spite of its evil character, then the government's evil character is justified and explained by the corresponding evil character of its subjects. The Prussians of that day had the government they deserved.[2]

But according to Hegel, reality is in no way an attribute which applies to any given state of affairs, social or political, in all circumstances and at all times. On the contrary. The Roman Republic was real, but so was the Roman Empire which supplanted it. In 1789 the French monarchy had become so unreal, that is to say, so denuded of all necessity, so irrational, that it had to be abolished by the Great Revolution, of which Hegel always speaks with the greatest enthusiasm. In this case, therefore, the monarchy was unreal and the revolution real. Thus in the course of development all that was previously real becomes unreal, loses its necessity, its right to existence, its rationality; a new, viable reality takes the place of the moribund reality — peacefully if the old is sensible enough to go to its death without a struggle, forcibly if it offers resistance to this necessity. Thus the Hegelian proposition is transformed into its opposite through the Hegelian dialectic itself: All that is real in the domain of human history becomes irrational in the course of time, is therefore already irrational by definition, is infected in advance with irrationality; and everything which is rational

in the minds of men is destined to become real, however much it may contradict existing apparent reality. In accordance with all the rules of the Hegelian method of thought, the proposition about the rationality of everything real resolves itself into this other proposition: All that exists deserves to perish.

But the true significance and the revolutionary character of the Hegelian philosophy (to which, as the close of the whole movement since Kant, we must here confine ourselves) lay precisely in the fact that once and for all it dealt the deathblow to the final validity of all products of human thought and activity. With Hegel truth, the cognition of which is the task of philosophy, was no longer a collection of finished dogmatic propositions which, once discovered, had merely to be learned by heart. Truth now lay in the process of cognition itself, in the long historical development of science, which mounts from lower to ever higher levels of knowledge, but without ever reaching, by discovering some so-called absolute truth, a point at which it can proceed no further and at which it would have nothing more to do than to fold its hands and gaze admiringly at the absolute truth it had attained. And what holds good for the realm of philosophical knowledge holds good for that of every other kind of knowledge and also for practical activity. History is as little able as cognition to reach a final conclusion in a perfect, ideal condition of humanity; a perfect society, a perfect "state," are things which can only exist in the imagination. On the contrary, every successive historical situation is only a transitory stage in the endless course of development of society from the lower to the higher. Each stage is necessary and therefore justified for the time and conditions to which it owes its origin. But it becomes decrepit and

unjustified in the face of new, higher conditions which gradually develop in its own womb. It must give way to a higher stage which in its turn will also decay and perish. Just as in practice the bourgeoisie dissolves all stable, time-honoured institutions by means of large-scale industry, competition and the world market, so this dialectical philosophy dissolves all conceptions of final, absolute truth and of absolute states of humanity corresponding to it. Nothing final, absolute or sacred can endure in its presence. It reveals the transitory character of everything and in everything and nothing can endure in its presence except the uninterrupted process of becoming and of passing away, of endless ascent from the lower to the higher, of which it is itself the mere reflection in the thinking brain. Of course, it has a conservative side too: it recognizes that definite stages of knowledge and society are justified for their time and circumstances; but only up to a point. The conservatism of this outlook is relative, its revolutionary character is absolute — the only absolute which dialectical philosophy allows to prevail.

It is not necessary here to go into the question of whether this outlook is completely in accord with the present state of natural science, which predicts a possible end for the very existence of the earth and a fairly certain one for its habitability; which therefore recognizes that for the history of mankind, too, there is not only an upward but also a downward phase. At any rate we still find ourselves pretty far from the turning point at which the history of society will enter a decline, and we cannot expect Hegelian philosophy to be concerned with a subject which in its time natural science had definitely not yet put on the agenda.

But what must in fact be said here is that the above exposition is not found with such clarity in Hegel. It is a

necessary conclusion from his method, but one which he himself never drew so explicitly. And this, indeed, for the simple reason that he was compelled to build a *system* and, in accordance with traditional requirements, a system of philosophy must conclude with some kind of absolute truth. Therefore, however much Hegel emphasizes, especially in his *Logic*,[3] that this eternal truth is nothing but the logical, that is, the historical, *process* itself, he still finds himself compelled to supply this process with an end precisely because he must bring his system to an end at some point or other. In his *Logic* he can make this end a beginning again, since here the point of conclusion, the absolute idea — which is only absolute insofar as he has absolutely nothing to say about it — "alienates," that is, transforms, itself into nature and later returns to itself in the mind, that is, in thought and in history. But at the end of the whole philosophy a similar return to the beginning is possible only in one way. Namely, by conceiving the end of history as consisting in mankind's arriving at the knowledge of this self-same absolute idea, and by declaring that this knowledge of the absolute idea is attained in Hegelian philosophy. But the whole dogmatic content of the Hegelian system is thus declared to be absolute truth, in contradiction with his dialectical method, which dissolves all dogmatism. Thus the revolutionary side is smothered beneath the overgrowth of the conservative side. And what applies to philosophical knowledge applies also to historical practice. Mankind, which, in the person of Hegel, has reached the point of working out the absolute idea, must have gotten so far in practice too that it can carry out this absolute idea in reality. Hence the practical political demands of the absolute idea on contemporaries should not be exorbitant. So we find at the conclusion of the *Philosophy of*

Right that the absolute idea is to realize itself in that monarchy based on social estates which Frederick William III so stubbornly but vainly promised to his subjects, that is, in the limited, moderate, indirect rule of the possessing classes suited to the German petty-bourgeois conditions of the time; with, moreover, the necessity of the nobility speculatively demonstrated for us.

Consequently, the inner necessities of the system alone suffice to explain why a thoroughly revolutionary method of thinking produced a very tame political conclusion. Indeed, the specific form of this conclusion arises from the fact that Hegel was a German and like his contemporary Goethe had a bit of the philistine's pigtail dangling behind. Each was an Olympian Zeus in his own sphere, yet neither ever altogether got rid of the German philistine in him.

However, none of this prevented the Hegelian system from covering an incomparably greater domain than any earlier system or from developing a wealth of thought in this domain which is astounding even today. The phenomenology of the mind (which one may call a parallel to the embryology and paleontology of the mind, an evolution of the individual consciousness through its different stages, expressed in the form of an abbreviated reproduction of the stages through which the consciousness of man has passed in the course of history), logic, philosophy of nature, philosophy of mind, and the latter in its turn worked out in its separate, historical sub-divisions, philosophy of history, of right, of religion, history of philosophy, aesthetics, etc. — in all these different historical fields Hegel laboured to discover and demonstrate the main thread of development. As he was not only a creative genius but also a man of encyclopedic erudition, he played an epoch-making role in every sphere. It is self-

evident that owing to the needs of the "system" he quite often had to resort to those forced constructions about which his pigmy opponents raise such a terrible din even today. But these constructions are only the frame and scaffolding of his work. If one does not loiter here needlessly, but presses on farther into the immense building, one finds innumerable treasures which still retain all their value today. With all philosophers it is precisely the "system" which is perishable, just because it springs from an imperishable need of the human mind, the need to overcome all contradictions. But if all contradictions are eliminated once and for all, we shall have arrived at so-called absolute truth — world history will have come to an end. Yet it has to continue, although there is nothing left for it to do — hence, a new, insoluble contradiction. As soon as we have realized — and ultimately no one has helped us do so more than Hegel himself — that the task of philosophy thus posed only means that a single philosopher should accomplish what can only be accomplished by the whole human race in its progressive development — as soon as we realize this, there is an end to all philosophy in the hitherto accepted sense of the word. We abandon "absolute truth," which is unattainable along this path or by any single individual, and instead we pursue attainable relative truths along the path of the positive sciences and of the syntheses of their results by means of dialectical thought. With Hegel philosophy as such comes to an end: on the one hand, because in his system he recapitulates its whole development in the most splendid fashion, and on the other, because he shows us, albeit unconsciously, the way out of this labyrinth of systems to real positive knowledge of the world.

One can imagine what a tremendous effect this Hegelian system must have produced in the philosophy-tinged at-

mosphere of Germany. It was a triumphal procession which lasted for decades and which by no means came to a standstill with Hegel's death. On the contrary, it was precisely from 1830 to 1840 that "Hegelianism" reigned most exclusively and to a greater or lesser extent infected even its opponents. It was in this very period that Hegelian views, whether consciously or unconsciously, most profusely penetrated the most varied sciences and even leavened popular literature and the daily press, from which the average "cultured person" derives his mental pabulum. But this victory along the whole front was only the prelude to an internal struggle.

As we have seen, Hegel's whole doctrine left plenty of room for accommodating the most diverse practical party views, and two things above all were practical in the theoretically minded Germany of the time: religion and politics. Whoever placed the main stress on the Hegelian *system* could be pretty conservative in both spheres; whoever regarded the dialectical *method* as the main thing could belong to the most extreme opposition both in religion and politics. Despite the fairly frequent outbursts of revolutionary wrath in his works, Hegel himself seemed to be on the whole more inclined to the conservative side. Indeed, his system had cost him much more "hard mental plugging" than his method. Towards the end of the thirties, the cleavage in the [Hegelian] school became more and more apparent. In their fight with the orthodox pietists and feudal reactionaries the left wing, the so-called Young Hegelians, little by little abandoned that philosophically refined reserve in regard to the burning questions of the day which till then had insured state toleration and even protection for their teachings. And open partisanship became unavoidable when orthodox bigotry and absolutist feudal reaction ascended the throne with Frederick

William IV in 1840. The fight was still carried on with philosophical weapons, but no longer for abstract philosophical goals. It turned directly on the destruction of traditional religion and of the existing state. While the practical ends were still predominantly clothed in philosophical garb in the *Deutsche Jahrbücher*,[4] in the *Rheinische Zeitung*[5] of 1842 the Young Hegelian school directly revealed itself as the philosophy of the aspiring radical bourgeoisie and used the threadbare cloak of philosophy only to deceive the censorship.[3]

But politics was then a very thorny field, and hence the main fight was directed against religion; indirectly, this fight was also political, particularly after 1840. Strauss' *Life of Jesus*[6] had provided the first impulse in 1835. Bruno Bauer later combated its theory of the formation of the gospel myths by proving that a whole series of evangelic stories had been fabricated by the authors themselves. The controversy between them was carried out in the philosophical disguise of a battle between "self-consciousness" and "substance," and the question whether the miracle stories of the gospels came into being through the unconscious-traditional creation of myths within the bosom of the community or whether they were fabricated by the evangelists themselves was inflated into the question whether "substance" or "self-consciousness"[4] is the decisive motive force in world history. Finally Stirner, the prophet of contemporary anarchism — Bakunin has taken a great deal from him — came along and capped the sovereign "self-consciousness" with his sovereign "ego."[7]

We will not go any further into this side of the process of decomposition of the Hegelian school. What is more important for us is that the main body of the most determined Young Hegelians was driven back to Anglo-French material-

ism by the practical necessities of its fight against positive religion. Here they came into conflict with the system of their school. While materialism views nature as the sole reality, in the Hegelian system nature represents merely the "alienation" of the absolute idea, so to say, a degradation of this idea. At all events, thinking and its intellectual product, the idea, is here primary, and nature is derivative, only existing at all through the condescension of the idea. And they floundered in this contradiction as well or as ill as they could.

Then came Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity*.[8] With one blow it dissipated the contradiction by again raising materialism to the throne without any fuss. Nature exists independently of any philosophy. It is the foundation upon which we human beings, ourselves the products of nature, have grown up. Nothing exists outside nature and man, and the higher beings created by our religious fantasies are only the fantastic reflection of our own essence.[5] The spell was broken; the "system" was shattered and cast aside, and the contradiction shown to exist only in our imagination was dissolved. One must have oneself experienced the liberating effect of this book to have any idea of it. The enthusiasm was general; at once we all became Feuerbachians. It may be seen from *The Holy Family* how enthusiastically Marx greeted the new approach and how much — in spite of all critical reservations — he was influenced by it.*

The very shortcomings of the book contributed to its immediate impact. Its literary, sometimes even high-flown, style ensured a larger public for it and was at any rate refreshing

* Marx and Engels, *The Holy Family*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1956. — *Ed.*

after long years of abstract and abstruse Hegelianism. The same is true of its gushing deification of love, which had its excuse, though not its justification, after the now intolerable sovereign rule of "pure thought." But what we must not forget is that "true socialism,"[9] which had been spreading like a plague in "educated" Germany since 1844, took precisely these two weaknesses of Feuerbach's as its starting point, putting literary phrases in the place of scientific knowledge and the liberation of mankind through "love" in place of the emancipation of the proletariat through the economic transformation of production — in short, losing itself in the nauseating preciosity and love-feasts typified by Herr Karl Grün.[6]

Nor must we forget that while the Hegelian school was dissolved, Hegelian philosophy was not overcome through criticism; Strauss and Bauer each extracted one of its aspects and turned it polemically against the other. Feuerbach broke through the system and simply discarded it. But a philosophy is not disposed of by simply asserting that it is false. And so powerful an achievement as Hegelian philosophy, which had exercised so enormous an influence on the intellectual development of the nation, could not be disposed of by being abruptly ignored. It had to be "sublated" in its own sense, that is, in the sense that while its form had to be destroyed by criticism, the new content which had been gained through it had to be saved. How this was brought about we shall see below.

But in the meantime the Revolution of 1848 thrust all philosophy aside as unceremoniously as Feuerbach had thrust aside his Hegel. And in the process Feuerbach himself was also pushed into the background.

II

The great basic question of all philosophy, and especially of more recent philosophy, is that concerning the relation of thinking and being. From the very early times when men, who were still completely ignorant of the structure of their own bodies, came to believe under the stimulus of dream apparitions* that their thinking and sensation were not activities of their bodies but of a distinct soul which inhabits the body and leaves it at death — from these times men have been driven to reflect about the relation between this soul and the external world. If upon death it took leave of the body and lived on, there was no occasion to ascribe yet another separate death to it. Thus there arose the idea of its immortality, which in no wise appeared as a consolation at that stage of development but as a fate against which nothing could be done, and often enough as a positive misfortune, as among the Greeks. It was not the religious need for consolation but the quandary arising from the common universal ignorance of what to do with this soul, once granting its existence after the death of the body — it was this quandary that generally led to the tiresome fiction of personal immortality. The first gods arose in an altogether similar way from the personification of natural forces. In the subsequent evolution of religions they increasingly assumed an extra-mundane form, until finally by a process of abstraction — I might almost say of distillation — occurring naturally in the course of man's intellectual development, out of the many more or less limited and mutually limiting gods there arose in the minds of men the idea of the one exclusive God of the monotheistic religions.

* Among savages and lower barbarians the idea is still universal that the human forms appearing in dreams are souls which have temporarily left their bodies; the real man is, therefore, held responsible for acts committed by his dream apparition against the dreamer. Thus im Thurn found this belief current, for example, among the Indians of Guiana in 1884.[10] [*Note by Engels*]

Thus the question of the relation of thinking to being, of mind to nature — the paramount question of the whole of philosophy — has, no less than all religion, its roots in the narrow-minded and ignorant notions of savagery. But this question could first be posed in all its sharpness, could first achieve its full significance, only when humanity in Europe awoke from the long hibernation of the Christian Middle Ages. The question of the place of thinking in relation to being, which incidentally had played a great part in medieval scholasticism too, the question, which is primary, mind or nature — this question confronting the church took the pointed form: Did God create the world, or has the world been in existence eternally?

Philosophers were divided into two great camps according to their answer to this question. Those who asserted the primacy of mind over nature and, in the last analysis, therefore, assumed some kind of creation of the world — and this creation often becomes far more intricate and impossible among the philosophers, for example, Hegel, than in Christianity — formed the camp of idealism. The others, who regarded nature as primary, belonged to the various schools of materialism.

These two terms, idealism and materialism, originally signify nothing but this; and here too we are not using them in any other sense. We shall see below the confusion which arises when some other meaning is put into them.

But the question of the relation of thinking and being has yet another aspect. In what relation do our thoughts about the world surrounding us stand to this world itself? Is our thinking capable of knowing the real world? Are we able to produce a correct reflection of reality in our ideas and notions of the real world? In philosophical language this question is called the question of the identity of thinking and being, and the overwhelming majority of philosophers answer it affirmatively. With Hegel, for example, its affirmation is self-evident; for what we know in the real world is precisely its content conforming to thought — that which makes the world a gradual realization of the absolute idea, which absolute idea has existed somewhere from eternity, independently of and prior to the world. But it is manifest without further proof that thought can know a content which is already in advance a thought-content. It is equally manifest that what is to be proved here is already tacitly contained in the premise. But that in no way prevents Hegel from drawing the further conclusion from his proof of the identity of thinking and being that his philosophy, because it is correct for his thinking, is therefore also the only correct one, and that the identity of thinking and being must prove its validity by mankind's immediately translating his philosophy from theory into practice and transforming the whole world according to Hegelian principles. This is an illusion he shares with well-nigh all philosophers.

In addition there is a set of different philosophers — those who challenge the possibility of any knowledge, or at least of an exhaustive knowledge, of the world. Among the more modern ones there belong Hume and Kant, who have played a very important role in the development of philosophy. What is decisive in the refutation of this view has already

been said by Hegel, insofar as this was possible from an idealist standpoint; what Feuerbach has added from a materialist standpoint is more ingenious than profound. The most telling refutation of this as of all other philosophical crotchets is practice, namely, experiment and industry. If we are able to prove the correctness of our understanding of a natural process by making it ourselves, producing it from its preconditions and making it serve our own purposes into the bargain, then it's all over with the Kantian ungraspable "thing-in-itself." The chemical substances produced in the bodies of plants and animals remained such "things-in-themselves" until organic chemistry began to produce them one after another; whereupon the "thing-in-itself" became a thing-for-us, as, for instance, alizarin, the colouring matter of madder, which we no longer trouble to grow in the madder roots in the field, but produce much more cheaply and simply from coal tar. For three hundred years the Copernican solar system was a hypothesis with a hundred, a thousand or ten thousand chances to one in its favour, but still always a hypothesis. But when Leverrier, by means of the data provided by this system, not only deduced the necessity of the existence of an unknown planet, but also calculated the position in the heavens which this planet must necessarily occupy, and when Galle really found this planet,[11] the Copernican system was proved. If, nevertheless, the Neo-Kantians are attempting to resurrect the Kantian approach in Germany and the agnostics that of Hume in England (where it never died out), this is scientifically a retrogression and practically just a shamefaced way of surreptitiously accepting materialism while publicly denying it, since they were refuted both theoretically and practically a long time ago.[7]

But during this long period from Descartes to Hegel and from Hobbes to Feuerbach, the philosophers were by no means pushed forward solely by the force of pure thought, as they themselves believed. On the contrary. What really pushed them forward was above all the powerful and increasingly rapid and impetuous progress of natural science and industry. Among the materialists this was plain on the surface, but the idealist systems too filled themselves more and more with a materialist content and attempted pantheistically to reconcile the antithesis between mind and matter, so that ultimately the Hegelian system merely represents a materialism idealistically stood on its head in method and content.

It is, therefore, understandable that in his characterization of Feuerbach Starcke first investigates the latter's position in regard to this fundamental question of the relation of thinking and being. After a short introduction, in which the views of earlier philosophers, particularly since Kant, are described in unnecessarily ponderous philosophical language, and in which Hegel, by an all too formalistic adherence to certain passages in his works, gets far less than his due, there follows a detailed exposition of the course of development of Feuerbach's "metaphysics" itself, as this course was manifested in the sequence of his relevant writings. This exposition is a clear and diligent piece of work, but like the whole book it is loaded with an occasionally avoidable ballast of philosophical terminology, which is the more disturbing in its effect, the less the author keeps to the terminology of one and the same school or even of Feuerbach himself, and the more he injects terms from the most divergent tendencies, and especially from the self-styled philosophical tendencies now rampant.

Feuerbach's course of development is that of a Hegelian — never quite an orthodox one, it is true — towards materialism, a development which at a definite stage necessitates a complete rupture with his predecessor's idealist system. With irresistible force Feuerbach is finally driven to the realization that the Hegelian premundane existence of the "absolute idea," the "pre-existence of the logical categories" before there was a world, is nothing but the fantastic vestige of the belief in the existence of an extramundane creator; that the material, sensuously perceptible world to which we ourselves belong is the only reality; and that our consciousness and thinking, however supra-sensuous they may seem, are the product of a material, bodily organ, the brain. Matter is not a product of mind, but mind is itself merely the highest product of matter. This is, of course, pure materialism. But, having got so far, Feuerbach stops short. He cannot overcome the customary philosophical prejudice, the prejudice not against the thing but against the name materialism. He says:

> "For me materialism is the foundation of the edifice of human essence and knowledge; but for me it is not what it is for the physiologist, for the natural scientist in the narrower sense, for example, Moleschott, and indeed necessarily from their standpoint and profession, namely, the edifice itself. Backwards I fully agree with the materialists, but not forwards."

Here Feuerbach lumps together the materialism which is a general world outlook resting upon a definite conception of the relation between matter and mind with the particular form in which this world outlook was expressed at a definite historical stage, namely, in the eighteenth century. More than that, he lumps it together with the shallow, vulgarized form in which eighteenth century materialism survives in the

heads of natural scientists and doctors today and which was preached by Büchner, Vogt and Moleschott on their lecture tours in the fifties. But materialism underwent a series of stages of development just as idealism did. It has to change its form with each epoch-making discovery in the sphere of natural science; and since history itself has been subjected to materialistic treatment, a new avenue of development has been opened here too.

The materialism of the last century was predominantly mechanical, because of all the natural sciences only mechanics, and indeed only the celestial and terrestrial mechanics of solid bodies — in short, the mechanics of gravity — had then come to a certain finality. Chemistry existed only in its infantile, phlogistic form. Biology was still in its swaddling clothes; plant and animal organisms had been investigated only in the rough and were explained by purely mechanical causes. What the animal was to Descartes, man was to the eighteenth century materialists — a machine. This exclusive application of the standards of mechanics to processes which are chemical and organic in nature and in which the laws of mechanics are, it is true, likewise valid but are pushed into the background by other, higher laws, constitutes one specific limitation of classical French materialism, a limitation which was inevitable at the time.[8]

The second specific limitation of this materialism lay in its inability to apprehend the universe as a process, as matter engaged in uninterrupted historical development. This accorded with the contemporary level of natural science and with the metaphysical, that is, anti-dialectical way of philosophizing connected with it. Nature, it was known, was in eternal motion. But according to the view then current, this motion revolved, likewise eternally, in a circle and therefore

never shifted position; it produced the same results over and over again. This conception could not then be avoided. The Kantian theory of the origin of the solar system had only just been put forward and still passed as a mere curiosity. The history of the evolution of the earth, geology, was still totally unknown, and the idea that the living natural beings of today are the result of a long sequence of evolution from the simple to the complex could not then be scientifically advanced at all. The unhistorical view of nature was therefore inevitable. We have all the less reason for reproaching the philosophers of the eighteenth century on this account since the same thing is likewise found in Hegel. With him, nature, as a mere "alienation" of the idea, is incapable of development in time but is only capable of extending its manifoldness in space, so that it displays simultaneously and side by side all the stages of development comprised in it and is condemned to an eternal repetition of the same processes. Hegel burdens nature with this absurdity of development in space, but outside of time — the basic condition of all development — just when geology, embryology, the physiology of plants and animals, and organic chemistry were being built up, and when brilliant foreshadowings of the later theory of evolution were everywhere emerging on the basis of these new sciences (for instance, in Goethe and Lamarck). But the system demanded it thus, hence the method had to become untrue to itself for the sake of the system.

The same unhistorical conception also prevailed in the domain of history. Here the struggle against the remnants of the Middle Ages confined people's vision. The Middle Ages were regarded as a mere interruption of history by a thousand years of general barbarism; the great advances of

the Middle Ages — the extension of the area of European culture, the viable great nations which took form there side by side, and finally the enormous technical progress of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries — none of this was seen. Thus rational recognition of the great historical interconnections became impossible, and history served at best as a collection of examples and illustrations for the use of philosophers.

The vulgarizing pedlars who hawked materialism in the Germany of the fifties in no way overcame this limitation of their teachers. All the advances in natural science in the interim served them only as new proofs against the existence of a creator of the universe; and in fact they did not in the least make it their business to develop the theory any further. Though idealism was at the end of its tether and was stricken unto death by the Revolution of 1848, it had the satisfaction of seeing that materialism had for the moment fallen lower still. Feuerbach was unquestionably right when he rejected responsibility for this materialism; only he should not have confounded the doctrines of these itinerant preachers with materialism in general.

Here, however, there are two things to be pointed out. First, even in Feuerbach's lifetime, natural science was still in that process of intense ferment which has found clarification and relative consummation only in the last fifteen years. New scientific data were acquired to a hitherto unheard-of extent, but it has only quite recently become possible to establish interconnections, and thus order, out of this chaos of discoveries coming on top of each other. It is true that Feuerbach lived to see the three decisive discoveries — that of the cell, the transformation of energy, and the theory of evolution named after Darwin. But how could the lonely

philosopher, living in rural solitude, adequately follow scientific developments and appreciate at their full value discoveries which natural scientists themselves either were still contesting or did not know how to exploit adequately? The blame for this falls solely upon the wretched conditions in Germany, as a result of which casuistic and eclectic flea-crackers had cornered the chairs of philosophy, while Feuerbach, who towered above them all, had to rusticate and grow sour in a hamlet. It is therefore not Feuerbach's fault that the historical conception of nature, which had now become possible and which discarded all the one-sidedness of French materialism, remained inaccessible to him.

But secondly, Feuerbach is quite correct in asserting that the simple materialism of the natural sciences is indeed

> "the foundation of the edifice of human . . . knowledge, but . . . not . . . the edifice itself."

For we live not only in nature but also in human society, and it too no less than nature has its historical development and its science. It was therefore a question of bringing the science of society, that is, the totality of the so-called historical and philosophical sciences, into harmony with the materialist base, and of reconstructing it on this base. But this was not granted to Feuerbach. In spite of the "base," he here remained confined by the traditional idealist fetters, a fact which he recognizes in these words:

> "Backwards I fully agree with the materialists, but not forwards."

But it was Feuerbach himself who did not go "forwards" here in the social domain, who did not transcend his standpoint of 1840 or 1844, and again chiefly because of his isolation which compelled him, who of all philosophers was the most inclined to social intercourse, to produce thoughts out

of his solitary head instead of in friendly and hostile encounters with other men of his calibre. Later we shall see in detail how much he remained an idealist in this sphere.

It need only be added here that Starcke looks for Feuerbach's idealism in the wrong place.

"Feuerbach is an idealist, he believes in the progress of mankind," (p. 19). "The foundation, the substructure of the whole, nevertheless remains idealism. Realism for us is nothing more than a protection against aberrations, while we follow our ideal trends. Are not compassion, love and enthusiasm for truth and justice ideal forces?" (p. VIII.)

In the first place, idealism here means nothing but the pursuit of ideal goals. But these necessarily have to do at most with Kantian idealism and its "categorical imperative"; however, Kant himself called his philosophy "transcendental idealism," not at all because it also dealt with ethical ideals, but for quite other reasons, as Starcke will remember. The superstition that philosophical idealism revolves around a belief in ethical, that is, social, ideals, arose outside philosophy, among the German philistines, who learned by heart from Schiller's poems the few morsels of philosophical culture they needed. No one has more severely criticized Kant's impotent "categorical imperative" — impotent because it demands the impossible and therefore never attains any reality — no one has more cruelly derided the gushing philistine enthusiasm for unrealizable ideals purveyed by Schiller than the consummate idealist Hegel himself. (See, for example, his *Phenomenology.*[12])[9]

In the second place, we simply cannot get away from the fact that everything by which men are moved must find its ways through their brains — even eating and drinking, which begin as a result of the sensation of hunger or thirst felt through the brain and end as a result of the sensation of

satisfaction likewise felt through the brain. The influences of the external world upon man express themselves in his brain, are reflected in it as feelings, thoughts, impulses, volitions, in short, as "ideal tendencies," and in this form become "ideal powers." Now if the fact that a man generally pursues "ideal tendencies" and concedes the influence of "ideal powers" on him makes him an idealist, then every person who is more or less normally developed is a born idealist, and how, in that case, can there still be any materialists?

In the third place, the conviction that humanity, at least at the present moment, is by and large moving in a progressive direction has absolutely nothing to do with the antithesis between materialism and idealism. The French materialists no less than the deists[13] Voltaire and Rousseau held this conviction to an almost fanatical degree, and often enough made the greatest personal sacrifices for it. If ever anybody dedicated his whole life to "enthusiasm for truth and justice" — using this phrase in the good sense — it was Diderot, for example. If, therefore, Starcke declares all this to be idealism, this merely proves that the word materialism, and the whole antithesis between the two trends, has lost all meaning for him here.

The fact is that Starcke is here making, although perhaps unconsciously, an unpardonable concession to the traditional philistine prejudice against the term materialism deriving from long-standing clerical slanders. By materialism the philistine understands gluttony, drunkenness, lust of the eye, carnal desire and ostentatious living, avarice, cupidity, covetousness, profit-hunting and stock-exchange swindling — in short, all the sordid vices in which he himself secretly indulges. By idealism he understands the belief in virtue,

universal philanthropy and a "better world" generally, of which he boasts to others but in which he himself believes at most only so long as he is having the blues or is going through the bankruptcy consequent upon his customary "materialist" excesses. It is then that he sings his favourite song, What is man? — Half beast, half angel.

For the rest, Starcke takes great pains to defend Feuerbach against the attacks and doctrines of the verbose university lecturers who strut as philosophers in Germany today. Of course, this is important for people who are interested in this after-birth of classical German philosophy, and it may have appeared necessary to Starcke himself. We, however, will spare the reader this.

III

The real idealism of Feuerbach becomes evident as soon as we come to his philosophy of religion and ethics. He by no means wants to abolish religion, he wants to perfect it. Philosophy itself must be absorbed into religion.

"The periods of humanity are distinguished only by religious changes. A historical movement is fundamental only when it penetrates the hearts of men. The heart is not a form of religion, so that the latter may also exist in the heart; the heart is the essence of religion" (quoted by Starcke, p. 168).

According to Feuerbach, religion is the sentimental relation between human beings, their relation based on the heart, the relation which has hitherto sought its truth in a fantastic mirror image of reality — in mediation by one or many gods who are the fantastic mirror images of human qualities — but which now finds it directly and without any mediation

in the love between I and Thou. Thus, for Feuerbach sexual love finally becomes one of the highest forms, if not the highest form, of the practice of his new religion.

Now relations between human beings, and especially between the two sexes, have existed as long as mankind has. Sexual love in particular has undergone a development and won a place over the last eight hundred years which has made it the compulsory pivot of all poetry in this period. The existing positive religions have limited themselves to the bestowal of a higher consecration on state-regulated sexual love, that is, on the marriage laws, and they could all disappear tomorrow without changing in the slightest the practice of love and friendship. Thus from 1793 to 1798 the Christian religion actually disappeared to such an extent in France that even Napoleon could not reintroduce it without opposition and difficulty; and this without any need in the interval for a substitute, in Feuerbach's sense.

Feuerbach's idealism consists here in the fact that he does not simply accept relations between human beings based on mutual affection such as sexual love, friendship, sympathy, self-sacrifice, etc., as what they are in themselves — without any recollection of any particular religion — he, too, consigns such religion to the past; instead he asserts that they will attain their full value only when given a higher consecration in the name of religion. The chief thing for him is not that these purely human relations exist but that they shall be viewed as the new, true religion. They are to have full value only after they have been stamped with a religious seal. The word religion is derived from *religare* and originally meant a bond. Therefore, every bond between two people is a religion. Such etymological jugglery is the last resort of idealist philosophy. What should count is not what the

word means according to the historical development of its actual use, but what it ought to mean according to its derivation. And so sexual love and sexual union is glorified as a "religion," solely in order that the word religion so dear to idealistic memories may not disappear from the language. The Parisian reformers of the Louis Blanc trend used to speak in precisely the same way in the forties; they could likewise only picture a man without religion as a monster and used to say to us: *"Donc, l'athéisme c'est votre religion!"** If Feuerbach wants to establish the true religion on the basis of an essentially materialist conception of nature, it is the same as regarding modern chemistry as true alchemy. If religion can exist without its god, alchemy can exist without its philosopher's stone. Besides, there is a very close connection between alchemy and religion. The philosopher's stone has many godlike properties, and the Egyptian-Greek alchemists of the first two centuries of our era had a bit of a hand in the formation of Christian doctrine, as the data advanced by Kopp and Berthelot prove.

Feuerbach's assertion that

> "the periods of humanity are distinguished only by religious changes"

is totally wrong.

Great historical turning points have been *accompanied* by religious changes only insofar as the three world religions which have existed up to the present — Buddhism, Christianity and Islam — are concerned. The old tribal and national religions which arose spontaneously did not proselytize and lost all their capacity to resist as soon as the independence of the tribe or people was lost; for the Germans it was sufficient to have simple contact with the decaying Roman world empire and with its recently adopted Christian world religion which fitted its economic, political and intellectual conditions. We find that the more general historical movements acquire a religious imprint only with these world religions which had arisen more or less artificially, particularly in the case of Christianity and Islam. Even in Christendom the religious imprint in revolutions of really universal significance is restricted to the first stages of the bourgeoisie's struggle for emancipation from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries and is to be accounted for not, as Feuerbach thinks, by the hearts of men and their religious needs but by the entire previous history of the Middle Ages, which knew no other form of ideology than religion and theology itself. But when the bourgeoisie of the eighteenth century became strong enough to have its own ideology suited to its own class standpoint, it made its great and decisive French revolution, appealing exclusively to juristic and political ideas, and troubling itself with religion only insofar as it stood in its way. But it never occurred to the bourgeoisie to put a new religion in place of the old; we know how Robespierre failed when he tried.[14]

Today the possibility of purely human feelings in our intercourse with other human beings has already been sufficiently stunted by the society based on class antagonism and class rule in which we must live, move and have our being. We have no reason to stunt it still more for ourselves by glorifying these feelings into a religion. Similarly, people's understanding of the great historical class struggles has already been sufficiently obscured by current historiography, particularly in Germany, without our needing to make such understanding totally impossible by transforming this his-

* "Well, then atheism is your religion!" — *Ed.*

tory of struggles into a mere appendix of ecclesiastical history. It is already obvious here how far we have moved beyond Feuerbach today. His "finest passages" in celebration of his new religion of love are now completely unreadable.

The only religion Feuerbach examines seriously is Christianity, the world religion of the West which is based on monotheism. He proves that the Christian god is only the fantastic reflection, the mirror image, of man. But this god is himself the product of a protracted process of abstraction, the very quintessence of the numerous earlier tribal and national gods. And accordingly man, of whom this god is the image, is not a real man, but likewise the quintessence of numerous real men, or man in the abstract, therefore himself again a mental image. The same Feuerbach who on every page preaches sensuousness, absorption in the concrete, in the real world, becomes abstract through and through as soon as he begins to talk of any other than purely sexual relations between human beings.

Morality is the only aspect these relations display to him. Here we are again struck by Feuerbach's astonishing poverty when compared to Hegel. The latter's ethics or system of morality is the philosophy of right and embraces: 1) abstract right; 2) morality; and 3) social ethics [*Sittlichkeit*], which in its turn includes the family, civil society, and the state. Here the content is as realistic as the form is idealistic. Besides morality the whole sphere of law, economics and politics is here included. With Feuerbach it is just the reverse. In form he is realistic, since he starts from man; but there is absolutely no mention of the world in which this man lives, and hence this man always remains the same abstract man who held forth in the philosophy of religion. For this man is not born of woman; he issues, as from a chrysalis, from

the god of the monotheistic religions and consequently does not live in a real world which has come into being historically and which is historically determined. True, he has dealings with other men, each one of whom, however, is just as abstract as he is himself. In the philosophy of religion we at least still had man and woman, but in ethics even this last difference vanishes. To be sure, at long intervals Feuerbach advances such maxims as:

> "One thinks differently in a palace and in a hut." "If you have no food in your body because of hunger, because of poverty, then you have no food for morality in your head, in your mind or heart." "Politics must become our religion," etc.

But Feuerbach is absolutely incapable of getting anywhere with these maxims. They remain mere words, and even Starcke has to admit that politics constituted an impassable frontier for Feuerbach and that the

> "science of society, sociology, was *terra incognita** to him."

Compared to Hegel, he appears just as shallow in his treatment of the antithesis of good and evil. Hegel remarks,

> "We believe we are saying something lofty, if we say that 'man is naturally good'; but we forget that we are saying something far loftier when we say 'man is naturally evil.' "

With Hegel evil is the form in which the motive force of historical development is presented. This has a twofold meaning. On the one hand, each new advance necessarily appears as a sacrilege against things hallowed, as a rebellion against conditions which are old and moribund but sanctified by custom; on the other hand, it is precisely men's wicked passions, greed and lust for power, which, with the emergence

---

* Unknown territory. — *Ed.*

of class antagonisms, serve as levers of historical development, a fact of which the history of feudalism and of the bourgeoisie, for example, constitutes a single continual proof.[15][10] But it does not occur to Feuerbach to investigate the historical role of moral evil. To him history is altogether a weird and dismal field. Even his dictum:

"Man as he sprang originally from nature was only a simple creature of nature, not a man. Man is a product of man, of culture, of history" —

with him even this dictum remains absolutely sterile.

Accordingly, what Feuerbach has to tell us about morals cannot but be extremely meagre. The urge towards happiness is innate in man and must therefore form the basis of all morality. But the urge towards happiness is subject to a double correction. First, by the natural consequences of our actions: after the debauch the "blues," after habitual excess illness. Second, by its social consequences: if we don't respect the same urge towards happiness in other people, they will defend themselves and so interfere with our own urge towards happiness. Consequently, in order to satisfy our urge, we must be in a position to evaluate the results of our conduct correctly and must likewise allow others an equal right to seek happiness. The basic laws of Feuerbach's morality are therefore rational self-restraint with regard to ourselves, and love — again and again love! — in our relations with others; from them all others are derived. And neither the most ingenious utterances of Feuerbach nor the strongest eulogies of Starcke can hide the poverty and inanity of these few propositions.

The urge towards happiness is satisfied only exceptionally by a man's preoccupation with himself, and never to his and other people's advantage. On the contrary, it requires pre-

occupation with the outside world, means of satisfaction, therefore food, an individual of the opposite sex, books, conversation, debate, activity, objects for use and working up. Feuerbach's morality either presupposes that these means and objects of satisfaction are given to every individual as a matter of course, or else offers only inapplicable good advice and is, therefore, just so much hot air to people lacking these means. Feuerbach himself says so plainly:

"One thinks differently in a palace and in a hut." "If you have no food in your body because of hunger, because of poverty, then you have no food for morality in your head, in your mind or heart."

Do matters fare any better in regard to the equal right of others in their urge towards happiness? Feuerbach poses this claim as absolute, as valid for all times and circumstances. But since when has it been valid? Was there ever any talk about an equal right to the urge towards happiness between slaves and masters in antiquity, or between serfs and barons in the Middle Ages? Was not the urge towards happiness of the oppressed class ruthlessly and "legally" sacrificed to that of the ruling class? Yes indeed, that was immoral, but nowadays equality of rights is recognized. Recognized in words ever since and inasmuch as the bourgeoisie was compelled, in its fight against feudalism and in the development of capitalist production, to abolish all privileges of estate, that is, personal privileges, and to introduce individual equality of rights with respect first to private law and then gradually to public law and the courts. But the urge towards happiness thrives for the most part on material means and only to a trivial extent on ideal rights. Since capitalist production sees to it that the great majority of those endowed with equal rights get only what is essential for bare subsistence, it has little, if any, more respect for the equal right of the majority

to the urge towards happiness than had slavery or serfdom. Do things stand any better with the mental means of happiness and education? Isn't "the schoolmaster of Sadowa"[16] himself a mythical person?

More. According to Feuerbach's theory of morals the Stock Exchange is the highest temple of ethical conduct, provided only that you are always right in your speculation. If my urge towards happiness leads me to the Stock Exchange, and if I gauge the consequences of my actions there so correctly that they bring me only benefits and no drawbacks, that is, if I always win, then I am fulfilling Feuerbach's precept. Besides, I am not interfering with the other man's selfsame urge towards happiness, for he went to the Stock Exchange just as voluntarily as I did and in making the speculative deal with me he was following his urge towards happiness just as much as I was mine. If he loses his money, that by itself proves his action to have been unethical because of his faulty calculation, and by giving him the punishment he deserves I can even slap my chest proudly, like a modern Rhadamanthus.[17] Love rules on the Stock Exchange, too, insofar as it is not a mere sentimental figure of speech, for each finds in others the satisfaction of his own urge towards happiness, which is just what love ought to achieve and how it functions in practice. And if I gamble with correct foresight concerning the consequences of my operations and therefore successfully, I fulfil all the strictest demands of Feuerbachian morality and become a rich man into the bargain. In other words, Feuerbach's morality is cut to fit present-day capitalist society, little as Feuerbach himself might have desired or suspected it.

But love! — yes, with Feuerbach love is everywhere and always the wonder-working god to help surmount all the

difficulties of practical life — and at that in a society which is split into classes with diametrically opposite interests. At this point the last relic of its revolutionary character disappears from philosophy, leaving only the old song: Love one another, fall into each other's arms regardless of sex or estate — a universal orgy of reconciliation!

In short, it is the same with the Feuerbachian theory of morals as with all its predecessors. It is cut to fit all periods, all peoples and all conditions, and for that very reason it is never and nowhere applicable. It remains as impotent in the real world as Kant's categorical imperative. In reality every class, indeed every occupation, has its own morality, and even this it violates whenever it can do so with impunity. And love, which is to unite all, manifests itself in wars, strife, lawsuits, domestic quarrels, divorces and every possible exploitation of one by another.

Now how was it possible that the powerful impetus given by Feuerbach turned out to be so unfruitful for himself? For the simple reason that Feuerbach cannot find a way out of the realm of abstraction — for which he himself has a deadly hatred — into that of living reality. He clings fiercely to nature and man; but nature and man remain mere words with him. He is incapable of telling us anything definite either about real nature or about real man. But from the abstract man of Feuerbach one arrives at real living men only when one considers them as participants in history. Feuerbach resisted this, and so for him the year 1848, which he failed to understand, meant merely the final break with the real world, retreat into solitude. The blame for this again falls chiefly on the conditions then obtaining in Germany, which condemned him to rot away in misery.

Nevertheless, the step Feuerbach did not take had to be taken. The cult of abstract man, which formed the kernel of Feuerbach's new religion, had to be replaced by the science of real men and of their historical development. This further development of Feuerbach's standpoint beyond Feuerbach was inaugurated by Marx in 1845 in *The Holy Family.*

IV

Strauss, Bauer, Stirner, Feuerbach — these were the offshoots of Hegelian philosophy, insofar as they did not abandon the field of philosophy. Strauss, after his *Life of Jesus* and *Dogmatics*, produced only philosophical and ecclesiastical-historical *belles-lettres* after the fashion of Renan. Bauer only achieved something in the field of the history of the origins of Christianity, though what he did here was important. Stirner remained a curiosity, even after Bakunin blended him with Proudhon and baptised the blend as "anarchism." Feuerbach alone was of significance as a philosopher. But not only did philosophy, which allegedly soars above all the separate sciences and is the science of sciences synthesizing them, remain an impassable barrier, an inviolable holy of holies for him; but as a philosopher, too, he stopped halfway, was a materialist below and an idealist above. He was incapable of disposing of Hegel critically but simply threw him aside as useless, while he himself achieved nothing positive beyond a turgid religion of love and a meagre, impotent morality in contrast with the encyclopedic wealth of the Hegelian system.

Yet one other tendency emerged out of the dissolution of the Hegelian school, the only one which has really borne

fruit. This tendency is essentially connected with the name of Marx.*

Here too the separation from Hegelian philosophy was the result of a return to the materialist standpoint. That means the decision was taken to comprehend the real world — nature and history — as it presents itself to everyone who approaches it without preconceived idealist crotchets. The decision was taken mercilessly to sacrifice every idealist crotchet which could not be brought into harmony with the facts grasped in their own and not in some fantastic interconnection. And materialism actually means nothing more than this. Only here the materialist world outlook was taken really seriously for the first time and was carried through consistently — at least in its basic features — in all the domains of knowledge involved.

Hegel was not simply put aside. On the contrary, one started out from his revolutionary side, described above, from the dialectical method. But this method was unusable in its Hegelian form. According to Hegel, dialectics is the

---

* Here I may be permitted to make a personal explanation. Repeated reference has recently been made to my share in this theory, and so I can hardly avoid saying a few words here to settle this point. I cannot deny that both before and during my forty years' collaboration with Marx I had a certain independent share in laying the foundations of the theory, and more particularly in its elaboration. But the greater part of its leading basic principles, particularly in the realm of economics and history, and especially their final trenchant formulation, belong to Marx. What I contributed — at any rate with the exception of my work in a few special fields — Marx could very well have done without me. What Marx accomplished I would not have achieved. Marx stood higher, saw farther, and took a broader and quicker view than all the rest of us. Marx was a genius; we others were at best men of talent. Without him the theory would be far from what it is today. It therefore rightly bears his name. [*Note by Engels*]

self-development of the idea. The absolute idea not only exists — we know not where — from eternity, it is also the actual living soul of the whole existing world. It develops itself into itself through all the preliminary stages which are treated at length in the *Logic* and which are all included in it. Then it "alienates" itself by changing itself into nature, where, without consciousness of itself and disguised as natural necessity, it goes through a new development and finally comes again to self-consciousness in man. This self-consciousness now works out its way in its turn in history from the crude form until finally the absolute idea returns to itself completely in the Hegelian philosophy. According to Hegel, therefore, the dialectical development apparent in nature and history, that is, the causal interconnection of the progressive movement from the lower to the higher which asserts itself through all zigzags and temporary retrogressions, is only a miserable copy of the self-movement of the idea going on from eternity, no one knows where, but at all events independently of any thinking human brain. This ideological perversion had to be done away with. We comprehended the ideas in our heads materialistically again — as reflections [*Abbilder**] of real things instead of regarding the real things as reflections of this or that stage of the absolute idea. Thus dialectics was reduced to the science of the general laws of motion, both of the external world and of human thought — two sets of laws which are identical in substance, but different in their expression insofar as the human mind can apply them consciously, while in nature and also so far for the most part in human history, these laws assert themselves unconsciously, in the form of external necessity, in the midst

* I.e., mirror images. — *Ed.*

of an endless series of seeming contingencies. In this way the dialectic of ideas itself became merely the conscious reflex of the dialectical movement of the real world and thus Hegel's dialectic was put on its head, or rather, from its head, on which it was standing, it was put on its feet. And this materialist dialectic, which for years has been our best working instrument and our sharpest weapon, was remarkably enough discovered not only by us but also, independently of us and even of Hegel, by a German worker, Joseph Dietzgen.*

In this way, however, the revolutionary side of Hegelian philosophy was again taken up and at the same time freed from the idealist trimmings which had prevented its consistent application in Hegel. The great basic thought that the world is to be comprehended not as a complex of ready-made *things* but as a complex of *processes*, in which apparently stable things no less than the concepts, their mental reflections in our heads, go through an uninterrupted change of coming into being and passing away, in which, through all the seeming contingency and in spite of all temporary retrogression, a progressive development finally asserts itself — this great fundamental thought has so thoroughly permeated ordinary consciousness especially since Hegel's time that it is now scarcely ever contradicted in this general form. But it is one thing to acknowledge it in words and another to carry it out in reality in detail in each domain of investigation. If, however, investigation always proceeds from this standpoint, the demand for final solutions and eternal truths ceases once

* See *Das Wesen der menschlichen Kopfarbeit, dargestellt von einem Handarbeiter* [*The Nature of Human Brainwork, Described by a Manual Worker*]. Hamburg, Meissner. [*Note by Engels*]

and for all; we are always conscious of the necessarily limited nature of all knowledge gained, of its being conditioned by the circumstances in which it was gained. On the other hand, we no longer permit ourselves to be imposed upon by the antitheses, which are insuperable for the old metaphysics, still all too current, between true and false, good and evil, identical and different, necessary and accidental. We know that these antitheses have only a relative validity; that what is now recognized as true also has its hidden false side which will later manifest itself, just as what is now recognized as false also has its true side, by virtue of which it could previously be regarded as true; that what is maintained to be necessary is composed of sheer contingencies, and that the so-called accidental is the form behind which necessity hides itself — and so on.

The old method of investigation and thought, which Hegel calls "metaphysical," which preferred to investigate *things* as given, as fixed and stable, and the survivals of which still strongly haunt people's minds, had much historical justification in its day. It was first necessary to examine things before it was possible to examine processes. One had first to know what a particular thing was before one could observe the changes it was undergoing. And such was the case with natural science. The old metaphysics, which accepted things as completed, arose from a natural science which investigated dead and living things as completed ones. But when this investigation had progressed so far that it became possible to take the decisive step forward of transition to the systematic investigation of the changes these things undergo in nature itself, then the last hour of the old metaphysics struck in the realm of philosophy as well. In fact, while natural science up to the end of the last century was predominantly a *collecting* science, a science of completed things, in our century it is essentially an *organizing* science, a science of the processes, of the origin and development of these things and of the interconnections which bind all these natural processes into one great whole. Physiology, which investigates the processes occurring in plant and animal organisms; embryology, which deals with the development of individual organisms from germination to maturity; geology, which investigates the gradual formation of the earth's surface — all these are the offspring of our century.

But, above all, there are three great discoveries which have enabled our knowledge of the interconnections of natural processes to advance in giant strides: first, the discovery of the cell as the unit from whose multiplication and differentiation the whole plant and animal body develops, so that not only is the development and growth of all higher organisms recognized as proceeding according to a single general law, but also the way is pointed out by which, through the capacity of the cell to change, organisms can change their species and thus go through a more than individual evolution. Second, the transformation of energy, which has demonstrated to us that all the so-called forces operative in the first instance in inorganic nature — mechanical force and its complement, so-called potential energy, heat, radiation (light, or radiant heat), electricity, magnetism, chemical energy, are different phenomenal forms of universal motion, which pass into one another in definite proportions, so that in place of a certain quantity of the one which disappears a certain quantity of another appears in its turn, and so that the whole movement of nature is reduced to this incessant process of transformation from one form into another. Finally, the proof first coherently developed by Darwin that

the stock of organic products of nature, mankind included, environing us today is the result of a long process of evolution from a few originally unicellular embryonic germs, and that these in their turn have arisen from protoplasm or protein, which came into existence chemically.

Thanks to these three great discoveries and the other immense advances in natural science, we have now arrived at the point where we can demonstrate not only the interconnections of natural processes in particular spheres but also the interconnections of these particular spheres in their totality, and so can present in an approximately systematic form a comprehensive view of the interconnectedness of nature with the facts provided by empirical natural science itself. To furnish this comprehensive view was formerly the task of so-called natural philosophy. It could do this only by putting imaginary, fantastic interconnections in place of the as yet unknown real ones, filling in the missing facts by mental images and bridging the actual gaps by pure imagination. It conceived many brilliant ideas and foreshadowed many later discoveries in the process, but it also produced a lot of nonsense, which indeed could not have been otherwise. Today, when one needs to comprehend the results of natural scientific investigation only dialectically, that is, in the sense of their own interconnections, in order to arrive at a "system of nature" adequate to our time, when the dialectical character of these interconnections is forcing itself against their will even into the metaphysically-trained minds of the natural scientists — today natural philosophy is finally disposed of. Every attempt to resurrect it would not only be superfluous, *it would also be a step backwards.*

But what is true of nature, which is thus recognized as a historical process of development too, is likewise true of

the history of society in all its branches and of the totality of all sciences dealing with things human (and divine). Here, too, the philosophy of history, of right, of religion, etc., has consisted in the substitution of interconnections manufactured in the mind of the philosopher for the real interconnections to be demonstrated in the events; in the apprehension of history in its totality as well as in its separate parts as the gradual realization of ideas, and naturally always only the pet ideas of the philosopher himself. Accordingly, history worked unconsciously but necessarily towards a certain ideal goal fixed in advance, as in Hegel for example, towards the realization of his absolute idea, and the irreversible trend towards this absolute idea constituted the inner interconnection in the events of history. A new mysterious providence — unconscious or gradually coming into consciousness — was thus put in the place of the real and as yet unknown interconnection. Here, therefore, just as in the realm of nature, it was a question of doing away with these manufactured, artificial interconnections by finding the real ones — a task ultimately amounting to the discovery of the general laws of motion which assert themselves as the ruling ones in the history of human society.

In one point, however, the history of the development of society proves to be essentially different from that of nature. In nature — insofar as we ignore man's reaction on nature — there are only blind, unconscious agencies acting on one another, out of whose interplay the general law comes into operation. Whatever happens — from the innumerable apparent contingencies observable on the surface to the ultimate results confirming the law-abidingness of these contingencies — does not happen as a consciously desired aim. On the other hand, in the history of society the actors are all

endowed with consciousness, are men acting with deliberation or passion, working towards definite goals; nothing happens without a conscious purpose, without an intended aim. But this distinction, important as it is for historical investigation, particularly of specific epochs and events, cannot alter the fact that the course of history is governed by inner general laws. For here too, in spite of every individual's consciously desired aims, superficially accident seems to prevail on the whole. That which is willed happens but rarely; in the majority of cases the numerous desired ends cross and conflict with one another, or these ends themselves are from the outset incapable of realization or the means insufficient. Thus the conflicts of innumerable individual wills and individual actions produce a state of affairs in the domain of history entirely analogous to that prevailing in the realm of unconscious nature. The ends of the actions are willed, but the results which in fact follow from these actions are not; or when they do at first seem to correspond to the end willed, they ultimately have consequences quite other than those willed. Thus by and large historical events also appear to be governed by chance. But wherever accident superficially holds sway, it is always governed by hidden inner laws and it is only a matter of discovering these laws.

Men make their own history, whatever its outcome may be, through each person following his own consciously desired end, and history is precisely the resultant of these many wills operating in different directions and of their manifold effects upon the external world. Thus it is also a question of what the many individuals want. The will is determined by passion or deliberation. But the levers which immediately determine passion or deliberation are of very different kinds. They may be partly external objects, partly ideal motives,

ambition, "enthusiasm for truth and justice," personal hatred or even purely individual whims of all kinds. But, on the one hand, we have seen that the many individual wills active in history for the most part produce results quite other than and often the very opposite of those willed, and that therefore their motives are likewise only of secondary importance in relation to the total result. On the other hand, the further question arises, what motive forces in turn stand behind these motives, what are the historical causes which transform themselves into these motives in the brains of the actors?

The old materialism never put this question to itself. Its conception of history, insofar as it has one at all, is therefore essentially pragmatic, it judges everything by the motives of the action, it divides men who act in history into noble and ignoble and then finds that as a rule the noble are defrauded and the ignoble are victorious. Hence, it follows for the old materialism that nothing very edifying is to be got from the study of history, and for us that in the realm of history the old materialism becomes untrue to itself because it takes the ideal motive forces which operate there as final causes, instead of investigating what is behind them, what are the motive forces of these motive forces. The inconsistency does not lie in the fact that *ideal* motive forces are recognized, but in the investigation not being carried further back behind these into their determining causes. On the other hand, the philosophy of history, particularly as represented by Hegel, recognizes that the ostensible and also the really operating motives of men acting in history are by no means the final causes of historical events; that behind these motives are other determining powers, which have to be investigated. But it does not seek these powers in history itself, on the contrary it imports them from outside, from

philosophical ideology, into history. For example, instead of explaining the history of ancient Greece out of its own inner interconnections, Hegel simply maintains that it is nothing more than the working out of configurations of beautiful individuality, the realization of the "work of art" as such.[18] In passing, he says much about the old Greeks that is fine and profound, but today that does not prevent us from refusing to be put off with such an explanation, which is mere phraseology.

When, therefore, it is a question of investigating the motive forces which — whether consciously or unconsciously, and indeed very often unconsciously — lie behind the motives of men who act in history and which constitute the real ultimate motive forces of history, then it cannot be the motives of particular individuals, however eminent, so much as those which set in motion great masses, whole peoples, and again whole classes of people among each people; and this, too, not momentarily for the transient flaring up of a straw-fire which quickly dies down, but for a lasting action resulting in a great historical change. To ascertain the determining causes which are here reflected as conscious motives in the minds of the masses in action and of their leaders — the so-called great men — whether clearly or obscurely, directly or in ideological, even glorified form — that is the only path which can put us on the track of the laws holding sway both in history in general, and at particular periods and in particular lands. Everything which sets men in motion must go through their minds; but what form it takes in their minds depends very much on the circumstances. The workers have in no wise become reconciled to capitalist machine industry, even though they no longer simply break the machines to pieces as they still did in 1848 on the Rhine.

But while the investigation of these determining causes of history was almost impossible in all earlier periods — on account of the complicated and concealed interconnections between them and their effects — our present period has so far simplified these interconnections that the riddle could be solved. Since the establishment of large-scale industry, that is, at least since the European peace of 1815, it has been no longer a secret to anyone in England that the whole political struggle there turned on the claims to supremacy of two classes, the landed aristocracy and the bourgeoisie (middle class). In France, awareness of the same fact came with the return of the Bourbons; the historians of the Restoration period, from Thierry to Guizot, Mignet and Thiers, speak of it everywhere as the key to the understanding of French history since the Middle Ages. And since 1830 the working class, the proletariat, has been recognized in both countries as a third competitor for power. Conditions had become so simplified that one would have had to close one's eyes deliberately not to see the motive force of modern history in the fight of these three great classes and in the conflict of their interests — at least in the two most advanced countries.

But how did these classes come into existence? If at first glance it was still possible to ascribe the origin of the great, formerly feudal landed property — at least in the first instance — to political causes, to seizure by force, this was no longer possible for the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Here the origin and development of the two great classes was seen to lie clearly and palpably in purely economic causes. And it was just as clear that in the struggle between landed property and the bourgeoisie, no less than in the struggle between the bourgeoisie and proletariat, it was a

question, first and foremost, of economic interests, to the furtherance of which political power had to serve as a mere means. Bourgeoisie and proletariat had both arisen in consequence of a change in the economic conditions, more precisely, in the mode of production. The transition, first from guild handicrafts to manufacture, and then from manufacture to large-scale industry with steam and mechanical power, had brought about the development of these two classes. At a certain stage the new productive forces set in motion by the bourgeoisie — in the first place the division of labour and the combination of many detail labourers [*Teilarbeiter*] in one general manufactory — and the conditions and needs of exchange developed through these productive forces became incompatible with the existing order of production handed down by history and sanctified by law, that is to say, incompatible with the guild privileges and the numerous other personal and local privileges (which were only so many fetters for the unprivileged estates) of the feudal order of society. The productive forces represented by the bourgeoisie rebelled against the order of production represented by the feudal landlords and the guildmasters. The result is well known: the feudal fetters were smashed, gradually in England, at one blow in France, with the process still unfinished in Germany. But just as manufacture at a definite stage of its development came into conflict with the feudal order of production, so now large-scale industry has already come into conflict with the bourgeois order of production replacing it. Tied down by this order, by the narrow limits of the capitalist mode of production, industry produces an ever-growing proletarianization of the great mass of the people on the one hand, and an ever greater mass of unsaleable products on the other. Over-production

and mass misery, each the cause of the other — such is the absurd contradiction which is its outcome, and which of necessity calls for the liberation of the productive forces through a change in the mode of production.

In modern history at least it is, therefore, proved that all political struggles are class struggles, and all class struggles for emancipation, despite their necessarily political form — for every class struggle is a political struggle — turn ultimately on the question of *economic* emancipation. Therefore, here at least, the state — the political order — is the subordinate element and civil society — the realm of economic relations — the decisive element. The traditional conception, to which Hegel, too, pays homage, saw in the state the determining element and in civil society the element determined by it. Appearances correspond to this. Just as all the motive forces behind his actions must pass through an individual's brain and be transformed into determinants of his will in order to make him act, so also all the needs of civil society — whichever class happens to be the ruling one — must pass through the will of the state in order to obtain general validity in the form of laws. That is the formal aspect of the matter, which is self-evident. But the question now arises, what is the content of this merely formal will — of the individual as well as of the state — and whence is this content derived, and why is just this willed and not something else? If we look into this, we discover that in modern history the will of the state is by and large determined by the changing needs of civil society, by the supremacy of this or that class, in the last resort, by the development of the productive forces and relations of exchange.

But if even in our modern era, with its gigantic means of production and communication, the state is not an independent domain with an independent development, but one whose existence as well as development is to be explained in the last resort by the economic conditions of existence of society, then this must be much truer still for all earlier times in which the production of man's material life was not yet carried on with these rich resources, and in which, therefore, the necessities of such production must have exercised a still greater mastery over men. If even today, in the era of large-scale industry and of railways, the state is mainly only a reflex, in a comprehensive form, of the economic needs of the class dominating production, then this must have been much more the case in an epoch when each generation of men was forced to spend a far greater part of its aggregate lifetime in satisfying its material needs, and was therefore far more dependent on them than we are today. As soon as the examination of the history of earlier periods is seriously undertaken from this angle, it most abundantly confirms this; but, of course, this cannot be gone into here.[11]

If the state and public law are determined by economic relations, so, too, of course is private law, which indeed in essence only sanctions the existing economic relations between individuals which are normal in the given circumstances. However, the form in which this happens can vary considerably. It is possible to retain the forms of the old feudal laws in the main while giving them a bourgeois content, in fact, directly insinuating a bourgeois meaning into the feudal name; this is what happened in England, in harmony with the whole national development. But it is likewise possible to base oneself on Roman Law, the first world law of a commodity-producing society, with its unsurpassably fine elaboration of all the essential legal relations of simple commodity owners (of buyers and sellers, debtors and creditors, contracts, obligations, etc.); this is what happened in western continental Europe. In this case, for the benefit of a society which is still petty-bourgeois and semi-feudal, it can either be reduced to this society's level simply through judicial practice (common law), or it can be worked into a special code of law to correspond with this social level through the help of allegedly enlightened, moralizing jurists — a code which in these circumstances will also be a bad one from the legal standpoint (for instance, Prussian *Landrecht*). In which case, however, after a great bourgeois revolution, it is also possible to elaborate so classic a legal code as the French *Code Civil* for bourgeois society on the basis of this same Roman Law. If, therefore, bourgeois legal rules merely express the economic conditions of existence of society in legal form, they can do so well or ill according to circumstances.

The first ideological power over mankind appears to us in the form of the state. Society creates for itself an organ for the safeguarding of its common interests against internal and external attacks. This organ is the state power. Immediately after its birth, this organ makes itself independent *vis-à-vis* society, and indeed increasingly so, the more it becomes the organ of a particular class and the more directly it enforces the rule of that class. The fight of the oppressed class against the ruling class necessarily becomes a political fight, to begin with a fight against the political dominance of this class. The consciousness of the connection between this political struggle and its economic base becomes dulled and can get lost altogether. While this is not wholly the case with the participants, it almost always happens with the historians. Of the ancient sources on the struggles within the

Roman Republic only Appian tells us clearly and distinctly what was at issue in the last resort — namely, landed property.

But once the state has become an independent power *vis-à-vis* society, it immediately produces a further ideology. The connection with economic facts gets lost for fair among professional politicians, theorists of public law and jurists of private law. Since the economic facts in each particular case must take the form of juristic motives in order to receive legal sanction, and since, in the process, consideration must of course be given to the whole legal system already in force, the juristic form consequently becomes everything and the economic content nothing. Public law and private law are treated as independent spheres, each having its own independent historical development, and each being capable of and needing a systematic presentation by the consistent elimination of all internal contradictions.

Still higher ideologies, that is, such as are still further removed from the material economic base, take the form of philosophy and religion. Here the connection between ideas and their material conditions of existence becomes more and more complicated and more and more obscured by the intermediate links. But it exists. If the whole period of the Renaissance from the middle of the fifteenth century on was an essential product of the towns and, therefore, of the burghers, this was also the case with philosophy which then awoke from its slumber. Its content was in essence only the philosophical expression of the thinking corresponding to the development of the small and middle burghers into the big bourgeoisie. This becomes clear among Englishmen and Frenchmen of the last century who in many cases were just

as much political economists as philosophers; and we have proved it above for the Hegelian school.

Nevertheless, we will now deal briefly with religion, since the latter stands furthest away from material life and seems to be most alien to it. Religion arose in very primitive times from men's erroneous and primitive conceptions about their own nature and the external nature surrounding them. Once it has arisen, however, every ideology develops in conjunction with the given conceptual material and elaborates on it; otherwise it would not be an ideology, that is, dealing with ideas as autonomous entities which develop independently and are subject only to their own laws. The fact that in the last analysis the material conditions of existence of the persons inside whose heads this mental process goes on determine the course of this process remains necessarily unknown to these persons, for otherwise there would be an end to all ideology. Therefore, these original religious notions, which by and large are common to each group of kindred peoples, develop, after the group dissolves, in a manner peculiar to each people, according to the conditions of existence falling to its lot. Comparative mythology has shown this process in detail for a number of groups of peoples, and particularly for the Aryans (so-called Indo-Europeans). The gods thus fashioned within each people were national gods, whose domain extended no farther than the national territory which they were to protect; beyond its borders other gods held undisputed sway. Only as long as the nation existed could they persist in the imagination; with its downfall they fell too. The Roman world empire, the economic conditions of whose origin we do not need to examine here, brought about this downfall of the old nationalities. The old national gods decayed, including even those of the Romans, which likewise

were designed to fit only the narrow confines of the city of Rome. The need to complement the world empire by a world religion clearly appeared in the attempts to provide recognition and altars for all the foreign gods in the slightest degree respectable side by side with the indigenous ones in Rome. But a new world religion cannot be made by imperial decree in this fashion. The new world religion, Christianity, had already come into being secretly out of a mixture of generalized Oriental, and particularly Jewish, theology, and out of vulgarized Greek, and particularly Stoic, philosophy. What it originally looked like has to be first laboriously discovered, since its official form in which it has been handed down to us is merely that in which it became the state religion after being adapted to this end by the Council of Nicaea.[19] The fact that it became the state religion within 250 years suffices to show that it was the religion corresponding to the conditions of the time. In the Middle Ages, in the same measure as feudalism developed, Christianity grew into its religious counterpart, with a corresponding feudal hierarchy. When the burghers grew, the Protestant heresy developed in opposition to feudal Catholicism, in the first place among the Albigenses[20] in Southern France at the time of the greatest prosperity of the cities there. The Middle Ages had annexed all the other forms of ideology — philosophy, politics, jurisprudence — to theology and made them subdivisions of theology. In this way every social and political movement was compelled to assume a theological form. The sentiments of the masses were exclusively fed with religion; it was therefore necessary to give their interests a religious disguise in order to generate a great storm. And just as the burghers, from the very beginning, created an appendage of propertyless urban plebeians, day labourers and servants of all kinds,

belonging to no recognized social estate, precursors of the later proletariat, so likewise heresy soon became divided into a moderate burgher heresy and a revolutionary plebeian one which was an abomination to the burgher heretics themselves.

The indestructibility of the Protestant heresy corresponded to the invincibility of the rising burghers. When these burghers had become sufficiently strong, their struggle against the feudal nobility, which till then had been predominantly regional, began to assume national dimensions. The first great action occurred in Germany — the so-called Reformation. The burghers were neither powerful nor developed enough to be able to unite under their banner the remaining rebellious estates — the plebeians of the towns, the lower nobility and the peasants on the land. First the nobles were defeated; the peasants rose in a revolt which formed the peak of this whole revolutionary movement; the cities left them in the lurch, and thus the revolution succumbed to the armies of the secular princes who reaped the whole profit. Thenceforward Germany disappeared for three centuries from the ranks of the countries playing an active and independent part in history. But beside the German Luther there stood the Frenchman Calvin. With true French acuity he put the bourgeois character of the Reformation in the forefront, he republicanized and democratized the church. While the Lutheran Reformation in Germany bogged down and led the country to rack and ruin, the Calvinist Reformation served as a banner for the republicans in Geneva, in Holland and in Scotland, freed Holland from Spain and from the German Empire and provided the ideological costume for the second act of the bourgeois revolution, which was taking place in England. Here Calvinism justified itself as the true religious disguise for the interests of the contemporary bourgeoisie,

and on this account did not attain full recognition when the revolution ended in 1689 in a compromise between one part of the nobility and the bourgeoisie. The English state church was re-established, but strongly Calvinized and not in its earlier form as Catholicism with the king as its pope. The old state church had celebrated the merry Catholic Sunday and had fought against the dull Calvinist one, which the new, bourgeoisified church introduced and which adorns England to this day.

In France, the Calvinist minority was suppressed in 1685 and either Catholicized or driven out of the country. But what was the good? The freethinker Pierre Bayle was already at the height of his activity, and in 1694 Voltaire was born. Louis XIV's forcible measures only made it easier for the French bourgeoisie to carry through its revolution in the irreligious, exclusively political form which alone was suited to a developed bourgeoisie. Instead of Protestants, freethinkers took their seats in the national assemblies. Christianity had thus entered into its final stage. It had become incapable of serving any progressive class any farther as the ideological garb for its aspirations. It increasingly became the exclusive possession of the ruling classes who employ it as a mere instrument of government with which to keep the lower classes within bounds. Moreover, each of the different classes uses its own appropriate religion: the landed nobility — Catholic Jesuitism or Protestant orthodoxy; the liberal and radical bourgeoisie — rationalism; and it makes no difference whether these gentlemen themselves believe in their respective religions or not.

We see, therefore, that once formed, religion always contains traditional material, just as tradition constitutes a great conservative force in all ideological domains. But the transformations which this material undergoes originate in class relations, that is to say, in the economic relations of the people who carry out these transformations. And here that is sufficient.

In the above it could only be a question of giving a general sketch of the Marxist conception of history, at most with a few illustrations thrown in. The proof must be derived from history itself; and here I may be permitted to say that it has been sufficiently furnished in other writings. This conception, however, puts an end to philosophy in the realm of history, just as the dialectical conception of nature renders all natural philosophy as unnecessary as it is impossible. In every place it is no longer a question of inventing connections out of our brains, but of discovering them in the facts. For philosophy, which has been expelled from nature and history, there remains only the realm of pure thought, so far as it is left over, that is, the theory of the laws of the thought process itself, logic and dialectics.

* * *

With the Revolution of 1848, "educated" Germany said farewell to theory and went over to the field of practice. Petty production based on manual labour and manufacture were superseded by real large-scale industry. Germany appeared on the world market again. The new little German Empire[21] abolished at least the most crying of the abuses, with which the system of petty states, the relics of feudalism, and the bureaucratic economy had obstructed this development. But to the same degree that speculation abandoned the philosopher's study in order to set up its temple in the Stock Exchange, educated Germany lost the great aptitude for theory which had been the glory of Germany in the days

of its deepest political humiliation — the aptitude for purely scientific investigation, no matter if the result obtained is applicable practically or not, or contrary to police regulations or not. Official German natural science, it is true, maintained its position in the front rank, particularly in the field of specialized research. But the American journal *Science* has already rightly remarked that the decisive advances in the sphere of the comprehensive linking together of particular facts and their generalization into laws are now being made much more in England instead of in Germany, as was formerly the case. And in the sphere of the historical sciences, philosophy included, the old intransigent theoretical spirit has now completely disappeared along with classical philosophy. Inane eclecticism and an anxious concern for career and income, descending to the most vulgar opportunism, have taken its place. The official representatives of this science have become the undisguised ideologists of the bourgeoisie and the existing state — but at a time when both stand in open antagonism to the working class.

Only among the working class does the German aptitude for theory remain unimpaired. Here it cannot be eradicated. Here there is no concern for careers, for profit-hunting, or for gracious patronage from on high. On the contrary, the more science proceeds in a ruthless and unbiassed way, the more it finds itself in harmony with the interests and aspirations of the workers. From the outset the new tendency, which recognized the history of the development of labour as the key to the understanding of the whole history of society, addressed itself by preference to the working class and here found the response which it neither sought nor expected from officially recognized science. The German working-class movement is the inheritor of German classical philosophy.

KARL MARX: THESES ON FEUERBACH

I

The chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism — that of Feuerbach included — is that the thing [*Gegenstand*], reality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of the *object* [*Objekt*] or of *intuition* [*Anschauung*],* but not as *human sensuous activity, practice*, not subjectively. Hence it happened that the *active* side, in contradistinction to materialism, was developed by idealism — but only abstractly, since, of course, idealism does not know real, sensuous activity as such. Feuerbach wants sensuous objects, really distinct from the objects of thought, but he does not conceive human activity itself as *objective* [*gegenständliche*] activity. Hence, in the *Essence of Christianity*, he regards the theoreti-

* *Anschauung* — in Kant and Hegel means awareness, or direct knowledge, through the senses, and is translated as intuition in English versions of Kant and Hegel. It is in this sense that Marx uses *Anschauung*, and not in the sense of contemplation, which is how it has usually and incorrectly been translated. — *Ed.*

cal attitude as the only genuinely human attitude, while practice is conceived and fixed only in its dirty Jewish manifestation. Hence he does not grasp the significance of "revolutionary," of "practical-critical," activity.

II

The question whether objective [*gegenständliche*] truth can be attained by human thinking is not a question of theory but is a *practical* question. It is in practice that man must prove the truth, that is, the reality and power, the this-sidedness [*Diesseitigkeit*] of his thinking. The dispute over the reality or unreality of thinking which is isolated from practice is a purely *scholastic* question.

III

The materialist doctrine that men are products of circumstances and upbringing, and that, therefore, changed men are products of other circumstances and changed upbringing, forgets that men themselves change circumstances and that the educator himself must be educated. Hence, this doctrine necessarily arrives at dividing society into two parts, of which one is superior to society (in Robert Owen, for example).

The coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity can be conceived and rationally understood only as *revolutionizing practice.*

IV

Feuerbach starts out from the fact of religious self-alienation, the duplication of the world into a religious, imagined

world and a real one. His work consists in the dissolution of the religious world into its secular basis. He overlooks the fact that after completing this work, the chief thing still remains to be done. For the fact that the secular foundation detaches itself from itself and establishes itself in the clouds as an independent realm is precisely only to be explained by the very self-dismemberment and self-contradictoriness of this secular basis. The latter itself must, therefore, first be understood in its contradiction and then revolutionized in practice by the elimination of the contradiction. Thus, for instance, once the earthly family is discovered to be the secret of the holy family, the former must then itself be criticized in theory and revolutionized in practice.

V

Feuerbach, not satisfied with *abstract thinking*, appeals to *sensuous intuition*; but he does not conceive sensuousness as *practical*, human-sensuous activity.

VI

Feuerbach dissolves the religious essence into the *human* essence. But the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of social relations.

Feuerbach, who does not enter on a critique of this real essence, is consequently compelled:

1. To abstract from the historical process and to fix the religious sentiment [*Gemüt*] as something for itself and to presuppose an abstract — *isolated* — human individual.

2. Therefore, with him the human essence can be comprehended only as "genus," as an internal, dumb generality which links the many individuals merely *naturally.*

VII

Consequently, Feuerbach does not see that the "religious sentiment" is itself a *social product*, and that the abstract individual he analyses belongs in reality to a determinate form of society.

VIII

Social life is essentially *practical.* All mysteries which lead theory astray into mysticism find their rational solution in human practice and in the comprehension of this practice.

IX

The highest point attained by *intuiting* materialism, that is, materialism which does not understand sensuousness as practical activity, is the outlook of single individuals in "civil society."

X

The standpoint of the old materialism is *"civil"* society, the standpoint of the new is *human* society, or socialized humanity.

XI

The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to *change* it.

Written in the spring of 1845

Included in and first published as appendix to *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy* by Engels in 1888

Original in German

NOTES

[1] Engels had in mind Heine's comment on the "German philosophical revolution" in the latter's *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* (*Religion and Philosophy in Germany*, translated by J. Snodgrass, reprinted by the Beacon Press, Boston, 1959, p. 156). p. 5

[2] Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, translated by T. M. Knox, Oxford, 1942, p. 10. p. 5

[3] W. Wallace, *The Logic of Hegel*, Oxford, 2nd ed., no date, p. 258. p. 9

[4] The *Deutsche Jahrbücher für Wissenschaft und Kunst* (*German Yearbooks of Science and Art*), the organ of the Young Hegelians edited by A. Ruge and T. Echtermeyer, and published in Leipzig from 1841 to 1843. p. 13

[5] For the *Rheinische Zeitung*, see comments by Plekhanov, p. 113. p. 13

[6] D. F. Strauss, *A New Life of Jesus*, Williams and Norgate, London, two volumes, 1865. p. 13

[7] Max Stirner (pseudonym for Kaspar Schmidt), *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum* (*The Ego and His Own*), which appeared in 1845 and which is sharply criticized in Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*. p. 13

[8] Feuerbach's *Das Wesen des Christentums* (*The Essence of Christianity*) appeared in Leipzig in 1841. p. 14

[9] For "true socialism," see Plekhanov's note, pp. 135-37. p. 15

[10] E. F. im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, London, 1883, pp. 344-46, a collection of essays on anthropology written during the author's stay in British Guiana. p. 16

[11] The planet referred to is Neptune, discovered in 1846 by Johann Galle, an astronomer at the Berlin Observatory.

Cf. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, Eng. ed., Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1976, pp. 70-71. p. 19

[12] Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, English translation by J. B. Baillie, Allen and Unwin, London, 2nd ed., 4th impression, 1955, pp. 391-400. p. 26

[13] Deists reject the existence of a personal god while maintaining that of an impersonal one. p. 27

[14] Robespierre attempted to set up a religion of the "Supreme Being." p. 31

[15] Here Engels uses rational and secular language to paraphrase the idea expressed by Hegel in theological terms, for which see Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, pp. 231 and 256, and *The Logic of Hegel*, translated by Wallace, pp. 56-57. p. 34

[16] The schoolmaster of Sadowa: An expression used by German bourgeois publicists after the Prussian victory at Sadowa (in the Austro-Prussian War of 1866), the implication being that the Prussian victory was to be attributed to the superiority of the Prussian system of public education. p. 36

[17] In Greek mythology Rhadamanthus was a wise and impartial judge. p. 36

[18] Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, English translation by J. Sibree, Willey Book Co., New York, 1944, pp. 238-40. p. 48

[19] The first universal council of the Christian church, which was called by the Roman emperor Constantine the Great and met in A.D. 325 at Nicaea in Asia Minor. p. 56

[20] A religious sect which flourished between the 12th and 13th centuries in southern France and northern Italy. It condemned the ritualistic formalities and ecclesiastical hierarchy of Catholicism, reflected in a religious form the anti-feudal protests of the urban merchants and artisans. The name is derived from the town of Albi, in the south of France. p. 56

[21] This term is applied to the German Empire (excluding Austria) that arose in 1871 under Prussia's hegemony. p. 59

APPENDICES

PLEKHANOV'S FOREWORDS AND NOTES TO THE RUSSIAN EDITIONS OF ENGELS' *LUDWIG FEUERBACH AND THE END OF CLASSICAL GERMAN PHILOSOPHY*

TRANSLATOR'S FOREWORD TO THE FIRST RUSSIAN EDITION[1]

In publishing the translation of Engels' remarkable work on Feuerbach we permit ourselves to say a few words on its possible significance for Russian readers.

Triumphant reaction attires itself in our country, among other things, in a philosophical garb, as can be seen, for example, from the journal *Voprosy Filosofii i Psikhologii* [*Questions of Philosophy and Psychology*]. The negative trend of the sixties is treated as something very frivolous and superficial, and Messrs. Astafyev, Lopatin and other would-be sages are acknowledged as great philosophical luminaries (see, for instance, what Mr. Y. Kolubovsky says on "Philosophy among the Russians" in the supplement to his Russian translation of *History of Modern Philosophy* by Überweg and Heinze). The Russian socialists will be obliged to take this philosophical reaction into account and consequently take up philosophy. In this field, in politics as in economics, Marx and Engels will be their most reliable guides. The present pamphlet contains as full a summary as possible of the philosophical views of these thinkers.

The pamphlet is written in a most concise way. We have had to supply a number of explanatory notes. The longer ones are indicated by figures and placed at the end of the book. There also are two supplements, one of which (*Karl Marx on Feuerbach*) is also to be found in the German edition and the other (*Karl Marx on French Materialism*) is taken from Marx's and Engels' work *Die heilige Familie oder Kritik der kritischen Kritik. Gegen Bruno Bauer und Comp.* [*The Holy Family, or Critique of Critical Criticism. Against Bruno Bauer and Co.*], Frankfurt a. M., 1845. But we have not taken it directly, as this book is a great bibliographical rarity. We translated the chapter on French materialism from the well-known Social-Democratic journal *Neue Zeit*, which reprinted it a few years ago.

The polemic of Marx and Engels against "Bruno Bauer and Company" (see Note 4 on Bruno Bauer) constitutes a whole epoch in the history of world literature. It was the first resolute encounter of the brand-new dialectical materialism with idealist philosophy. Of extraordinary importance for its historical significance and its content (as far as we have been able to judge by the few extracts we are acquainted with), it might still play a great role in Russia, where even the most advanced writers obstinately continue to adhere to idealist views of social life. We would be very willing to contribute to the publication of this book in Russian if it were at our disposal. But we do not know when it will be and therefore content ourselves with translating one chapter.*

* This book has now been published in the second volume of Mehring's edition of *Gesammelte Schriften von K. Marx und Fr. Engels, 1841 bis 1850* [*Collected Works of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, 1841-50*]. [Note by Plekhanov to the 1905 edition. All footnotes in the Appendices are by Plekhanov, unless otherwise indicated.]

This chapter, which is closely connected with what Engels says about Feuerbach, is a fairly complete whole, and by its wealth of thought leaves far behind the many pages on modern materialism in Lange's well-known work. We particularly direct our readers' attention to the link between nineteenth-century Utopian socialism and eighteenth-century French materialism pointed out by Marx.

Engels' work on Feuerbach was elicited by Starcke's book on him. But it says so little about this latter book that we do not consider it necessary to discuss it in the foreword. Readers will find the required information in Note 5.

G. Plekhanov

June 1892

TRANSLATOR'S FOREWORD TO THE SECOND RUSSIAN EDITION

Much water has flowed under the bridge since the first Russian edition of this pamphlet appeared. In the foreword to that edition I wrote that, in our country, triumphant reaction attires itself, among other things, in philosophic garb and that to fight this reaction Russian socialists would inevitably have to take up philosophy. Subsequent events have confirmed my foresight. Russian socialists — by which I meant and mean specifically the Social Democrats — have in fact had to tackle philosophy. But since they tackled it very late and, to use the popular expression, *not jointly and with a will,* the results were not particularly happy. At times one was almost compelled to feel sorry that philosophy books had fallen into our comrades' hands. Sorry because they were unable to take a critical attitude towards the authors they were studying and ended by submitting to their influence. And since contemporary philosophy not only among us but also in the West is marked by reaction, revolutionary heads soaked up reactionary content, and there arose an immense muddle, which was sometimes grandly called a *critique of*

Marx and at other times was more modestly called a *uniting of Marxism* with the philosophical views of one or another ideologist of the bourgeoisie (the neo-Kantians, Mach, Avenarius, etc.). That one can combine *Marxism* with anything at all, even *spiritualism,* is beyond doubt; the whole question is *how* it is done. This question cannot be answered by any person of elementary sense without reference to *eclecticism.* With the aid of eclecticism one can "unite" whatever one wishes with anything that comes into one's head. But eclecticism has never led to any good in either theory or practice. Fichte says, "To philosophize means not to act; to act means not to philosophize," and this is quite correct. It is no less correct, however, that only a person who is consistent in thought can be consistent in action. For us, who aspire to the honour of being representatives of the most revolutionary class ever to appear on history's stage, consistency is compulsory on pain of treason to our own cause.

What gives rise to this striving to unite Marx now with this, now with that, ideologist of the bourgeoisie?

Firstly, *fashion.*

Nekrasov says of one of his heroes:

> . . . Whatever the latest book has to say,
> At once atop his soul does lay.

There are such heroes at all times, and they make their way into every camp. Unfortunately they are also to be met in ours.

We had a whole crop of them in the later 1890s, when to a great many of our "intellectuals" Marxism itself was the "latest book" which lay "atop their souls." Such "intellectuals" seem to have been purposely created by history to attempt the "uniting" of Marxism with other "latest books." We need not pity them; they are empty folk.

But it is sad that even more serious comrades not infrequently feel the urge to "unite." Here the explanation is not their infatuation with fashion. Here this phenomenon, in itself a very harmful and regrettable one, indicates the presence of praiseworthy motives.

Imagine that the comrade involved feels the need to work out an orderly world outlook for himself; this comrade has absorbed — more or less well — the philosophical-*historical* side of Marx's teaching, but its specifically *philosophical* side remains beyond his ken and reach. Therefore he decides that, in Marx, this side is *"not worked out"* and undertakes to *"work it out"* himself. While tackling this — by no means easy — job, he stumbles across some representative of bourgeois "criticism" who brings a certain, if only apparent, order into matters which previously seemed to belong wholly to the realm of chaos, and who very easily subjects this inquiring but insufficiently prepared and insufficiently independent seeker after philosophical truth to his own influence. So here is your ready-made "uniter"! His intentions were good, but the result turned out bad.

No, whatever our opponents may say, one thing is incontestable: the urge to "unite" Marx's theory with other theories which, in the German expression, slap it in the face, reveals not only a striving to work out an orderly world outlook, but also a *weakness of thought, an inability to adhere strictly and consistently to one principle.* In other words: what is revealed here is inability to understand Marx.

How to remedy this misfortune? I see no means other than the spreading of the correct view of the philosophy of Marx and Engels. And I think the present pamphlet can do a great deal in this regard.

I myself have more than once heard the question: Why is it impossible to unite historical materialism with the transcendental idealism of Kant, the empirio-criticism of Avenarius, Mach's philosophy, etc.? I have always answered in much the same terms as now. As to Kant, my note[2] shows how completely impossible it is to "unite" Kant's philosophical doctrine with the theory of evolution. This is no less true with respect to uniting this theory with the views of Mach and Avenarius, which represent the newest variant of Hume's philosophy. By consistently adhering to these views, you will *arrive at solipsism*, i.e., at the denial of the existence of any person besides yourself. Reader, don't think this a joke. Although Mach vigorously protests against the identification of his philosophy with Berkeley's subjective idealism,* this only proves his inconsistency. If bodies or things are merely mental symbols of our sensations (more precisely, groups or complexes of sensations) and if they do not exist outside our consciousness — which is precisely Mach's view — then one can shake off subjective idealism and solipsism only by resorting to crying inconsistencies. No wonder one of Mach's pupils, Cornelius, in his book *Einleitung in die Philosophie* [*Introduction to Philosophy*], Munich, 1903, comes very close to solipsism.** He admits (p. 322) that science cannot answer for a man, either positively or negatively, the question of whether any mental life other than his own exists. From the Machist viewpoint this is indisputable; but if a man doubts the existence of any mental life outside his own, and

---

* *Die Analyse der Empfindungen*, vierte Auflage, S. S. 282-83 [*Analysis of Sensations*, 4th ed., pp. 282-83].

** For comments on Hans Cornelius, see Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, Eng. ed., Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1972, pp. 256-61, 417. — *Ed.*

if, as we have seen, all bodies are taken to be mere symbols of sensations, then all that remains is to reconcile himself to solipsism — which, however, Cornelius does not quite make up his mind to do.

It must be noted that Mach considers Hans Cornelius to be not his pupil but Avenarius'. This is no surprise, because the views of Mach and Avenarius have a great deal in common, as Mach himself admits.* For Avenarius' philosophy, as for Mach's, the problem of what Fichte calls *the plurality of selves* presents a major difficulty, which it cannot resolve except by either recognizing the truth of materialism or coming to a dead stop in the blind alley of solipsism. This should be clear to every thinking person who takes the trouble to read, for instance, Avenarius' work, *The Human Concept of the World*,** which has been translated into Russian.

It stands to reason that solipsism can be "united" with any other viewpoint on history (not the materialist one alone) only by a follower of Poprishchin.[3]

The modern doctrine of evolution, of which our interpretation of history constitutes a part, finds a solid basis *only* in materialism, and it is not surprising, therefore, that the founders of scientific socialism, to use Engels' words, *did not trifle with materialism,* and consistently applied it to those spheres of knowledge which prior to their time constituted the firmest stronghold of idealism.

* See in his above-mentioned book, the chapter: *Mein Verhältnis zu R. Avenarius und anderen Forschern* [*My Relation to R. Avenarius and Other Scholars*], p. 38.

** One German writer notes that for empirio-criticism *experience* is not a means of knowledge but only an object of investigation. If this were correct, then the opposition of empirio-criticism and materialism would become devoid of meaning and arguments about empirio-criticism being destined to supplant materialism would be utterly empty and idle.[4]

Note too that it is not *scientific* socialism alone that is closely linked with materialism. *Utopian* socialism, though apt at flirting with idealism and even religion, should also be acknowledged as a legitimate son of materialism, as one can see very well from the first supplement to this pamphlet ("Karl Marx on the French Materialism of the 18th century").

"As *Cartesian* materialism merges into *natural science* proper," Marx says there, "the other branch of French materialism leads direct to *socialism* and *communism.* One does not need any great penetration to see from the teaching of materialism on the original goodness and equal intellectual endowment of men, the omnipotence of experience, habit and education, the influence of environment on man, the great significance of industry, the justification of enjoyment, etc., how materialism is necessarily connected with communism and socialism. If man draws all his knowledge, sensations, etc., from the world of the senses and from the experience gained in it, the empirical world must be so arranged that in it man experiences and gets used to what is really human and that he becomes aware of himself as man. If interest, correctly understood, is the principle of all morals, man's private interest must be made to coincide with the interest of humanity. If man is unfree in the materialist sense, i.e., is free not through the negative power to avoid this or that, but through the positive power to assert his true individuality, crime must not be punished in the individual, but the anti-social sources of crime must be destroyed, and each man must be given social scope for the vital expression of his being. If man is formed by his surroundings, his surroundings must be made human. If man is social by nature, he will develop his true nature only in society, and the power of his nature must be measured not by the power of separate individuals but by

the power of society. This and similar propositions are to be found almost literally even in the oldest French materialists."*

Further, Marx reveals very clearly the blood relationship with materialism of the different school of Utopian socialism in England and France.

But to all this the people who try to "unite" Marxism with one or another variety of more or less consistent idealism pay not the slightest attention. That is regrettable, all the more so because in fact "one does not need any great penetration" to understand the total unsoundness of all such efforts at unification.

But how should one understand *materialism*? This has been much argued, right up to the present. Engels says: ". . . the question of the relation of thinking to being, of mind to nature — the paramount question of the whole of philosophy — has, no less than all religion, its roots in the narrow-minded and ignorant notions of savagery. But this question could first be posed in all its sharpness, could first achieve its full significance, only when humanity in Europe awoke from the long hibernation of the Christian Middle Ages. The question of the place of thinking in relation to being, which incidentally had played a great part in medieval scholasticism too, the question, which is primary, mind or nature — this question confronting the church took the pointed form: Did God create the world, or has the world been in existence eternally?

"Philosophers were divided into two great camps according to their answers to this question. Those who asserted the

* Marx and Engels, *The Holy Family*, Eng. ed., Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1956, p. 175-76, translation revised. — *Ed.*

primacy of mind over nature and, in the last analysis, therefore, assumed some kind of creation of the world — and this creation often becomes far more intricate and impossible among the philosophers, for example, Hegel, than in Christianity — formed the camp of idealism. The others, who regarded nature as primary, belonged to the various schools of materialism.

"These two terms, idealism and materialism, originally signify nothing but this; and here too we are not using them in any other sense. We shall see below the confusion which arises when some other meaning is put into them."*

Thus the main distinguishing feature of materialism is that it eliminates the *dualism of mind and matter, of God and nature*, and considers nature to be the basis of those phenomena which, ever since the days of primitive hunting tribes, men have explained by the activity of objectified *souls* or *spirits*. To the opponents of materialism, about which most of them harbour the most absurd ideas, it appears that Engels defined the essence of materialism wrongly, and that in effect materialism *reduces mental phenomena to material ones*. That is why they were so amazed when, in the controversy with Mr. Bernstein, I counted *Spinoza* among the materialists. But a few citations from the works of the materialists of the 18th century will suffice to prove the correctness of Engels' definition of materialism.

"Let us stay within nature (*Demeurons dans la nature*) when we wish to explain the phenomena of nature to ourselves," says the author of the famous *Le bon sens puisé dans la nature* [*Good Sense Drawn from Nature*] (Holbach), "let us reject the search for causes which are too subtle to act

* See p. 17 above. — *Ed.*

on our external sensations,* and let us adhere to the conviction that we will never solve the problems set before us by nature by leaving her confines."**

Holbach expresses himself in exactly the same sense in another and more famous work, *Système de la nature* [*The System of Nature*], which I do not quote precisely because it is better known. I shall limit myself simply to pointing out that there is a passage on the question that interests us in Volume II, Chapter 6 of this work (London edition of 1781, p. 146).

Helvétius has the same viewpoint. He says: "Man is a creation of nature; he is situated in nature; he is subject to her laws; he cannot free himself from her; he cannot, even in his thoughts, go beyond her limits. . . . For a being created by nature nothing exists beyond the great whole of which he is a part. . . . Beings supposedly standing above nature and distinct from it are nothing but chimeras," etc.***

There were some materialists, it is true, who recognized the existence of a god and regarded nature as his creation. Joseph Priestley is an example.† But to the famous naturalist this belief was simply a theological appendage to his materialist teachings, whose essential thesis was the idea that man is the creation of nature and that "the corporeal and

* Note that Holbach calls everything that acts on our external sensations matter.

** The quotation is from *Le bon sens puisé dans la nature*, Paris, 1st year of the Republic.

*** "Le vrai sens du système de la nature," ch. I, *De la nature* ["The True Meaning of the System of Nature", Chap. I, *Concerning Nature*].

† See his "Disquisitions Relating to Matter and Spirit" in Vol. I of the Birmingham edition of his *Works* (1782). There God is proclaimed "our Maker" (p. 139), "the all in all" (p. 143), etc.

spiritual properties of man are rooted in the same substance and grow, mature and wane together with it."* This substance is *matter*, as Priestley says repeatedly in this and other works.**

Feuerbach rightly says that the substance which Spinoza theologically names God turns out, on closer examination (*bei Lichte besehen*), to be nature.*** This is no less correct than another observation of Feuerbach's, that "the secret, the true meaning of Spinoza's philosophy is nature."† For this very reason, Spinoza should be classified among the materialists despite the theological wrapping around his basic philosophical thought. This was already very well understood by Diderot, who as may be seen from his article *Spinosiste* in Volume XV of the *Encyclopedia*, considered himself and his fellow thinkers the contemporary Spinozists (*spinosistes modernes*). If the "critics of Marx" let out a unanimous cry of amazement when, in the debate with Bernstein, I expressed the idea that Marx's and Engels' materialism was a sort of Spinozism (*eine Art Spinosismus*),[5] this is explained only by their striking ignorance.†† The better to grasp this idea, it is necessary first to recall that Marx and Engels passed through Feuerbach's philosophy and, second, to try and become clear on what, properly speaking,

* Ibid., p. 69.

** "Matter being capable of the property of sensation or thought," see "The History of the Philosophical Doctrine Concerning the Origin of the Soul" in Vol. I of the same edition of his *Works*, p. 400.

*** *Werke* [*Works*], Vol. IV, p. 380.

† Ibid., p. 391.

†† I have been asked, by way of objection, what "a *sort* of Spinozism" means. This is easily answered. In Marx and Engels, as in Diderot, Spinozism was freed of its theological wrapping. That is all.

distinguishes Feuerbach's philosophy from Spinoza's. People capable of understanding what they read will readily see that in his basic view of the relation of existence to thought Feuerbach was a Spinoza who had ceased to call nature God and who had gone through the school of Hegel.

Let us continue. If, as we have seen above, Priestley taught that matter possesses the property of *sensation* and *thought*, then from this alone it may be seen that, contrary to what its opponents declare* on its behalf, *materialism in no wise attempts to reduce all mental phenomena to the motion of matter.* For a materialist, sensation and thought, or consciousness, are an internal state of matter in motion. But no materialist who has left a perceptible trace in the history of philosophy ever *"reduced"* consciousness to *"motion,"* or *explained* the one by the other. If the materialists maintained that the explanation of mental phenomena requires no invention of a special substance, the soul, if they maintained that matter is capable of "sensation and thought," this capacity of matter seemed to them just as basic, and therefore as inexplicable, a property as motion. Thus, for example, La Mettrie whose doctrine is generally represented as the crudest kind of materialism, said categorically that he considered motion as much of a "marvel of nature" as consciousness.** At the same time, different materialists took a different view of this capacity of matter to possess consciousness. Some — as for example Priestley and, it would seem, Holbach, who did not however speak out with full

* See, for instance, Lasswitz, *Die Lehre Kants von der Idealität des Raumes und der Zeit* [*Kant's Teaching Concerning the Ideality of Space and Time*], Berlin, 1883, p. 9.

** *Œuvres philosophiques de Monsieur de La Mettrie* [*Philosophical Works of M. de La Mettrie*], Amsterdam, 1764, Vol. I, pp. 69 and 73.

boldness — considered that consciousness arises in matter in motion only when it is organized in a certain way. Others — Spinoza, La Mettrie and Diderot — thought that matter always possesses consciousness, although it is only in matter organized in a certain way that it attains any significant degree of intensity. At present, as is known, the celebrated Haeckel adheres to this view. As for the general question of whether matter can "think," hardly any conscientious investigator of nature would find it difficult to give a negative answer. "Surely," says the "agnostic" Huxley in his book on Hume, "no one who is cognizant of the facts of the case, nowadays, doubts that the roots of psychology lie in the physiology of the nervous system."* That is precisely what the materialists say, and Engels is entirely right when he states in the present pamphlet that agnosticism is merely shamefaced materialism. Contemporary psycho-physiology is permeated with the materialist spirit. True, certain psycho-physiologists excuse themselves from drawing materialist conclusions by means of the doctrine of psycho-physical *parallelism.* But in this case the assertion of parallelism is undoubtedly only a means of revealing the causal connection between phenomena, as was already made clear by Alexander Bain.**

Now let us turn to another aspect of the matter. The philosophy of Marx and Engels is not just a *materialist* one. It is *dialectical materialism.* And the objections made to this doctrine are, first, that dialectics itself does not stand up

* See p. 181 of the French translation of this book [Huxley, *Hume*, Macmillan and Co., London, first published in 1879, p. 80].

** *Mind and Body*, translated from the 6th English edition, Kiev, 1884, pp. 24-25.

to criticism, and second, that it is precisely materialism that is incompatible with dialectics. Let us pause to consider these objections.

The reader may remember how Mr. Bernstein explained what he called the mistakes of Marx and Engels by the evil influence of dialectics. Customary logic adheres to the formula, "yes — yes and no — no," but dialectics transforms this formula into its direct opposite, "yes — no and no — yes." Not being over-fond of this last "formula," Mr. Bernstein maintained that it could lead men into the most dangerous logical temptations and fallacies. Probably, the vast majority of so-called educated readers agree with him, because the formula, "yes — no and no — yes" is apparently in sharp contradiction with the basic and immovable laws of thought. This is the aspect of the matter we must consider here.

The "basic laws of thought" are considered to be three in number: 1. the law of identity; 2. the law of contradiction; and 3. the law of the excluded middle.

The law of identity (*principium identitatis*) says: "A is A (*omne subjectum est predicatum sui*) or, in other words, A = A.

The law of contradiction — A is not not-A — represents merely the negative form of the first law.

According to the law of the excluded middle (*principium exclusi tertii*) two contradictory judgments, which are mutually exclusive, cannot both be in error. In fact, A is either B or not-B; the correctness of one of these judgments necessarily signifies the error of the other and vice versa. Here there neither is, nor can be, any middle.

Überweg notes that the law of contradiction and the law of the excluded middle can be combined in the following

rule of logic: *to each completely determinate question, and one understood in precisely that fully determinate sense, the question of whether the given object possesses the given property must be answered either by yes or by no, and cannot be answered: both yes and no.**

It is hard to adduce any objection against the correctness of this rule. And if it is correct, then the formula "*yes — no* and *no — yes*" appears to be completely groundless, and the only thing for us to do is to laugh at it, taking Mr. Bernstein's example, and to throw up our hands in wonder at how such undoubtedly profound thinkers as Heraclitus, Hegel and Marx could find it more satisfactory than the formula: "*yes — yes* and *no — no*," which is firmly grounded in the above-mentioned basic laws of thought.

This conclusion, which is fatal for dialectics, would seem to be irrefutable. But before accepting it, let us consider the matter from another aspect.

The basis of all the phenomena of nature is the motion of matter.** But what is motion? It is an obvious contradiction, if someone asks you, "Is a moving body located at a particular place at a particular time?" With the best will in the

---

* *System der Logik* [*System of Logic*], Bonn, 1874, p. 219.

** I speak of the *objective* aspect of phenomena. "Une volition est, pour le cerveau, un mouvement d'un certain système de fibres. Dans l'âme, c'est ce qu'elle éprouve en conséquence du mouvement de fibres. . . ." (*Robinet, De la nature*, t. I, ch. XXIII, partie IV) ["Volition is, for the brain, a movement of a certain system of fibres. Volition in the mind is what the latter feels as a result of the movement of fibres. . . ." (Robinet, *On Nature*, Vol. I, Chap. XXIII, part IV)]. Cf. *Feuerbach*, "Was für mich oder subjectiv ein rein geistiger Akt, ist an sich oder objectiv ein materieller, sinnlicher." *Werke*. II, 350. ["What for me, or subjectively, is a purely mental act is in itself, or objectively, a material, sensuous act." *Works*, II, 350.]

world you will not be able to answer it in accordance with Überweg's rule, i.e., with the formula "*yes — yes* and *no — no*." The moving body is *located in* a particular place and *at the same time is not located there.** One cannot make a judgment about it other than according to the formula, "*yes — no* and *no — yes*." Therefore, it is irrefutable evidence in favour of the "*logic of contradiction*," and whoever refuses to reconcile himself to this logic must declare, along with old Zeno, that motion is nothing but the deceit of the senses. This is apparently not understood by our compatriot Mr. N. G. who is likewise a very determined foe of dialectics but unfortunately not a very serious one. He says: if a moving body in *all its parts* is "located in one place, then its simultaneous location in another place is an obvious emergence out of nothing, since where would it come from to get to the other place? From the first place? But the body has not yet left its original place." "But if we concede that the body is *not* located at the particular place at the particular time *in all its parts*," he continues, "then it is also true that in a body at rest the different parts also occupy different places in space."**

* Even the most resolute opponents of the dialectical method are compelled to recognize this. "Die Bewegung," says A. Trendelenburg, "die vermöge ihres Begriffs an demselben Punkte zugleich ist und nicht ist," etc. (*Logische Untersuchungen*, Leipzig, 1870, Vol. I, P. 189) ["Motion which, by virtue of its concept, is and at the same time is not at one and the same point," etc. (*Logical Investigations*, Leipzig, 1870, I, p. 189)]. Here it is almost superfluous to make the remark already made by Überweg that Trendelenburg should have said "*a moving body*" and not "*motion*."

** "Materialism and Dialectical Logic," *Russkoye Bogatstvo* [Russian Wealth], July 1898, pp. 94 and 96.

Very good, although also very old! However, what do Mr. N. G.'s arguments prove? *They prove motion to be impossible.* Fine. We won't argue that either. But we shall ask Mr. N. G. to recall Aristotle's statement, which natural science confirms constantly and daily, that if we deny motion, we immediately render impossible any study of nature.* Was this what Mr. N. G. wanted? Was this what the editorial board of the "fat magazine" which printed his profound work wanted? And if neither of them can make up their minds to deny motion, they should at least understand that this warmed-up Zenonian "aporia"** leaves them no alternative but to recognize motion as contradiction in action, i.e., to recognize precisely what Mr. N. G. wanted to refute. "Critics," indeed!

To everyone who does not deny motion we put the question: What are we to think of a "*basic law*" *of thought* which contradicts *the basic fact of existence*? Should we not treat it with a certain reserve?

It looks as though we have unexpectedly come face to face with the alternative: *either* to recognize the "basic laws" of formal logic and to deny motion, *or*, on the contrary, to recognize motion and deny these laws. This alternative is unpleasant, to say the least. Let us see if we can somehow avoid it.

The motion of matter lies at the basis of all natural phenomena. Motion is contradiction. It must be considered dialectically, that is, as Mr. Bernstein would say, according

* Aristotle, *The Metaphysics*, William Heinemann Ltd., London, Vol. I, p. 51. — *Ed.*

** A problem which is difficult to solve because of some contradiction in the object itself or in the conception of it. — *Ed.*

to the formula: *"yes — no* and *no — yes."* Hence we are obliged to admit that, as long as we talk of this basis of all phenomena, we are in the realm of *"the logic of contradiction."* But molecules of matter in motion, uniting with one another, form certain *aggregations* — things, objects. These aggregations are distinguished by greater or lesser stability, exist for a longer or shorter time, and then disappear to be replaced by others: only the motion of matter, which in itself is an indestructible substance, is eternal. But once a certain temporary aggregation of matter has arisen in consequence of eternal motion, so long as it does not disappear as a result of this same motion, the question of its existence must necessarily be answered positively. Therefore, if someone points at the planet Venus and asks us if it exists, we reply unwaveringly, *"Yes."* And if we are asked whether witches exist, we reply equally resolutely, *"No."* What does this mean? It means that when dealing with particular things, we are obliged in judging them to follow Überweg's abovementioned rule and in general to guide ourselves by the "basic laws" of thought. The "formula" which pleases Mr. Bernstein, *"yes — yes* and *no — no,"* reigns — in *this* sphere.*

* The same formula must govern *historical judgments* referred to by *Überweg* (*Logic*, p. 196), such as whether Plato was born in 429, 428 or 427 B.C. Here I am reminded of an amusing answer given by a young Russian revolutionary who came to Geneva in 1882, if I am not mistaken, and was obliged to give the police certain data on his identity. "Where were you born?" asked the late N. I. Zhukovsky who was arranging the matter. "In various provinces," evasively replied the over-cautious "conspirator." N. I. Zhukovsky flared up. "Nobody, dear Sir, will believe this!" And in this case, even the strongest partisan of the dialectical method would agree with him.

But even here the sway of this respected formula is not unlimited. The question of the existence of an object that *has already emerged* must be answered definitively. But if the object *is still just emerging*, then vacillation in answering is sometimes fully justified. When half a man's scalp is bare of hair, we say he has a large bald spot. But just try to define at exactly what point the loss of hair makes him bald.

Each particular question concerning the possession of a given property by a given object must be answered *either by yes, or by no.* This cannot be doubted. But how are we to answer when the object *is changing*, when it is *already losing* that property or *is still only acquiring it*? It stands to reason that a definite answer is necessary in this case too; but the point is that the only answer that can be definite here is one based on the formula *"yes — no* and *no — yes,"* while to proceed according to the formula recommended by Überweg, *either yes or no,* makes it impossible to answer at all.

It might of course be objected that the attribute *which is being lost* has not *yet* ceased to exist, while that *which is being acquired* is *already* in existence, and that therefore a definite answer according to the formula *"either yes or no"* is both possible and necessary even when the object under discussion is *in a state of change.* This, however, is incorrect. A youth on whose chin some "fuzz" is beginning to sprout is undoubtedly already acquiring a beard, but this *still* does not give us the right to describe him as bearded. The fuzz on his chin is no beard, although it is *becoming one.* To become *qualitative*, a change must attain a certain *quantitative limit.* Whoever forgets this makes it impossible for himself to express *definite* judgments concerning the properties of objects.

"Everything is in flow and nothing abides," said the old

Ephesian thinker.[6] The aggregations known to us as objects *are in a state of* constant, more or less rapid, *change.* Insofar as these particular aggregations remain *particular aggregations,* we are obliged to judge them according to the formula "*yes — yes* and *no — no.*" But insofar as they are *changing* and *ceasing to exist* as such, we are obliged to appeal to the *logic of contradiction*; we must say, at the risk of drawing the displeasure of Messrs. Bernstein, N. G. and the rest of the metaphysical fraternity: *"Yes and no, they both exist and do not exist."*

Just as rest is a particular event within motion, so thinking according to the rules of formal logic (according to the "basic laws" of thought) constitutes a particular event in dialectical thinking.

It is related of Cratylus, one of Plato's teachers, that he did not agree even with Heraclitus, who said, "You cannot step twice into the same river." Cratylus maintained that we cannot do it even once: while we are stepping into it, the river changes and becomes *different.* In these judgments the element of *determinate being* is, as it were, cancelled by *that of becoming.** This is an abuse of dialectics, not a correct application of the dialectical method. Hegel remarks, "Das Etwas ist die erste Negation der Negation" (Something is the first negation of negation).**

Those of our critics who are not entirely unacquainted with philosophical literature are fond of quoting Trendelenburg,

* Here I have followed the terminology adopted by Mr. N. Lossky in his translation of Kuno Fischer's book on Hegel: Dasein, *determinate being;* Werden, *becoming.*

** *Werke,* III, S. 114 [*Works,* III, p. 114. For English translation, see *Science of Logic,* translated by A. V. Miller, Allen and Unwin, London, 1969, p. 115. — *Ed.*]

who is supposed to have knocked all arguments in favour of dialectics on the head. But it seems that these gentlemen have read Trendelenburg badly, if at all. They have forgotten the following trifle, if they ever knew it, which I am not at all sure of. Trendelenburg recognizes that the principium contradictionis [*Principle of Contradiction*] *is applicable not to motion but only to those objects which it creates.** This is correct. But motion not only *creates* objects. As we have said, it *constantly changes them. The logic of motion* ("logic of contradiction") never loses its validity for the objects created by motion. And precisely because of this, while giving the "basic laws" of formal logic their due, we must remember that they have significance only within certain limits, and only to the extent to which they do not interfere with our giving dialectics its due as well. That is how it turns out with Trendelenburg, even though he himself did not draw the corresponding logical conclusions from the principle he enunciated, which is of *tremendous importance for a scientific theory of knowledge.*

Let us add here in passing that a great many sensible observations, which do not speak against but for us, are scattered through Trendelenburg's *Logische Untersuchungen.* This may seem strange but is very simply explained by the very simple circumstance that, strictly speaking, it was *idealist* dialectics which Trendelenburg battled against. For instance, he considered it to be a shortcoming of dialectics that it "affirms the self-movement of pure thought which is at the same time the self-begetting of being" (behauptet eine

* *Logische Untersuchungen* [*Logical Investigations*], 3rd ed., Leipzig, 1870, Vol. II, p. 175.

Selbstbewegung des reinen Gedankens, die zugleich die Selbsterzeugung des Seins ist).*

This is indeed a great error. But who can fail to understand that it is a shortcoming peculiar to idealist dialectics? Who does not know that when Marx wanted to stand dialectics "back on its feet," he began by correcting this key error which stemmed from its old idealist basis? Another example. Trendelenburg says that in fact with Hegel motion is the basis of a logic which seemingly does not depend on any premise for its proof.** This again is entirely correct; but in fact it is also an argument for *materialist* dialectics. The third and most interesting example. In Trendelenburg's words, it is vain to assume that Hegel regards nature merely as applied logic. Precisely the contrary. Hegelian logic is not at all the product of pure thought but was created by an anticipatory abstraction from nature (eine antizipierte Abstraktion der Natur). Almost everything in Hegel's dialectics is drawn from experience, and if experience were to reclaim from it all that it had borrowed, dialectics would be compelled to go out and beg.*** Precisely so! But this is just what was said by the pupils of Hegel who rebelled against their teacher's idealism and went over to the *materialist* camp.

Many similar examples could be cited, but this would take me away from my subject. I wish only to show our critics that it would perhaps be better for them not to cite Trendelenburg at all in their struggle with us.

Let us proceed. I have said that motion is contradiction in action and that the "basic laws" of formal logic therefore

* Ibid., Vol. I, p. 36.

** Ibid., p. 42.

*** Ibid., pp. 78 and 79.

do not apply to it. In order that this proposition should not give grounds for misunderstanding, a reservation must be made. When faced with the question of the transition from one form of motion to another — let's say from mechanical motion to heat — we too, are compelled to reason according to Überweg's basic rule. This form of motion is *either* heat *or* mechanical motion, *or,* etc. This is clear. But if so, then within certain limits the basic laws of formal logic *apply also to motion.* And from this it again follows that dialectics does not abrogate formal logic but merely deprives its laws of the *absolute significance* ascribed to them by the metaphysicians.

If the reader has been attentive to what was said above, he will not find it hard to understand how little "value" there is in the idea, which is much repeated nowadays, that *dialectics is incompatible with materialism.** On the contrary *the materialist interpretation of nature lies at the basis of our dialectics.* It rests on this basis, if materialism were fated to fall, it too would fall. And vice versa. Without dialectics, the materialist theory of knowledge is incomplete, one-sided, nay, more, *a materialist theory of knowledge is impossible.*

In Hegel *dialectics* coincides with *metaphysics.* With us *dialectics* rests on *a teaching concerning nature.*

With Hegel the demiurge of reality — to use Marx's expression — was *the absolute idea.* For us the absolute idea is only the *abstraction of motion,* by which all the *aggregations and states of matter* are called forth.

In Hegel thought moves forward as a result of the discovery and resolution of *contradictions* contained in *concepts.* Ac-

* "It seems to us that materialism and dialectical logic are elements which in the philosophical sense can be considered incompatible," says the profound Mr. N. G. (*Russkoye Bogatstvo* [Russian Wealth], June issue, p. 59).

cording to our — *materialist* — teaching, the contradictions contained in concepts are merely the reflection, the *translation into the language of thought*, of the contradictions contained in *phenomena* as a result of the contradictory nature of their common basis, i.e., of *motion.*

In Hegel the course of things is determined by the course of ideas. With us, the *course of ideas* is defined by the *course of things,* and the *course of thought* by the *course of life.*

Materialism stands dialectics "on its feet" and thus strips it of the mystical covering in which it was wrapped by Hegel. But by the same token it reveals the *revolutionary character* of dialectics.

"In its mystified form," says Marx, "dialectics became the fashion in Germany, because it seemed to transfigure and to glorify the existing state of things. In its rational form it is a scandal and abomination to bourgeoisdom and its doctrinaire professors, because it includes in its comprehension and affirmative recognition of the existing state of things, at the same time also, the recognition of the negation of that state, of its inevitable breaking up; because it regards every historically developed (more precisely — become: *gewordene* — G. P.) social form as in fluid movement, and therefore takes into account its transient nature not less than its momentary existence; because it lets nothing impose upon it, and is in its essence critical and revolutionary."*

It is in the nature of things that materialist dialectics is hateful to the bourgeoisie, which is permeated by the spirit of reaction. But that even people sincerely sympathetic to

* See Afterword to the second German edition of Vol. I of *Capital* [*Capital*, Eng. ed., Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1954, Vol. I, p. 20. — *Ed.*]

revolutionary socialism sometimes turn away from it is both ridiculous and very sad — a Herculean pillar of absurdity.

After all I have said, I can perhaps limit myself to a shrug of the shoulders concerning the amazing invention of Mr. N. G., who ascribes to us a principle of "*dual organization* of the mind," supposedly constituting the only "premise" which can make our "dialectical logic to any extent credible."* No more need be said — our incredible critic has made a fantastically wide miss!

Here is another thing we should now note. We know already that Überweg was right, and the extent to which he was right, in demanding of logical thinkers that they give determinate answers to determinate questions concerning the possession of particular attributes by particular objects. But suppose that we are dealing not with a *simple* object but with a *complex* one, which unites within itself *directly contradictory phenomena* and therefore combines in itself directly contradictory properties. Does Überweg's demand apply to judging such an object? No, Überweg himself, who is as resolute an opponent of Hegelian dialectics as Trendelenburg, says that here we must reason according to a different rule, namely, the rule of the *coincidence of opposites* (principium coincidentiae oppositorum). But the vast majority of phenomena dealt with by natural and social science belongs precisely to this category of "objects": directly contradictory phe-

* Cf. *Russkoye Bogatstvo*, June, p. 64. Parmenides in his polemic with the followers of Heraclitus called them *two-headed philosophers* to whom things present themselves simultaneously in dual form: as both existent and *non*-existent. Mr. N. G. now presents as a philosophical position what with Parmenides was a biting polemical sally. What progress, "with God's help," in the understanding of the "first questions" of philosophy!

nomena are united in even the simplest blob of protoplasm and in the life of the most undeveloped society. Hence, it is necessary to allot a big place to the dialectical method in both natural and social science. Since allotting it such a place, those sciences have made truly colossal advances.

Do you wish to know, reader, how dialectics won its rights in biology? Recall the arguments about what constitutes a *species,* evoked by the advent of the theory of evolution. Darwin and his adherents hold that different species of the same genus of animals or plants are no more than the differentially developed descendants of one and the same primary form. In addition, according to the doctrine of evolution, all genera of the same order are descended from one common form, and the same can be said of all orders of the same class. According to the opposite view, held by Darwin's antagonists, all animal and plant species are completely independent of each other, and only individuals of the same species are descended from one common form. The same concept concerning species was earlier upheld by Linnaeus who said: "There are as many species as were originally created by the Supreme Being." This was a purely metaphysical view, since the metaphysician sees things and ideas as "isolated, to be considered one after the other and apart from each other, fixed, rigid objects of investigation given once for all." (Engels). The dialectician, however, sees things and ideas "in their interconnection, in their concatenation, their motion, their coming into and passing out of existence."* This view has penetrated biology since Darwin's time and will always remain there, whatever amendments

* Engels, *Anti-Dühring,* Eng. ed., Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1976, pp. 26 and 27. — *Ed.*

may be made in the theory of evolution by the further progress of science.

To understand the importance of dialectics in *sociology,* it is sufficient to recall how *socialism* was transformed *from Utopian* to scientific.

The Utopian socialists proceeded from an abstract view of human nature and judged social phenomena according to the formula: "*yes* — *yes* and *no* — *no.*" Property was *either* in conformity with human nature *or not;* the monogamous family *either* did *or* did not conform to human nature, etc., etc. Since human nature was assumed to be *unchanging,* socialists had the right to expect that among many *possible* systems of social organization there was one which conformed to it *more closely than all others.* Hence the striving to find this *optimum* system, i.e., the one most in conformity with human nature. The originator of each school *thought he had found this system;* each proposed *his own Utopia.* Marx introduced the dialectical method into socialism and thus made it a *science,* striking a mortal blow at Utopianism. In Marx there is no longer an appeal to human nature; he does not recognize social systems that either conform *or do not* conform with it. In his *Poverty of Philosophy* we already find the following significant and characteristic reproach to Proudhon: "M. Proudhon does not know that all history is nothing but a continuous transformation of human nature."* In *Capital,* Marx says that, by acting on the external world and changing it, man at the same time changes his own nature.** This is

* *Misère de la philosophie,* nouvelle édition, Paris, 1896, p. 204 [cf. *The Poverty of Philosophy,* Eng. ed., International Publishers, New York, 1963, Sixth Printing 1975, p. 147].

** *Das Kapital,* III Auflage, S.S. 155-56 [cf. *Capital,* Vol. I, Eng. ed., Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1954, p. 177].

the dialectical viewpoint which casts an altogether new light on questions of social life. Let us just take the question of private property. The Utopians wrote and debated much, both among themselves and with the economists, on the question of whether it should exist, i.e., whether it was in conformity with human nature. Marx placed this question on concrete ground. According to his teaching, both the *forms of property and the relations of property are determined by the development of the productive forces.* One form conforms with one stage of development of these forces, another with another — and there neither is nor can be any *absolute solution* here because all things are in flux, all things change, and "reason has become unreason, and kindness a scourge."

Hegel said, "Contradiction leads forward." Science has found brilliant confirmation of this dialectical view of his in *class struggle,* obliviousness to which makes it impossible to understand anything of the development of social and intellectual life in a society divided into *classes.*

But why should the "logic of contradiction," which as we have seen is a reflection in the human mind of the eternal process of motion, be given the name of *dialectics*? To avoid a long discourse on this score I give the floor to Kuno Fischer.

"Human life can be compared to a dialogue in the sense that with age and experience, our views on people and things undergo constant transformation, like the opinions of participants in a fruitful discussion rich in ideas. Experience consists in precisely this involuntary and necessary transformation of our views on life and the world. . . . Comparing the course of development of consciousness with the course of a philosophical discussion, Hegel therefore names it dialectics or dialectical motion. This expression was already used

by Plato, Aristotle and Kant, each of whom gave it his own important and distinctive meaning, but in no system did it acquire such broad significance as in Hegel's."*

Many people also fail to understand why views similar, for example, to those of Linnaeus on animal and plant species are called *metaphysical.* The words *metaphysics* and *metaphysical* seem to mean something quite different. Let us try to explain this too.

What is *metaphysics*? What is its subject?

Its subject is the so-called *unconditional* (absolute). And what is the main distinguishing feature of the *unconditional*? *Immutability.* This is not surprising: the *unconditional* does not depend on circumstances (*conditions*) of time and place which alter the finite objects available to us; hence it does not change. And what is the main distinguishing trait of the concepts with which those persons who in the language of dialectics are called metaphysicians operate? Their distinguishing trait is also *immutability,* as we have seen from the example of the Linnaean teaching on species. These concepts, too, are *unconditional* in their own way. Hence they have the same character as the concept of *the unconditional* that constitutes the subject of metaphysics. *Therefore,* Hegel gives the name *metaphysical* to all concepts which are produced (in his terminology) by *reason,* i.e., which are taken to be immutable and separated from each other by impassable chasms. The late Nikolai Mikhailovsky thought that Engels was the *first writer* to employ the terms *"metaphysical"* and *"dialectical"* in the sense known to us today. But this is

---

* *Hegel, His Life and Works,* Vol. I, Part I, translated by N. O. Lossky, St. Petersburg, p. 308.

incorrect. The basis of this terminology was already laid by Hegel.*

People may tell me that Hegel had his own metaphysics. I do not deny it: he had. But his *metaphysics* merged with *dialectics,* and in dialectics there is nothing immutable; everything is moving, everything is changing.

When I sat down to write this preface, I intended to dwell on Mr. Berdyayev's review, in *Voprosy Zhizni* [*Problems of Life*], of Engels' *Anti-Dühring* which has recently appeared in a Russian translation. Now I see that I cannot do it for lack of space. I am not too sorry about this. Mr. Berdyayev's review will convince only those readers who are already convinced, and hence need no convincing. And Mr. Berdyayev's opinions, in themselves, *do not* deserve attention. Spinoza said of Bacon that he *does not prove* his views but *only describes them.* This could likewise be said of Mr. Berdyayev if his method of presenting his ideas were not better conveyed by the word *decrees.* But when a thinker like Bacon describes or even decrees his views, we find in his decrees or descriptions a great deal that is precious. On the other hand, when a brain as muddled as Mr. Berdyayev's undertakes to decree, absolutely nothing instructive happens.

But no. From Mr. Berdyayev's decrees we can see what, from the standpoint of his practical reason, constitutes the main shortcoming of Engels' world outlook. It consists in interfering with the transformation of *social* democracy into *bourgeois* democracy. This is very interesting. And we shall so record it.

July 4, 1905.

* Cf. Hegel's *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences,* Vol. I, § 81 [Wallace, *The Logic of Hegel,* Oxford, 2nd ed., dateless, pp. 147-52].

NOTES TO THE RUSSIAN EDITION*

NOTE 1

The author has in mind a series of articles on Germany by Heine, which appeared originally in *Revue des Deux Mondes* [*Review of the Two Worlds*] and was then published as a separate book (the foreword to the first edition was dated December 1834). The reader will find this splendid work of Heine's in his complete works. Unfortunately the Russian translation has been horribly disfigured by the censorship.

The modern Aristophanes did not adopt the same attitude towards the philosophy of his time as did the Greek genius towards the Sophists. He not only *understood* the revolutionary significance of German philosophy, he warmly *sym-*

* Plekhanov wrote 11 notes in 1892 for the first Russian edition of *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy* and made some revisions and additions for the second Russian edition in 1905. In the present volume, the revisions and additions are given in angular brackets ‹ ›, while the deletions are printed separately on pp. 174-80. — *Ed.*

pathized with it precisely because of its revolutionary significance. However, in his book on Germany Heine dwells far more on the revolutionary significance ‹which he greatly exaggerated› of Kant (his *Critique of Pure Reason*) than of Hegel. By the forties he was more categorical in his pronouncements on Hegel. In a surviving excerpt from his first (and only) letter *On Germany* we find a humorous exchange of thoughts between the author and "the king of philosophy." "Once when I was put out by the saying: 'All that exists is rational,' he smiled in a peculiar way and observed: 'It could also mean: all that is rational *must* exist.' He looked around hastily but soon calmed down, for only Heinrich Beer had heard what he said."* Heinrich Beer's identity does not matter here. All that needs to be noted is that in Heine's opinion Hegel himself understood the revolutionary significance of his philosophy but was afraid to bring it to light. Again, to what extent this view of Hegel is correct is another question, which incidentally will be answered in the present pamphlet. But there can be no doubt that Heine himself was by no means one of those limited and short-sighted people who were afraid of the *conclusions* following from Hegel's philosophy. In the conversation quoted it was not without intent that Hegel's famous proposition was changed: *real* was replaced by *existing* in general. Heine apparently wished to show that the proposition invariably retains *its revolutionary meaning* even in the vulgar form it was given by people who were little versed in the secrets of Hegel's philosophy.

* Heinrich Heine, *Sämtliche Werke (Complete Works)*, published by Ernst Elster, Vol. 6, Leipzig and Vienna, p. 535. — *Ed.*

NOTE 2

We know that the question of how to understand Hegel's teaching on the rationality of everything which is "real" played a great role in Russian philosophical circles in the late thirties and early forties. Thanks to it, V. G. Belinsky, the most luminous thinker among Russian writers, experienced a major tragedy, so to speak. His articles on Menzel and the anniversary of the Battle of Borodino are full of the sharpest attacks on those who permitted themselves to condemn "reality," i.e., the social relations surrounding them. Later he very much disliked to recall these articles because he considered them a shameful error. In his passionate negation of the infamous Russian system he could not be restrained by any philosophical considerations concerning their alleged rationality. Later writers belonging to the same trend did not consider it necessary to return to Hegel and check the theoretical premises which the masterly critic took as his starting-point at the time of his conservative infatuations. They thought that those premises contained nothing but error. Such is the view of "advanced" Russian writers in the present too. Is it correct?

In his *My Life and Thoughts,* Herzen relates how he logically bypassed the theoretical barrier which at a first (and, it must be noted, completely wrong and superficial) glance the teaching of the "rationality" of all that is "real" seems to represent. He decided that this teaching was merely a new formulation of the law of sufficient cause. But the law of sufficient cause by no means leads to the justification of any given social system. If there was sufficient cause for the emergence and growth of despotism in the history of Russia, the emancipatory movement of the Decembrists apparently

had its own sufficient cause too. If despotism was "rational," in this sense, the wish to do away with it once and for all was obviously no less "rational." Hence, Herzen decided, Hegel's teaching is rather a theoretical justification for every struggle for emancipation. It is the real algebra of revolution.

Herzen was perfectly right so far as his final conclusion was concerned. But he arrived at it by an erroneous path. Let us explain this by an example.

"The Roman Republic was real," Engels says, developing Hegel's thought, "but so was the Roman Empire which supplanted it."* The question is: Why did the Empire supersede the Republic? The law of sufficient cause only guarantees that this fact could not have been without a cause. But it does not give the slightest indication as to where the cause or causes of the fact in question are to be sought. Perhaps the Republic was superseded by the Empire because Caesar had greater military talent than Pompey; perhaps because Cassius and Brutus made mistakes; perhaps because Octavius was very skilful and cunning, or perhaps for some other accidental reason. Hegel was not satisfied with such explanations. In his opinion accident is merely a wrapping hiding necessity. Of course, the concept of necessity itself can also be interpreted very superficially; one can say that the fall of the Roman Republic became necessary because and only because Caesar defeated Pompey. But with Hegel this concept had another, incomparably deeper, meaning. When he called a particular social phenomenon necessary, he meant that it had been prepared by the whole preceding course of development of the country in which it took place. It is there that we must seek the cause or causes. Consequently, the fall of the Roman Republic is not explained by Caesar's talents or the mistakes of Brutus or any other man or group of men, but by the fact that there had been changes in the internal relationships of Rome, as a result of which the further existence of the republic became impossible. Exactly what changes? Hegel himself often gave unsatisfactory answers to such questions. But that is not the point. The important thing is that Hegel's view of social phenomena is far deeper than that of people who know only one thing, namely, that *there is no action without a cause.* But that is not all either. Hegel etched in a far more profound and important truth. He said that in the process of its development every particular aggregate of phenomena creates *out of itself* those forces which lead to its negation, i.e., to its disappearance; that therefore every particular social system creates *out of itself* in the process of its historical development the social forces which destroy it and replace it by a new one. Hence the conclusion suggests itself — although it is not brought out by Hegel — that if I adopt a negative attitude to a particular social system, my negation is *"rational"* only if it coincides with the objective process of negation proceeding within that system itself, i.e., if that system is losing its historical significance and entering into contradiction with the social needs to which it owes its emergence.

Let us now try to apply this standpoint to the social questions which agitated Russian educated youth in the thirties. Russian "reality" — the serfdom, despotism, police omnipotence, censorship and the like — appeared to them as infamous, unjust. Involuntarily they recalled with sympathy the Decembrists' recent attempt to improve our social conditions. But they, or at least the most gifted among them, were no longer satisfied with the abstract revolutionary ne-

* See p. 6 above. — *Ed.*

gation of the eighteenth century or the conceited and egoistic negation of the romantics. Thanks to Hegel they had already become far more exacting. They said to themselves: "Prove the rationality of your negation, justify it by the objective laws of social development, or abandon it as a personal whim, a childish caprice." But to justify the negation of Russian reality by the inner laws of its own development meant to solve a problem which was beyond even Hegel's ability. Take for example Russian serfdom. To justify its negation meant to prove that it negated *itself*, i.e., that it no longer satisfied the social needs by virtue of which it had at one time come into being. But to what social needs did Russian serfdom owe its emergence? To the economic needs of a state which would have died of exhaustion without the enserfment of the peasant. Consequently, it was necessary to prove that in the nineteenth century serfdom had already become too poor a means for satisfying the economic needs of the state; that, far from satisfying them any longer, it was a direct obstacle to their satisfaction. All this was later proved most convincingly by the Crimean War. But, we repeat, Hegel himself would not have been capable of *proving this theoretically.* It follows directly from his philosophy that the causes of the historical movement of any given society have their roots in its internal development. This correctly indicated the most important task of social science. But Hegel himself contradicted, and could not but contradict, this profoundly correct view. An "absolute" idealist, he regarded the logical properties of the "idea" as the principal cause of any development. Thus the properties of the idea turned out to be the root cause of historical movement. Every time a great historical question towered before him, Hegel first referred to these properties. But to refer to them meant to

leave the ground of history and voluntarily to deprive himself of any possibility of finding the actual causes of historical movement. As a man of tremendous intellect, indeed of genius, Hegel himself felt that there was something wrong and that, properly speaking, his explanations explained nothing. Therefore, paying due tribute to the "*idea,*" he hastened down to the concrete ground of history to seek the real causes of social phenomena no longer in the properties of ideas, but in themselves, in the very phenomena that he happened to be investigating. In so doing he often made guesses of real genius (noting the *economic* causes of historical movement). But all the same these guesses of genius were no more than guesses. Having no firm systematic basis, they played no serious role in the historical views of Hegel and the Hegelians. That is why hardly any attention was paid to them at the time they were pronounced.

The great task pointed out by Hegel for the social sciences of the nineteenth century remained unfulfilled; the real, internal causes of the historical movement of humanity remained undiscovered. It goes without saying that it was not in Russia that the man capable of finding them could appear. Social relationships in Russia were too underdeveloped, social stagnation was too set for these causes which were being sought for to emerge on the surface of social phenomena in Russia. They were found by Marx and Engels in the West, under completely different social conditions. But this did not happen till some time later, and during the period of which we are speaking the Hegelian negators there, too, were still entangled in the contradictions of idealism. After all we have said, it is easy to understand why the young Russian followers of Hegel began by completely rec-

onciling themselves to Russian "reality," which, to tell the truth, was so infamous that Hegel himself would never have recognized it as "reality": unjustified theoretically, their negative attitude towards it was deprived in their eyes of any rational right to existence. Rejecting this attitude, they selflessly and disinterestedly sacrificed their social strivings to philosophical honesty. But on the other hand, reality itself saw to it that they were forced to retract their sacrifice. A daily and hourly eyesore to them by its infamy, it *forced them* to aspire to negation at any cost, i.e., even to negation not founded on any satisfactory theoretical basis. As we know, they yielded to the insistence of reality. Parting with the "philosophical nightcap" of Hegel, Belinsky undertook vigorous attacks on the very system he had but recently justified. This, of course, was very good on his part. But it must be admitted that, acting thus, the writer of genius was lowering the level of his *theoretical demands* and was admitting that he, and in his person all progressive Russian thought, was *an insolvent debtor as far as theory was concerned.* This did not prevent him from occasionally expressing very profound views on Russian social life. For example, in one of his letters at the end of the forties he said that only the bourgeoisie, i.e., only capitalism, would provide the ground for the serious and successful negation of the monstrous Russian reality. But all the same, on the whole he adhered in his negation to *Utopian* views of social phenomena. Similar views were held by Chernyshevsky, the "subjective" writers of the late sixties and early seventies and the revolutionaries ‹of the same period and› of all trends. It is remarkable that the farther the matter went and the more Hegel was forgotten, the less the Russian negators re-

alized that their social views stemmed from a certain theoretical fall from grace. Our "subjective" writers made scientific insolvency a dogma. They took pains to write and rewrite a certificate of theoretical poverty for Russian social thought, imagining that they were drafting a most flattering and precious document for it. But that could not go on forever. The revolutionary failures of the seventies alone were enough to make Russian social thought stop admiring its own insolvency. The theoretical problem Russian philosophical circles could not solve in the forties turned out to be easy to solve after Marx turned Hegel's philosophy "upside down," i.e., placed it on a materialist basis. Marx discovered the inner causes of the historical movement of humanity. All that remained to be done was to look at Russian social relationships from his standpoint. This was done by the Social-Democrats, who very often arrived at the same views on Russian life independently of each other. Russian social thought, as represented by the Social-Democrats, at last entered the general channel of nineteenth century scientific thought. The theoretical fall from grace of the old westernizers was redeemed: an unshakable objective *basis* for the negation of Russian reality was found *in that reality itself.* ‹See my article, "Zu Hegel's sechszigstem Todestag," *Neue Zeit,* XI, 1891 and my speech "V. G. Belinsky," Geneva, 1898.›*

* For "For the Sixtieth Anniversary of Hegel's Death," see *Selected Philosophical Works of Plekhanov,* Eng. ed., Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, no date, Vol. I, pp. 455-83.

"V. G. Belinsky" (speech on the fiftieth anniversary of Belinsky's death at Russian meetings in Geneva, Zurich and Bern in the spring of 1898), *Collected Works of Plekhanov,* Russ. ed., Vol. 10, pp. 319-49. — *Ed.*

NOTE 3

In 1827 the Hegelian Henning began to publish *Jahrbücher für wissenschaftliche Kritik* (*Yearbooks of Scientific Criticism*) to spread and defend his teacher's views. But Henning followed a conservative trend and his journal did not satisfy the Young Hegelians. In 1838 A. Ruge and T. Echtermeyer founded the *Hallesche Jahrbücher für deutsche Wissenschaft und Kunst* [*Halle Yearbooks of German Science and Art*], which was renamed *Deutsche Jahrbücher* [*German Yearbooks*] when the editorial office was transferred to Leipzig in 1841. From both the religious and political points of view, *German Yearbooks* was radical in trend. In 1843 it was banned in Saxony, and Ruge and Marx decided to publish it in Paris under the title *German-French Yearbooks* (*Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*). Among its contributors were Frederick Engels and H. Heine. Unfortunately only one volume of *German-French Yearbooks* appeared, combining both the first and the second issues. Among other things, it contained Marx's remarkable articles "Einleitung zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie" ["Introduction to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right"] — published in Russian in Geneva in 1888 and "Zur Judenfrage" ["On the Jewish Question"] and a no less remarkable article by Engels: "Umrisse zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie" ["Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy"] which was reprinted in *Neue Zeit*, IX, No. 8, 1891.*

* The only issue of *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* appeared in February 1844. For Marx, "On the Jewish Question," "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law. Introduction" and Engels, "Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy," see Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975, Vol. 3, pp. 146-74, 175-87, and 418-43. *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* also contained Engels' review of Thomas Carlyle's *Past and Present*, entitled "The Condition of England," ibid., pp. 444-68. — *Ed.*

Rheinische Zeitung[7] was founded in Cologne by Camphausen, Hansemann and their fellow-thinkers. Marx was its most active and talented contributor. In ‹mid-October› 1842 he became the editor. At that time he was not yet a socialist,[8] but his attacks on the government were already so vigorous that the paper lasted only a few months under his direction. ‹The issue of March 17, 1843, contained this short notice: "The undersigned declares that as a result of *the present censorship conditions* he has retired from the editorial board of *Rheinische Zeitung*. *Dr. Marx*." (Italics in the original.) The paper was compelled to cease publication on March 31 of the same year as a result of a government decree published on January 25. The editorial board ceased publication a few days before the final date, on March 28.› Marx, by the way, was almost pleased by this ban. Previous literary activity had proved to him the insufficiency of his *economic* knowledge and he wished to perfect it; the penalty imposed on the *Cologne Gazette*[9] gave him the opportunity to engross himself in his study. When Marx again took up literary and political activity, he already had an extensive stock of knowledge which he had lacked before, but, most important of all, he had a new view of economic science which constituted an epoch in its history.

‹The outstanding articles by Marx in this newspaper were recently published by Franz Mehring in *Gesammelte Schriften von Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels, 1841 bis 1850* [*Collected Works of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, 1841-50*], Vol. I, pp. 208-321. They have still not lost their publicistic interest

for Russian readers. It is superfluous to add that they are very important in the history of Marx's own intellectual development.›*

In June 1848, Marx, with the collaboration of Engels, Freiligrath and Wilhelm Wolff (to whose memory *Capital* is dedicated), founded the *New Rheinish Gazette*, again in Cologne. Marx and his main collaborators now wrote as completely convinced socialists in the most modern sense of the word, i.e., in the sense given it in their own works. The *New Rheinish Gazette* was the most remarkable literary publication of its time, as even its enemies admitted. But more can and must be said about it: no socialist newspaper either *before* or *after* can be compared with it. It was banned in June 1849 for its open call to "insubordination towards the government," which was then rapidly recovering from the blows dealt it by the revolution.[10]

NOTE 4

Thanks to the solicitude of the censors, the views of Strauss and B. Bauer mentioned by Engels are as yet little known to Russian readers. We therefore do not consider it superfluous to describe them in brief.

This is how matters stand. If you are convinced that the Holy Scripture was dictated by God himself (the Holy Ghost), selecting as his secretary now one, now another godly person, you will not even tolerate the idea that it can contain any ‹mistakes or› inconsistencies. All that is related there has

* Articles by Marx in the *Rheinish Gazette*, see Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975, Vol. I, pp. 132-81, 184-210, 215-81, 286-360 and 366-76. — *Ed.*

the significance of most indisputable fact for you. In tempting Eve, the serpent pronounces a speech worthy of an insinuating Jesuit, full of worldly wisdom. This is rather strange, but for God nothing is impossible: the apparent strangeness is only a fresh instance of his omnipotence. Balaam's famous ass entered into conversation with her rider. This again is not exactly an ordinary phenomenon, but for God, etc., etc., according to the same eternally established formula. Faith is not embarrassed by anything, ‹even by absurdity: *credo quia absurdum**›. Faith is "the announcement of things we hope for, the revelation of things invisible, i.e., confidence in the invisible as if it were visible, in what we desire and anticipate as if it were already present." For the religious man the omnipotence of God, the creator and lord of nature, is precisely what he "*desires*" above everything. All this would have been very good, very touching and even very lasting, if in his struggle for existence with nature man had not been obliged to taste of the "tree of knowledge of good and evil," i.e., gradually to study the *laws of nature* itself. Once he has tasted of the fruit of this dangerous "tree," he is no longer so easily influenced by fiction. If he continues by force of habit to believe in the omnipotence of God, his faith assumes a different character: God recedes into the background, behind the stage of the world, so to speak, and nature with its eternal, iron immutable laws, comes to the fore. But miracles are incompatible with conformity to law; conformity to law leaves no room for miracles; miracles preclude conformity to law. The question now is: How can people who have grown up to the concept of immutable laws in nature regard the account of miracles in the Bible? They

* I believe because it is absurd. — *Ed.*

are bound to *deny* them. But negation can assume various forms according to the constitution and course of social life in which the particular intellectual trend arises.

The French thinkers of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment simply laughed at the Bible stories, regarding them as a manifestation of ignorance and even of charlatanry. The French were prompted towards this sharply negative attitude to the Bible by the struggle the French third estate was then waging against the "privileged" in general and the clergy in particular. The situation in Protestant Germany was then different. First, since the Reformation the German clergy itself had played quite a different role from that of the clergy in Catholic countries; secondly, any idea of struggling against the "old order" was far from the thought of the "third estate" in Germany. This circumstance laid its impress on the whole history of eighteenth-century German literature. Whereas in France the educated representatives of the third estate used every new conclusion ‹every new hypothesis› of science as a weapon to fight the ideas and conceptions which had grown out of the obsolete social relationships, in Germany it was not so much a question of *eradicating* old prejudices as of bringing them into *agreement* with recent discoveries. For the revolutionary-minded French thinkers of the Enlightenment, religion was the fruit of *ignorance* and *deception*; for the German supporters of the Enlightenment — even the most advanced among them ‹for example, Lessing› — it was the "*education of the human race.*" Accordingly to them the Bible was not a book to be denied and ridiculed. They tried to "*enlighten*" it, to give its stories a new meaning and bring them into line with the "spirit of the time." Then there began the most laborious process of torturing the Bible. In the Old Testament God "speaks" on almost every page.

But that doesn't mean that he actually spoke. This is only one of those figurative expressions to which Orientals are so inclined. When we read that God said one thing or another, we must understand it in the sense that he impressed this or that idea on one or another of his loyal worshippers. The same with the tempter serpent and Balaam's ass. Actually these animals did not speak at all. They only suggested certain thoughts to their alleged interlocutors. On Pentecost, as is known, the Holy Ghost descended on the apostles in the form of tongues of fire. This again is a figurative expression. By it the author or authors of the *Acts of the Apostles* merely meant that the apostles experienced a violent fit of religious fervour at the time. However, according to the interpretation of other "enlightened" investigators the matter took place somewhat differently. The tongues of fire which descended on the apostles represented a perfectly natural phenomenon, namely electric sparks. In exactly the same way, if Paul became blind on the road to Damascus, this is explained by the natural effect of lightning, and if the old man Ananias healed him by the laying on of hands, it is well known that old men often nave very cold hands and that cold reduces inflammation. If Jesus raised many dead people to life, this is explained by the quite simple circumstance that he had to deal not with corpses but with living bodies in a swoon. His own death on the cross was only an apparent death. According to the interpretation of Doctor Paulus, who was well known in his day,* Jesus himself was astonished (*voll Verwunderung*) at his unexpected return to

* In 1800-04 he published *Evangeliencommentar* [*Commentary on the Gospels*] and in 1828 *Das Leben Jesu* [*The Life of Jesus*], which we refer to in our quotations from Paulus below.

life. Finally, there can be no question of his ascension to heaven, for the evangelists themselves are extremely vague on this point: they say he was taken up into heaven (Mark); but doesn't that mean that his soul was taken up into heaven *after his death*? And then, on what grounds would it have occurred to the evangelists to relate things unbelievable to either a naturalist or an astronomer "able to calculate exactly how long it would take a cannon ball to reach . . . Sirius"?

It would be superfluous to prove that *such* criticism of the Gospels is quite unsound and that it testifies to its representatives' total lack of a true critical attitude to the question. ‹It might have been good and useful as the *first step*. But the first step, already taken by Spinoza, had to be followed by a second, and the German thinkers of the Enlightenment did not take that *second* step.› The whole merit of Strauss (1808-74) consisted in putting a stop to fruitless attempts to "make the improbable probable and to make historically conceivable things which did not happen in history." Strauss regarded the Gospel narratives not as accounts (more or less accurate, more or less distorted) of actual events, but only as *myths* unconsciously formed in Christian communities and expressing Messianic ideas at the time of their origin. Similarly, the speeches of Jesus, particularly the loftiest among them, quoted in the so-called Gospel of John, were in Strauss' view later products. In his latest edition of *The Life of Jesus* he explains the view he then held of the origin of the Gospel myths as follows:

"In my former work I offered the idea of the *Myth* as the key to the miraculous narratives of the Gospel, and much else that in the accounts of the Gospels is opposed to an historical view. It is in vain, I said, in the case of stories like that about the star of the Wise men, about the transfiguration, about the miraculous Feeding and the like, to attempt to make them conceivable as natural events; but as it is quite as impossible to imagine things so unnatural to have really happened, all narratives of this kind must be considered as fictions. If it were asked how, at the period to which the appearance of our Gospels is to be assigned, men came to invent such fictions about Jesus, I pointed above all to the expectations of the Messiah current at that time. When men, I said, first a few persons, then a continually increasing number, had come to see the Messiah in Jesus, they supposed that everything must have coincided in him which, according to the Old Testament prophecies and types, and their current interpretations, was expected of the Messiah. However notorious throughout the country it might be that Jesus was from Nazareth: still, as the Messiah, as the son of David, he must have been born in Bethlehem, for Micah had so prophesied. Jesus might have uttered words of severe reproach against the desire for miracles on the part of his countrymen, and those words might still be living in tradition; but Moses, the first deliverer of the people, had worked miracles, therefore the last Deliverer, the Messiah, and Jesus had of course been he, must likewise have worked miracles. Isaiah had prophesied that at that time, i.e. the time of the Messiah, the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall hear; then will the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the stammerer speak flowingly: thus it was known in detail what sort of miracles Jesus, having been the Messiah, must have performed. And so it happened that in the earliest Church narratives might, nay could not fail to be invented, without any consciousness of invention on the part of the authors of them. . . . By this view the original production of Christian Myths is placed

upon the same footing as that of those which we find in the history of the rise of other religions. It is in this, in fact, that the progress which in modern times the science of theology has made consists, in having, that is, comprehended how the Myth, in its original form, is not the conscious and intentional invention of an individual but a production of the common consciousness of a people or religious circle, which an individual does indeed first enunciate, but which meets with belief for the very reason that such individual is but the organ of this universal conviction. It is not a covering in which a clever man clothes an idea which arises in him for the use and benefit of the ignorant multitude, but it is only simultaneously with the narrative, nay, in the very form of the narrative which he tells that he becomes conscious of the idea which he is not yet able to apprehend purely as such. . . .

"But the more the Evangelical Myths appear to have been, in part at least, newly and independently formed, the more difficult becomes the possibility of conceiving how the authors of narratives of this sort could have been unconscious that they were recounting as having happened something that had not really happened, but had been invented by them. He who first gave the account of the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem might do so in good faith, for according to Micah the Messiah was to come from Bethlehem, and Jesus had been the Messiah, consequently must have been born in Bethlehem. He, on the contrary, who first told that on the decease of Jesus the curtain in the Temple was rent in twain (Matt. xxvii. 51) must have known, it would appear, that he had neither seen this happen nor heard it from anyone, but that he had invented it himself. But in this very instance an allegorical form of speech, such as we find in Heb. x. 19, ff.,

to the effect that the death of Jesus opened the way for us through the curtain into the Holy of Holies, might have been easily understood by a hearer in a literal sense, and thus that story have arisen entirely without consciousness of invention. In like manner the calling of the four disciples to be fishers of men, may sometimes have been told in such a manner that the take of fish to which Jesus called them was contrasted with their earlier trade and its scanty profit, as being immeasurably more advantageous, and it is self-evident how easily, in the circulation of the story from mouth to mouth, the history of the miraculous draught of fishes (Luke v.) might hence arise. So also the accounts intended for the verification of the resurrection of Jesus have, at first sight, the appearance of being necessarily either historical or conscious falsehoods; and yet anyone who identifies himself with the circumstances will see that it is not so. In the dispute upon this point, a Jew may have said: No wonder that the sepulchre was found empty, for of course you had stolen the body away. 'We stolen it away!' said the Christian: 'how could we have done that when you had certainly set a watch over it?' He believed this because he assumed it. Another Christian, telling the story after him, said still more decisively that the sepulchre had been watched, and the seal placed upon it was found in Daniel, whose den of lions naturally presented itself as an antitype of the sepulchre of Jesus. . . . Or a Jew said: Yes, he may have appeared to you, but as a disembodied spirit from the lower world. 'As a disembodied spirit!' answered the Christian: 'nay, but he had (this was a matter of course to the Christians), and moreover showed us, the marks of the nails from his crucifixion.' The next who told the story might understand that the showing involved also the allowing them to be felt, and thus narratives

of this kind were formed quite in good faith, but still with no pretensions to be history."*

There is no doubt that Strauss' view was a huge step forward compared with the above-mentioned views of his predecessors. But it is not difficult to see that it too was not without significant shortcomings. "The change undergone by historical facts in passing through oral tradition, the growth of the myths pointed out by Strauss, in a word, the popular Christian legend, explains only the features common to all the Gospels or versions of them which are noted for their accidental and unintentional character and therefore betray no precise tendency and are not peculiar to any one of these accounts. But when, on the contrary, we see certain characteristic features present in one of the Gospels, whereas they are absent from the rest of the evangelical tradition, we can no longer explain them by motives common to the whole of the Christian legend; we must ascribe them to the influence of the private opinions and interests of the author of the book or of the group of Christians whose spokesman he is. And when these special features are not only manifest in certain isolated places in the work, but the whole work is apparently written precisely so as to bring these features out, when they determine the arrangement of the material, the chronology, the accessory details of the narrative and the style itself; when the work contains long discourses or conversations usually not preserved in legend — all circumstances which strike one in the fourth Gospel and also, although to a lesser degree, in

* *Das Leben Jesu, für das deutsche Volk bearbeitet* von David Friedrich Strauss, dritte Auflage, Leipzig, 1874, pp. 150-55 [D. F. Strauss, *A New Life of Jesus,* Williams and Norgate, London, 1865, Vol. I, pp. 201-08. — *Ed.*].

the third — we can be certain that we are in the presence not of a simple editing of religious legends but of the deliberate creation of the writer."* Consequently, Strauss' mythological theory far from explains all that needs explanation. Subsequently Strauss himself was convinced of this. In his last edition of *The Life of Jesus* he gave a far larger role to "the deliberate creative work of the writers." But at the time referred to by Engels, i.e., in the forties, he had not yet noticed the weak side of his approach, which was most vigorously attacked by Bruno Bauer.

Bauer (1809-82) reproached Strauss for leaning towards *the mystical and supernatural* because in his theory of myths "what is directly operative is the general, tribal, communal religious tradition," and no room is left for *the mediating activity of self-consciousness.* "Strauss' mistake," he says, "consists not in indicating a certain general force (i.e., the force of tradition), but in making that force work exclusively in a general form, directly out of its generality. This is a religious approach, faith in miracles, the imposition of religious ideas onto the critical standpoint, religious crudity and ingratitude towards self-consciousness". . . . The opposition between the views of Strauss and of Bauer is an "opposition between the tribe and self-consciousness, the substance and the subject."** In other words, Strauss points out the unconscious emergence of the Gospel stories, while Bauer says that in the historical process of their formation they went through the consciousness of people who *deliberately invented*

* Ed. Zeller, *Christian Bauer et L'école de Tubingue* [*Christian Bauer and the Tübingen School*], traduit par Ch. Ritter, Paris, 1883, p. 98.

** *Die Gute Sache der Freiheit* [*The Good Cause of Freedom*], Zürich und Wintertur, 1842, pp. 117-18.

them for some religious purpose. This is very evident in the so-called Gospel of John,* who created a quite special Jesus absolutely unlike the Jesus of the other Gospels. But the other evangelists, too, were by no means innocent of such invention. The so-called Luke arbitrarily re-tailors the Gospel written by the so-called Mark; the so-called Matthew, who wrote after them, treats both Luke and Mark most unceremoniously, trying to reconcile them and to adapt their narratives to the religious views and strivings of his own time. Nevertheless, he does not succeed in solving this far from easy problem. He gets muddled up in the most absurd contradictions. Here is one example out of many. Matthew says that after being baptized Jesus was led by the spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. The question is: Why did the spirit, i.e., God, need to test Jesus through the devil? "For . . . he could have known that the person he had just called his beloved son" (at the baptism — *G.P.*) "was inaccessible to temptation."** But the fact is that Matthew simply got muddled up in his story. "He did not wish simply to copy what he had read in his predecessors' tales, but was trying to explain them and reveal their internal coherence."*** He had read in Luke and Mark that the spirit led Jesus into the desert, where he was tempted by the devil. So he made up his mind that the spirit led Jesus into the desert for the purpose of tempting him with the help of the devil. And that is what he wrote in his Gospel, not noticing what a

* It is now acknowledged that the apostle John was not its author.

** *Kritik der evangelischen Geschichte der Synoptiker* [*Critique of the Synoptists' Evangelical History*], 2nd edition, Leipzig, 1846, Vol. I, p. 213.

*** Ibid., p. 214.

ridiculous situation his omniscient god was getting into by finding it necessary to tempt his own son. Here is another vivid example. Isaiah "makes a prophecy" about the "voice crying in the wilderness" ("prepare ye the way of the Lord"). In order that "the words of the prophet" should be fulfilled, Mark and Matthew make John the Baptist preach "in the desert." Matthew even names the desert — the Desert of *Judea.* Then, evidently repeating the words of Mark and Luke, he reports that many penitents came to John and that he baptized them in the Jordan. But it is sufficient to glance at the map of Palestine to see that it was physically absolutely impossible for John to baptize the penitents in the Jordan if he was preaching in the Desert of Judea, which is far from the river.* ‹Such errors must be considered *personal* blunders on the part of the narrator.›

By picking features from the life of Jesus out of the various evangelists which for some reason struck them, the faithful, or even the simply sentimental, compose for their spiritual use a more or less attractive figure of the "redeemer" according to their own ideas, tastes and inclinations. Strauss' criticism already made this manufacture of a mosaic of Christ very difficult, but by his critique of the Gospels Bauer threatened to make it absolutely impossible:** he did not recognize Jesus as historical at all. It is therefore easy to understand the horror with which he inspired pious and "respectable" people. He was deprived of the right to teach in the theological

* Ibid., p. 143.

** *Kritik der evangelischen Geschichte der Synoptiker* [*Critique of the Synoptists' Evangelical History*], 1st edition, Vols. I and II, Leipzig, 1841, and *Kritik der evangelischen Geschichte der Synoptiker und des Johannes* [*Critique of the Evangelical History of the Synoptists and John*], Vol. III and the last volume, Brunswick, 1842.

faculty (he was an unpaid lecturer in this faculty in Bonn) and was severely censured in a number of booklets, articles and faculty reports. But the Germany of the 1840s was no longer the Germany of the eighteenth century. The revolutionary storm of 1848 was approaching; the agitation among the progressive sections of the German people was growing, as the saying goes, not daily but hourly; the literary representatives of these sections were by no means embarrassed by the fact that their critical conclusions cut across established ideas; on the contrary, they were becoming more and more permeated with an oppositional tendency. B. Bauer answered the attacks of his "respectable" opponents very sharply, sparing neither religion in general nor the "Christian state." His brother Edgar showed still greater vigour and for his *Der Streit der Kritik mit Kirche und Staat* [*Criticism's Dispute with Church and State*], published in Berne in 1844, he was imprisoned in a fortress. Naturally one cannot consider this method of argument on the part of the defenders of the system particularly praiseworthy, but it must also be conceded that in this work Edgar Bauer went so far that his views might even now scare very many "advanced" Russian writers. He recognized neither God nor private property nor state. He went so far that one could go *no farther* in the direction of negation. But no, we are mistaken: one more step could and should have been taken — *the most decisive* step in that direction: the question could and should have been posed: How strong was the weapon of criticism? How well-grounded was it in its negation? Or, in other words, to what extent had it freed itself from the prejudices it was attacking? This question was set by people who went farther than the Bauer brothers, by Marx and Engels in their book *Die heilige*

*Familie.** It turned out that "critical criticism" based itself entirely on the selfsame idealism it was so furiously fighting. That was its main shortcoming. As long as B. Bauer, basing himself on the right of "self-consciousness," analysed the Gospel stories, he could strike many heavy blows at time-honoured prejudices; but when he and his brother went over to criticism of the "state" and to the appraisal of such great events as those in France at the end of the last and the beginning of the present century, he arrived at conclusions some of which were outright errors and others altogether groundless and unconvincing. Nor could it be otherwise. To say that a particular social form is opposed to my "self-consciousness" is not equivalent to defining its historical significance. But without appraising its significance one cannot understand it correctly or fight it with any serious hope of success. Marx and Engels did precisely what was suggested by the whole course of development of philosophical thought in the nineteenth century: once having broken with idealism, one also had to break with autocratic "self-consciousness," one had to find and point out the causes by which it *in turn* is determined. Here is not the place to discuss whether Marx and Engels were successful in the task they undertook; let the reader judge by their works. We shall only note that the abstract radicalism of the Bauer brothers recalls in many respects our Russian "subjective method in sociology"; the same ceaseless references to "criticism" and to the "critical spirit" (called "critical thought" in our country); the same inability to penetrate by thought into the *critical* process which goes on *within social relationships themselves* and which determines people's "self-conscious-

* *The Holy Family*, Moscow, 1956. — *Ed.*

ness." It would be very interesting and extremely instructive to write a special essay drawing a parallel between the arguments advanced by Edgar Bauer (*Der Streit der Kritik* [*Criticism's Dispute*], Chapter 4) against Hegel, on the one hand, and the objections raised by Nikolai Mikhailovsky to Spencer, on the other. Such a parallel would show how little is new in the notorious subjective method. It would also show how all the originality of the Russian subjective sociologists amounts to unconscious repetition of the mistakes of others, which have long been pointed out and corrected by thinkers in Western Europe.

NOTE 5

Finding it neither possible nor necessary to go into detail on the life of Feuerbach here, we shall confine ourselves to a few lines from the *History of Modern Philosophy* by Überweg and Heinze (p. 394 of the Russian translation). "Born in 1804 . . . the son of the famous criminologist Anselm Feuerbach, he studied theology and . . . became a Hegelian. From 1824 he lived in Berlin, where he attended lectures by Hegel and devoted himself entirely to philosophy. In 1828 he became a lecturer in Erlangen and lived from 1836 in the village of Bruckberg, between Ansbach and Bayreuth, and from 1869 in difficult conditions in Rechenberg near Nuremberg and died in 1872."

The contents of his *Essence of Christianity* can also be set forth in a few words.[11]

"Religion," Feuerbach says, "is the first and indirect self-consciousness of man." In religion man deifies himself, his own "*essence.*" The essence of God is the essence of man,

or better, the essence of man purified, freed from the limitations of the individual person. "The perfection of God," says Leibniz in his *Théodicée,* "is the perfection of our souls, but he possesses it in all its fullness . . . in us there is a *certain* power, a *certain* knowledge, a *certain* goodness, all these attributes are *fully* inherent in God." [Italics are Plekhanov's.] This is quite true and only means that "*all the attributes of God are attributes of man.*" But the religious man *is not conscious* of deifying his own essence. He objectifies it, i.e., "contemplates and honours it as another being, separate from himself and existing independently." Religion is the splitting of man in two, his severance from himself. From this a double conclusion follows.

First, Hegel absolutely distorted the truth when he said, "what man knows about God is God's knowledge of himself," or, in other words, "God knows himself in man." In actual fact it is just the other way round: man knows himself in God and "what man knows of God is man's knowledge of himself." The attributes of God change according to what man thinks and feels. "Whatever value a man has, that and no more is the value his God has too. . . . Religion is the solemn disclosure of man's hidden treasures, the open confession of the secrets of his love." Every step forward in religion is a step forward in man's knowledge of himself. Christ, the incarnation of God, is "God personally known to man . . . the blissful certainty that God exists and exists in the form in which sentiment wants and requires him to exist. . . . That is why the final desire of religion is fulfilled only in Christ, the secret of religious feeling uncovered (but uncovered in the figurative language characteristic of religion); what in God is *essence* becomes a *manifestation* in Christ . . . in this sense the Christian religion can be called

the absolute . . . religion." The oriental religions, for example in India, also speak of the incarnations of God. But in them these incarnations take place too often and "for that very reason they lose their significance." In them the God incarnate does not become a *personality*, i.e., *a man*, for without a personality there is no man.

Secondly, since in religion man is dealing with himself as with a separate being outside and opposed to himself, and since religion is only the *first and indirect* self-consciousness of man, it inevitably leads to a number of contradictions. When the believer says God is love, he says in essence only that love is superior to everything in the world. But in his religious consciousness love is degraded to the level of *an attribute of* a separate being, *God*, who has significance even independently of love. For the religious man belief in God becomes the indispensable condition for a loving, cordial attitude to his neighbour. He hates the atheist in the name of that very love which he professes and deifies. Thus, in distorting man's attitude to his own essence, belief in God distorts the mutual relations between people. It becomes a source of fanaticism and of all the horrors which go with it. It damns in the name of salvation, it waxes ferocious in the name of beatitude. God is an illusion. But this illusion is extremely harmful, it binds reason, it kills man's natural inclination to truth and goodness. . . . That is why *reason which has risen to self-consciousness* must *destroy it*. And it is not difficult for reason to do this. It needs only to turn inside out all the relationships created by religion. What in religion is a *means* (e.g., virtue, which serves as a means of acquiring eternal happiness) must become an *end*; what in religion is a subordinate, secondary thing, a *condition* (e.g., love of one's neighbour — the *condition* for God's favour

towards us) must become the principal thing, the *cause*. *"Justice, truth, and good contain their sacred foundation in themselves, in their own nature. For man there is no being superior to man."*

‹In 1902 the editorial board of the *Mouvement socialiste* undertook a broad inquiry into the attitude of the socialist parties in different countries to *clericalism*.[12] This question now has obvious *practical* importance. But in order to solve it correctly we must first clarify for ourselves another mainly *theoretical* question: *the attitude of scientific socialism to religion*. This last question is hardly analysed at all in current international socialist literature. This is a great deficiency, which is explained precisely by the "*practicalness*" of the majority of present-day socialists. They say religion is a personal matter. That is true, but only in a definite, limited sense. It goes without saying that the socialist party in each individual country would act very *improvidently* if it refused to accept in its ranks a man who accepts its programme and is ready to work for its fulfilment but at the same time still entertains certain religious prejudices. Yet it would be still more improvident of any party to renounce the theory underlying its programme. And the theory — modern *scientific socialism* — rejects religion as the product of an erroneous view of nature and society and condemns it as an obstacle to the all-round development of the proletariat. We *have not the right* to close the doors of our organization to a man who is infected with religious belief; but we *are obliged* to do all that depends on us in order to destroy that faith in him or at least to prevent — with intellectual weapons, of course — our religious-minded comrade from spreading his prejudices among the workers. A consistent socialist outlook is absolutely irreconcilable with religion. It is therefore not surprising

that the founders of scientific socialism had a sharply negative attitude towards it. Engels wrote: "We want to sweep away everything that claims to be supernatural and superhuman, . . . For that reason we have once and for all declared war on religion and religious ideas. . . ."* Marx in turn called religion the opium with which the higher classes try to lull the consciousness of the people and said that to destroy religion, as the illusory happiness of the people, is to demand their real happiness. Again he said: "The criticism of religion disillusions man to make him think and act and shape his reality like a man who has been disillusioned and has come to reason, so that he will revolve round himself and therefore round his true sun."**

This is so true that in our country all those former "Marxists" who, because of their bourgeois strivings, neither wish nor are able to wish that the proletariat should completely lose its illusions, have now returned to the fold of religious belief.›[13]

NOTE 6

Engels uses the word "belles-lettres" and "literary" in a sense in which they are no longer used in Russia. Hence a misunderstanding can arise: "How does it come about," the reader may ask, "that 'true' socialism has degenerated into unappetizing belles-lettres? Probably its followers wrote

* Engels, "The Condition of England," Marx and Engels, *Collected Works,* Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975, Vol. 3, p. 463. — *Ed.*

** Marx, "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law. Introduction," Marx and Engels, *Collected Works,* Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975, Vol. 3, p. 176. — *Ed.*

bad and tendentious novels and tales?" But the point is that the Germans class not only poetry (Dichtkunst) but also oratory (Redekunst) among belles-lettres (the so-called schönen Wissenschaften). That is why the degeneration of "true" socialism into belles-lettres means its degeneration into unappetizing rhetoric, as a Russian writer would put it. We will recall that in Belinsky the word "belles-lettres" did not have the same meaning as we give it now.

‹On German, or "true," socialism, cf. Fr. Mehring, *Geschichte der deutschen Sozialdemokratie* [*The History of German Social-Democracy*], Vol. I, p. 199-203 (first edition). This trend is described in greater detail by Mehring in his explanatory notes to the works of Marx and Engels which he published (*Aus dem literarischen Nachlass* [*From the Literary Legacy*], etc., Vol. II, pp. 349-74). Professor Adler's book *Geschichte der ersten sozialpolitischen Bewegungen in Deutschland* [*History of the Early Social Political Movements in Germany*] is interesting in this respect mainly for the excerpts it contains from the works of "true" socialists, especially those of M. Hess and K. Grün. The best description of the latter is contained in Marx's article: "*Karl Grün: Die soziale Bewegung in Frankreich und Belgien,* oder die Geschichtsschreibung des wahren Sozialismus" ["Karl Grün: *The Social Movement in France and Belgium,* or the Historiography of True Socialism"],* which appeared originally in *Westfälischen Dampfboot,*[14] August-October 1847, and was reprinted in *Neue Zeit,* Nos. 1-6, 1899-1900. Last but not least, mention must be made of a few most substantial and correct although very biting pages of the *Manifesto of the*

* For a critical analysis of Karl Grün's book, see *The German Ideology,* Eng. ed., Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1964, pp. 534-85. — *Ed.*

Communist Party on true socialism (Chap. III, pp. 29-33 of my translation, 1900 edition).* Mr. Struve's articles in *Neue Zeit* (Nos. 27 and 28 of 1895-96 and 34 and 35 of 1896-97) have now lost most of their interest. The first sets forth the content of two articles by Marx, one of which has now been published in full by Mehring (the article on Hermann Kriege, *Aus dem literarischen Nachlass,* Vol. II. pp. 415-45) and the other (on Karl Grün) reprinted in the above-mentioned issues of *Neue Zeit*; Struve's second article "Studien und Bemerkungen zur Entwickelungsgeschichte des wissenschaftlichen Sozialismus" ["Studies and Comments on the History of the Development of Scientific Socialism"] is devoted to the "*history of the idea of class struggle.*" According to him Lorenz von Stein was apparently the first to have advanced this idea, at least in German literature. Mr. Struve thinks Marx borrowed it from Stein. This is an unfounded and completely improbable guess. In order to corroborate it, Mr. Struve would have had to prove that at the time of publication of L. von Stein's book on French socialism Marx still had no knowledge of the works of the French historians of the period of the Restoration, who already firmly adhered to the viewpoint of class struggle. Mr. Struve did not and never will be able to prove that. (For the reader interested in this question I allow myself to refer to my foreword to the *Manifesto of the Communist Party,* 1900 edition.) Mr. Struve's article is now interesting only from one aspect: it shows us how high Mr. Struve's level was in 1896-97, in spite of all the defects of his thinking and all the gaps in his education, in comparison with the level to which he sank in his *Osvo-*

* See Marx and Engels. *Manifesto of the Communist Party,* Eng. ed., Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1975, pp. 66-69. — *Ed.*

bozhdeniye.[15] That man "evolved from the ape" is a very gladdening thing, but there is nothing sadder than the reverse transformation — from man to "ape."

The German "true" socialists sinned *in theory* by having no idea of economics in general and of the class struggle in particular; *in practice* their gravest sin was their negative attitude to "*politics.*" Karl Grün's attacks on the liberal movement of the German bourgeoisie at the time would now be readily subscribed to by any of our conservatives. Marx was extremely severe in his condemnation of this enormous error; this was one of the many services he rendered. But in condemning the "true" socialists, one must remember that the question of the socialist attitude to politics was incorrectly solved by the Utopian socialists in *all countries.* Russia is no exception to the general rule; our Narodniks and Narodovoltsi* too coped very badly with this problem. More than that, even *now* rather strange views are spread among the

* The Narodovoltsi Group was formed in 1891 and went out of existence in 1896. Influenced by the growth of the working-class movement in Russia, this group gradually abandoned the principles of Narodnaya Volya and adopted the principles of Marxism. Subsequently, some of its members became active members of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party.

The Narodnaya Volya (People's Will), the name of a secret revolutionary society formed in 1879, regarded individual acts of terrorism against the prominent representatives of the autocracy as its chief weapon in the struggle. Shortly after the assassination of tsar Alexander II by members of the Narodnaya Volya on March 1, 1881, the society was broken up by the tsarist government. After this, the majority of the Narodniks abandoned the revolutionary struggle against tsarism and began to preach conciliation and agreement with the autocracy. These epigones of Narodism — the liberal Narodniks of the eighties and nineties of the nineteenth century — became the champions of the interests of the kulaks. — *Ed.*

Russian *Social-Democrats* concerning the political tasks of the working class. Suffice to recall the talk about the *seizure of power* by the Social-Democrats in the now impending *bourgeois* revolution. The supporters of such a seizure forget that the dictatorship of the working class will be possible and opportune only where it is a case of a *socialist* revolution. These supporters (who rally round the paper *Proletary*[16]) are returning to the political standpoint of the late "*Narodnaya Volya trend.*" The founders of scientific socialism took a different view of the seizure of power. "The worst thing that can befall a leader of an extreme party," says Engels in his *The Peasant War in Germany*, "is to be compelled to take over a government in an epoch when the movement is not yet ripe for the domination of the class which he represents, and for the realization of the measures which that domination implies. *What* he *can do* depends not on his will but on the degree of contradiction between the various classes, and on the level of development of the material conditions of existence, of the relations of production and commerce on which the level of development of class contradictions always rest. What he *ought* to do, what his party demands of him, again depends not on him or the stage of development of the class struggle and its conditions. He is tied to his previous doctrines and demands which, again, do not proceed from the *immediate** balance of forces of the social classes, or from the *contemporary,* more or less *accidental,** level of the relations of production and commerce, but from his more or less penetrating insight into the general outcome of the social and political movement. Thus, he necessarily finds himself in an insoluble dilemma. What he *can* do contradicts all his

* Italics by Plekhanov. — *Ed.*

previous actions, his principles and his party's immediate interests, and what he *ought* to do cannot be carried out. In a word, he is compelled to represent not his party, not his class, but the class for whose domination the movement is then ripe. In the interests of the movement itself he is compelled to carry out the interests of a class alien to him, and to put off his own class with phrases and promises, and with the protestation that the interests of that alien class are their own interests. Whoever is put into this false position is irredeemably lost"[17] (quoted by me in *Our Differences,* pp. 288-89).

It would be useful for Lenin and the Nietzscheans and Machists surrounding him to give this some thought. But there are grounds for fearing that these "supermen" have lost the capacity to think.›[18]

NOTE 7

What is the meaning of "to deny the possibility of knowing the world" or "not to consider complete knowledge of it possible"? We shall see presently.

I cannot doubt my own existence for one minute; it is vouched for by my own internal conviction, which nothing can refute. "Judging according to common sense," the reader may add, "it may perhaps be conceded that there are no grounds for doubting the existence of the paper on which you are writing these lines." At another time I would not doubt it, but now I have been seized with a desire to philosophize, and for the philosopher current "common sense judgments" are not always convincing. I ask the reader: Of which *existence* of the paper are you talking? If you assume

that it exists *outside* of me, that it is one of the objects which make up what is called the external world, I will ask you another question: How do you know of the existence of those objects? ‹What guarantee do you have that the external world exists?› Your external feelings tell you of it, your *sensations* testify to it: you *see* this paper and *touch* this desk. That is undeniable. But this means that you are dealing, properly speaking, *not with objects but* with sensations and with ideas arising from them. You only infer the existence of these objects on the basis of your sensations. But what proof have you of the *correctness* of this inference? You think that the objects *cause* the sensations. But leaving aside the question of how reliable your conception of *cause* in general is, I would ask you to explain to me why you are so sure that the cause of your sensations lies *outside you* and not *in yourself.* It is true that you are in the habit of dividing your sensations into two categories: 1) those whose cause lies within you; 2) those which are caused by objects outside you. But that is *only* a habit. How do you know that this habitual classification of sensations does not flow from the nature of your "*ego,*" which is conscious of itself only insofar as, by an unconscious act of creation, it creates and counterposes to itself, *within itself,* an external world, the "non-*ego*"? It seems more probable to me that this is exactly what takes place in reality, and that there is no external world at all, no world existing outside my "*ego.*"

While you wax indignant at my "sophism," I shall continue to philosophize. But now I shall abandon the standpoint of *subjective idealism,* whose most prominent representative was Fichte, and change into a *sceptic.*

I open Hume's book *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* and read you the following passage from Section

XII. "It seems evident that men are carried, by a natural instinct or prepossession, to repose faith in their senses. . . . It seems also evident, that, when men follow this blind and powerful instinct of nature, they always suppose the very images, presented by the senses, to be the external objects, and never entertain any suspicion, that the one are nothing but representations of the other. . . ."* But philosophy would find it extremely difficult if it wanted to *prove* that instinct does not deceive man. The decisive argument can be taken only from experience; but "here experience is, and must be entirely silent";** we are dealing only with ideas and shall never be able to check their connection with objects. That is why reason gives no grounds whatsoever for admitting any such connection. Of course this need not embarrass us. All such arguments are only the fruitless play of the mind. The sceptic himself would be embarrassed if he were asked what he really wants, what he is aiming at with his clever arguments. "Man must act, reason and believe," although, in spite of all his efforts, he cannot be completely sure of the ultimate bases of his actions and his reasoning. But, all the same, in philosophy one must not lose sight of this impossibility. It must be remembered that the field of knowledge of the world accessible to us is limited by fairly narrow bounds. We are not even in a position to understand the true nature of the *causal connection* between one phenomenon and another. We have seen a stone falling to the ground thousands of times. Therefore we *believe* that it will always fall unless something supporting it prevents it. But our belief

* Edwin A. Burtt, *The English Philosophers from Bacon to Mill,* Random House, New York, 1939, p. 680. — *Ed.*

** Ibid., p. 681. — *Ed.*

is founded only *on habit.* Reason does not make it obligatory, nor can it do so. It gives us no guarantee that what we call a law of nature is immutable.

Let us continue. Let us remember the basic proposition in the philosophy of Kant, who was influenced by Hume's scepticism. Objects of some kind exist outside us. But of exactly what kind, we do not know. Actually we are dealing only with our own sensations and with images of those objects which are formed in us on the basis of these sensations. But sensation, and consequently the image of the object, is the resultant of two forces: the properties of the objects which produce a certain impression on us and those of the receiver who receives the impressions, the properties of our "ego," which groups them in a certain manner, or, so to speak, arranges and connects them *in a manner conforming to its own nature.* This alone makes it obvious that our ideas of objects cannot be similar to the objects which give rise to them, that our ideas are one thing and *things as they exist in themselves* are another. Nor is that all. We said that our "*ego*" groups the impressions it receives from external things (things-in-themselves which are inaccessible to us) *in a manner conforming to its own nature.* But how does it group them, how does it arrange and connect them? We see things *in space.* The question is: Does space exist in itself? *Experience* cannot give a direct answer to this question. As for reason, the presumption that space exists *outside us* and independently of us leads it to contradictory conclusions; it remains to presume that space (just like *time*) is nothing but a *form of our intuition* (or outlook, as some Russian writers put it), and that consequently it has absolutely no relation to things-in-themselves (to *noumena*). From images let us go on to *concepts* and take, for example, the concept of *cause.*

It is quite possible that we are mistaken when we say that phenomenon *A* is the cause of phenomenon *B.* But we are not mistaken when we say in general that a causal connection between phenomena exists. Abolish the concept of cause and you will have nothing left but a chaos of phenomena of which you will understand nothing at all. But the point is precisely that it is *impossible* to abolish this concept. It is obligatory for us, it is *one of the forms of our thinking.* We shall not enumerate the other forms. We shall merely say that as forms of *our thinking* they lose all significance as soon as we talk of things as they exist in themselves, *independently* of our thinking. In other words, what we call laws of nature extend only to the world of phenomena which exists in our consciousness, and the noumena (things-in-themselves) are not at all subject to those laws.

Thus Kant's doctrine on the world of phenomena contains two elements: 1) a subjective *idealist* element: the form of our intuition or of our thinking, of knowledge in general; 2) a *realistic* element: the indeterminate material which the noumena give us and which is processed by our consciousness. Kant calls his philosophy *transcendental idealism.* As our concept of natural necessity is not applicable to the world of noumena, it *can* be considered — by anybody who wishes — as a kingdom of complete freedom. In this world all those spectres — God, the immortality of the soul, freedom of the will — which do not fit in with the concept of conformity to law — *can* find their place. Kant, who fought these spectres in his *Critique of Pure Reason,* yields to them in his *Critique of Practical Reason,* i.e., when it is a question of action, not of abstract speculation.

This *dualism* is the Achilles' heel of Kant's idealism. Incidentally its groundlessness is apparent even from the standpoint of Kant's premises.

‹For example, what is the meaning of a *phenomenon* in Kant's philosophy? It is the resultant of two forces:

1) Action on our *ego* by those objects (noumena) which exist *outside us*,* and are known to us not in themselves, but only through the impressions they produce on us;

2) the properties of our *ego*, which processes the impressions it receives from the thing-in-itself according to these properties.

But if the phenomenon is caused by the action on us of the thing-in-itself, the latter's action is the *cause of the phenomenon.* Yet according to the doctrine of this same Kant, *the category of causality is applicable only within the limits of the world of phenomena but is inapplicable to the thing-in-itself.* There are only two ways out of this obvious contradiction which was already pointed out in German philosophic literature at the end of the eighteenth century: *either* we

* In 32 of Kant's well-known work *Prolegomena zu einer jeden Metaphysik, die als Wissenschaft wird auftreten können* [*Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics, Which Has Any Claims to Be a Science*] which appeared *after* his *Critique of Pure Reason,* we read: "In der That, wenn wir die Gegenstände der Sinne, wie billig, als blosse Erscheinungen ansehen, so gestehen wir hierdurch doch zugleich, dass ihnen ein Ding an sich selbst zu Grunde liege, ob wir dasselbe gleich nicht, wie es an sich beschaffen sei, sondern nur seine Erscheinung, d. i. die Art, wie unsere Sinne von diesem unbekannten Etwas affiziert werden, kennen." ["And we indeed, rightly considering objects of sense as mere appearances, confess thereby that they are based upon a thing in itself, though we know not this thing in its internal constitution, but only know its appearances [*sic.*], viz., the way in which our senses are affected by this unknown something." *Kant's Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics,* edited by Paul Carus, London, Kegan Paul, 1902, p. 75.]

continue to maintain that the category of causality is inapplicable to things-in-themselves and consequently reject the idea that the phenomenon is produced by the *action on us* of the thing-in-itself; *or* we continue to consider this idea as correct and then admit that the category of causality is applicable to things-in-themselves. In the first case we are taking the direct road to *subjective idealism,* because, if the thing-in-itself does *not* act on us, we know nothing of its existence and the very idea of it must be declared unnecessary, that is, superfluous in our philosophy; in the second case we enter upon the *path of materialism,* for the materialists never affirmed that we know what things are in themselves, i.e., independently of their action on us, but maintained only that these things are known to us precisely because they act on our organs of sense and precisely in the measure in which they act on them. "We do not know either the essence or the true nature of matter," says Holbach, "although by its action on us we can judge of some of its properties. . . . For us, matter is what acts in one way or another on our senses."*[19] If Lange wrote that ". . . materialism obstinately considers the world of sensuous appearance as the world of real things" in his *History of Materialism* (Vol. I, p. 349 of the Russian translation, where he is dealing specifically with Holbach), this is explained only by the fact that he "obstinately" *failed to understand materialism.* But however this may be, the question of the unknowability of the external world is settled *positively* in both the cases I

* Still more decisive in this sense is the English materialist Joseph Priestley (cf. his *Disquisitions Relating to Matter and Spirit,* Vol. I, second edition, Birmingham, 1782, p. 134). True, according to the spirit of his variety of materialism, which is fairly close to Ostwald's "energetics," Priestley goes *too* far, but that makes no difference to us here.

have mentioned. Indeed, if we go over to the standpoint of subjective idealism, it will be clear to us that our *ego* is capable of knowing the *non-ego* which it itself creates. And if we prefer to become materialists, with a little reflection we must come to the conviction that if, thanks to the action-on-us of things-in-themselves, we *know some properties of these things,* then, contrary to Holbach's opinion, *their nature is also known* to us to a *certain* extent, for *the nature* of a thing is manifest in its *properties.* The current counterposition of nature to properties is completely unfounded, and it is precisely this counterposition that has led the theory of knowledge into the scholastic labyrinth in which Kant lost his way and in which the present opponents of materialism continue to wander helplessly. Goethe, with his intuition as a poet and thinker of genius, understood better than Kant, the "transcendental idealist," and even better than Holbach, the materialist, where truth lies. He said:

> Nichts ist innen, nichts ist draussen,
> Denn was innen, das ist aussen.
> So ergreifet ohne Säumniss
> Heilig öffentlich Geheimniss . . . *

These few words may be said to contain the whole "epistemology" of materialism: but neither these words nor the materialist theory of knowledge can yet be understood by the scholastics who speak of the unknowability of the external world.

---

* Nothing is inside and nothing is outside,
For what is within is without.
Make haste, then, to grasp this holy mystery
Which is public knowledge.

(*Goethe,* The Penguin Poets, London, 1964, p. 273.) — *Ed.*

Hegel revealed with extraordinary clarity the logical, or, if you prefer, the *epistemological,* error which underlies all arguments that things-in-themselves are inaccessible to our knowledge. It is, indeed, impossible for us to answer the question what a thing-in-itself is. The reason is very simple: the question "*what is?*" presupposes that the thing in question has properties which must be pointed out; this question retains any sense at all *only on this assumption.* But "philosophical people" who indulge in talk about the unknowability of things-in-themselves *initially abstract from all the properties of the thing* and by so doing make *the question absurd* and therefore *the answer impossible.* Kant's transcendental idealism, Hegel says, "places every determinateness of things both as regards form and content, in consciousness, the fact that I see the leaves of the tree not as black but as green, and taste sugar as sweet and not bitter, that I determine the first and second strokes of a clock as successive and not as one beside the other, nor determine the first as cause and the second as effect, and so on, all this is something which from this standpoint, falls in *me,* the subject." (*Wissenschaft der Logik,* Book I, Section One, p. 55; Section Two, p. 150.* Before Hegel, *Priestley* made many most apt remarks about what, properly speaking, must be understood by the word *knowledge* in his *Disquisitions* and also in his polemic with Price.**)

But pardon, the reader may object, is not colour or sound something quite subjective? Is the perception of sound or colour similar to the kind of movement by which it is caused

---

* Hegel, *Science of Logic,* English edition translated by A. V. Miller, Allen and Unwin, London, 1969, pp. 120 and 489. — *Ed.*

** J. Priestley, *A Free Discussion on the Doctrines of Materialism and Philosophical Necessity,* London, 1778. — *Ed.*

according to the teaching of modern natural science? Of course, it is not. But if *iron* has different *colours* at different *temperatures,* there is an *objective cause* for this which does not depend on the qualities of my "mental" make-up. Our famous physiologist Sechenov was perfectly right when he wrote that "every vibration or transition of sound according to the intensity, pitch or duration we feel, corresponds to a perfectly definite change in the actual movement of sound. Sound and light as sensations are products of man's make-up; but the roots of the forms and movements we see, like the modulations of sound we hear, lie outside us in the real world" ("Objective Thought and Reality" in the collection *Help for the Famine-Stricken,* ed. of *Russkiye Vedomosti* [*Russian Recorder*], p. 188). Sechenov adds: "*Whatever the external objects may be in themselves, independently of our consciousness — even if it be granted that our impressions of them are only conventional signs — the fact remains that the similarity or difference in the signs we perceive corresponds with a real similarity or difference.*" In other words, "*the similarities or differences man finds in the objects he perceives are real similarities or differences*" (ibid., p. 207). This again is true. Only we must note that Mr. Sechenov does not express himself quite precisely. When he admits that our impressions may be only conventional signs of things-in-themselves, he seems to acknowledge that things-in-themselves have some kind of "appearance" which we do not know of and which is inaccessible to our consciousness. But this "*appearance*" is precisely merely the result of the action on us of the things-in-themselves: *outside this action they have no "appearance" whatsoever.* Hence, to counterpose their "appearance" as it exists in our consciousness to that "appearance" of theirs which they supposedly have in reality

means not to grasp which concept is connected with the word appearance. As we said above, this imprecise terminology underlies all the "epistemology" of Kantian scholasticism. I know that Mr. Sechenov is not inclined to such scholasticism; I have already said that *his* theory of knowledge is perfectly correct, but we must not make to our opponents in philosophy such concessions in terminology as will interfere with our expressing our own thoughts with complete precision. Another reason why I make this reservation is that in the notes to the first edition of my translation of this pamphlet by Engels I also failed to express myself quite precisely and only subsequently became fully aware of the awkwardness of that imprecision.

And so things-in-themselves have no "appearance" at all. Their "appearance" exists only in the consciousness of those subjects on whom they act. The question now is, who are those subjects? People? No, not only people, but all organisms which, thanks to certain peculiarities of their structure, have the possibility of "*seeing*" the external world in one way or another. But the structure of these organisms is not identical; for that reason the external world has not an identical "appearance" for them; I do not know how the snail "sees" things, but I am sure that it does not "see" things in the same way as people do. From this, however, it does not follow that the properties of the external world have only subjective significance. By no means! If a man and a snail move from point *A* to point *B,* the straight line will be the shortest distance between those two points for both the man and the snail; if both these organisms went along a broken line, *they would have to expend a greater amount of labour moving from one place to another.* Consequently, *the properties of space also have objective significance,* although they

appear differently to different organisms at different stages of development.

Nor is that all. What is a snail *for me*? A part of the external world which acts on me in a definite manner determined by my make-up. So that if I admit that the snail "sees" the external world in one way or another, I am obliged to acknowledge that the "appearance" which the external world presents to the snail is itself determined by the properties of this real, existing, external world. Thus, the relation of object to subject, of being to thought, this basic question of modern philosophy, as Engels says, presents itself to us in a completely new light. The counterposition of the subject to the object disappears: the *subject* becomes the *object* too; *matter* (remember Holbach's definition: "for us matter is what acts in one way or another on our senses") under definite conditions turns out to be endowed with *consciousness*. This is the purest materialism; but it is the only answer to the question of the relation of subject to object which is at all satisfactory and which does not contradict science.

Further. Kant in no way connects his theory of knowledge with the *doctrine of evolution* which dominates science today and to the substantiation of which he himself contributed so much by his work *Allgemeine Naturgeschichte und Theorie des Himmels* [*General Natural History and Theory of the Heavens*].* This is a great shortcoming, which is naturally explained by the state of biology in Kant's day but is now clearly felt by certain biologists who rate Kant's philosophy very high. As an example I shall mention an interesting

* In Plekhanov's *Selected Philosophical Works*, Vol. I, of both the Russian and the English editions, the title of this work by Kant was given as *Allgemeine Theorie und Geschichte des Himmels* [*General Theory and History of the Heavens*]. — *Ed.*

article by Professor Reinke, "Kants Erkenntnisslehre und die moderne Biologie" ["Kant's Theory of Knowledge and Modern Biology"] in *Deutsche Rundschau* [*German Review*], July, 1904.

Reinke finds that modern natural science, and especially biology, does not fit in with Kant's teaching "on the *a priori* properties of human reason."

Kant, as we know, says that the category of causality is inapplicable to *things-in-themselves* and applicable only to *phenomena*, and this because causality is introduced into phenomena by our reason, is an *a priori* law of nature. Generally, according to Kant, reason serves as the source of all order in nature, since it dictates its laws to nature. This is what embarrasses Reinke. "Does such an *a priori* exist?" he asks. He answers as follows, "Man, from his very birth, and consequently prior to any experience, is compelled by the properties of his reason to think according to the category of causality and to conceive phenomena in time and in space (Reinke also calls time and space categories; this is not a slip of the pen, but a peculiar way of understanding the doctrine of the categories, on which I shall not dwell here); but in just the same way he is compelled by the attributes of his organism to breathe, to move, to take food, etc. As man is part of nature, he is subject to its great law — the law of *adaptation* to the conditions of his existence. It would be perfectly ridiculous to think that this law of adaptation is prescribed to nature by our reason. But the *mental* attributes of organisms too are subject to this law, for they are also part of nature; they too develop with the development of the organism. All forms of adaptation of the organism to the medium around it — lungs, gills, etc., are given to the organism just as much *a priori* as the forms of thought. Both

these groups of properties of the organism are acquired by it through heredity, and they develop concomitantly with its growth from the cell, in which such properties are quite imperceptible. If we ask ourselves how they were acquired by a given species of animal, we will have to turn to the history of the evolution of the earth, but if we take a separate individual — man or some other animal — all its properties, physical as well as spiritual, are given to it *a priori.*"

Such is Reinke's reasoning. His arguments are interesting and correct, but thanks to him Kant's *a priori* acquires a completely new form. And Reinke would hardly be approved by Kant. Suffice to say that Reinke refuses to attribute an exclusively subjective character to time, space and causality. On the contrary. "Analogy with the adaptation of bodily forms leads me to the conclusion," he says, "that *a priori* laws of thought would not exist at all if they . . . did not correspond to the realities outside us." This already sounds quite materialistic, although Reinke, being one of the pillars of contemporary *neo-vitalism*, is naturally not a materialist. It also goes without saying that present-day neo-Kantians like Cohen, Lasswitz or even Riehl would not agree at any price with what Reinke says about the *a priori.* But modern biology gives them no peace.

"I do not know," says another German author, "how philosophers who adhere to Kant's theory of knowledge cope with the doctrine of evolution. For Kant, man's soul was an unchangeable datum with respect to its elements. For him it was only a question of determining its *a priori* character and deducing all the rest from it, not of proving the origin of that character. But if we proceed from the axiom that man evolved gradually out of a blob of protoplasm, we shall have to deduce from the elementary manifestations of

life in the cell the very thing which for Kant was the basis . . . of the whole world of phenomena" (P. Beck, *Die Nachahmung und ihre Bedeutung für Psychologie und Völkerkunde [Imitation and Its Significance for Psychology and Ethnography]*, Leipzig, 1904, p. 33). The point is, however, that so far the Kantians have given no thought to whether their theory of knowledge fits in with the doctrine of evolution and were even very surprised when anybody suggested that they should take this into account. I remember how my Kantian friends shrugged their shoulders in scorn when in arguing with Konrad Schmidt I adduced against Kant the arguments P. Beck advances in the passage I have just cited. But truth is coming into its own, and today even such an incorrigible, we may say, Kantian as Windelband has found himself forced to ask whether the "phenomenality" of time (*die Phaenomenalität der Zeit*) can be acknowledged by an adherent of the theory of evolution (cf. his article "Nach hundert Jahren" ["After a Hundred Years"] in the collection *Zu Kants Gedächtnis [In Commemoration of Kant]*, Berlin, 1904, pp. 17-18).

Windelband finds that science sets Kantianism a "difficult problem" here. But the "problem" in the present case is not "difficult," it is simply *insoluble.*

Evolution takes place *in time* and yet, according to Kant, time is only a subjective form of intuition. If I hold the philosophy of Kant, I contradict myself when I speak of what *pre-dated me*, i.e., when I did not exist and consequently the forms of my intuition, space and time, did not exist either. It is true that Kant's disciples tried to get out of his difficulty by pointing out that with Kant it is a question of the forms of intuition and thought, not of the individual but of the

whole of humanity. However, this is of no help, but only creates new difficulties.

Firstly, I must admit one of two things: *either* other people exist *only in my thoughts*, and in that case they did not exist before me and will not exist after my death; *or* they exist *outside me* and independently of my consciousness, in which case the idea of their existence before and after me naturally does not contain any contradiction; but this is the stage when new and insuperable difficulties arise for Kant's philosophy. If people exist *outside me*, that "*outside me*" is evidently what appears to me as *space* thanks to the structure of my brain. So that space is not only a subjective form of intuition; to it there also corresponds a certain objective "*an sich*" ("in itself"). If people lived *before me* and will live *after me*, then again to this "*before me*" and to this "*after me*" there apparently corresponds some "*an sich*" which does not depend on my consciousness and is only reflected in it in the form of time. So that *time is not merely subjective either.* Finally, if people exist outside me, they are among those things-in-themselves about the possibility of knowing which we materialists are arguing with the Kantians. If *their* actions are in any way capable of determining *my* actions and mine are capable of influencing theirs, which whoever acknowledges that human societies and the development of their cultures do not merely exist in his consciousness must necessarily admit — then it is clear that the category of causality is applicable to the actually existent external world, i.e., to the world of noumena, to things-in-themselves. In a word, there is no other way out: *either subjective idealism*, leading logically to *solipsism* (i.e., the acknowledgement that other people exist only in my thoughts) *or* the renunciation of Kant's premises, a renunciation whose logical consummation must be the tran-

sition to the standpoint of *materialism*, as I already proved in my debate with Konrad Schmidt.

Let us continue. Let us transport ourselves in thought to the epoch when only very remote ancestors of man existed on earth, for example in the Secondary Period. The question is: How did the problem of space, time and causality stand *then*? *Whose* subjective forms were they then? Subjective forms of the ichthyosaurus? And *whose reason* dictated its laws to nature *then*? The reason of the archaeopteryx? Kant's philosophy *cannot give any answer* to these questions. And it must be rejected as being incompatible with modern science.

Idealism says, *without a subject there is no object.* The history of the earth shows that *objects existed long before subjects appeared*, i.e., long before any organism appeared which had any perceptible degree of consciousness. The idealist says, *reason dictates its laws to nature.* The history of the organic world shows that "reason" appears only on a high rung of the ladder of evolution. As this evolution can be explained only by the laws of nature, it follows that nature dictated its laws to reason. The theory of evolution *reveals the truth of materialism.*

The history of mankind is a particular case of *development in general.* That is why what has been said includes the answer to the question whether Kant's teaching can be united with the materialist explanation of history. Of course, the eclectic can unite everything in his mind. With eclectic thinking one can unite Marx not only with Kant, but even with the medieval "realists." But for people who think consistently, the illegitimate cohabitation of Marx with the philosophy of Kant must appear as a monstrosity in the fullest sense of the word.

Kant says in his *Critique of Practical Reason* that *consistency* is the highest obligation of a philosopher, and yet the most rarely found. One cannot help recalling this remark in connection with Kant himself and with the journeymen and novices of philosophy who want to unite him with Marx.

The "critics of Marx," including the above-mentioned poor Konrad, have shouted loud and long that Engels utterly misunderstood Kant when he said that the doctrine of the unknowability of the external world was best refuted by experiment and industry. Indeed Engels was absolutely right. Every experiment and every productive activity of man represents an *active* attitude on his part to the external world, a deliberate calling forth of definite phenomena. And as a phenomenon is the fruit of the action of a thing-in-itself on me (Kant says: the *affecting* of me by that thing), in carrying out an experiment or engaging in the production of this or that product, I force the thing-in-itself to "affect" my "ego" in a definite manner predetermined by me. Consequently, I know at least some of its properties, namely those through which I force it to act. But that is not all. By using certain means to force this thing to act on me, I enter into a relationship of *cause* towards it. But Kant says that the category of causality has no relation whatsoever to "things-in-themselves"; consequently, experiment here refutes him better than he refuted himself when he said that the category of causality is related only to *phenomena* (not to things-in-themselves) and at the same time maintained that the thing-"in-itself" acts on our "*ego*," in other words, that it is the *cause* of phenomena. From this again it follows that Kant was seriously mistaken when he said that the "forms of our thought" (categories, or "basic concepts of reason," e.g.,

causality, reciprocity, existence, necessity) are only "*a priori forms*," i.e., that things-in-themselves are not subject to causal relations, reciprocity, etc. In reality the basic forms of our thought not only completely correspond to the relations existing between things-in-themselves, they *cannot fail to correspond* to them, because otherwise our existence in general, and consequently the existence of our "forms of thought," would be made impossible. It is true that we are quite capable of error in investigating these basic forms: we may take for a category something that is not a category at all. But that is another question, not directly related to the present one. In this connection we shall merely make one remark: when we speak of the knowability of the external world, we do not at all mean that any philosopher you come across has the correct conception of it.

Well, granted that Kant is wrong, granted that his dualism cannot withstand criticism. But the very existence of external objects is still not proved. How will you prove that Hume is not right, that the subjective idealists, for example Berkeley, whose views you set forth at the beginning of this note, are not right?

I do not even consider it necessary to give an answer concerning subjective idealism. It is useless to argue with one whose mind can be satisfied with this philosophy, which, as we have said above, logically leads to *solipsism*; but we can and must request him to be consistent. And consistency for a man like him means, for example, to deny even the act of his own birth; the solipsist who does not recognize anything but his own "ego" would, of course, commit a great error in logic, a real mental *salto mortale* [mortal leap], if he admitted that his mother exists or existed otherwise than in his thought. Yet nobody "perceived" himself during the

process of his birth; hence the solipsist has absolutely no grounds for saying that he was "born of woman." But only the mind of a wretched Poprishchin[3] can be satisfied with such idealism. This idealism is nothing but a *reductio ad absurdum* [reduction to absurdity] of criticism which doubts the knowability of the external world. Man must act, reason and believe in the existence of the external world, said Hume. It remains for us materialists to add that such "belief" is the necessary precondition for thought, *critical* thought in the best sense of the word, that is, the inevitable *salto vitale* [vital leap] of philosophy.[20] The basic question in philosophy is not solved by opposing the "*ego*" to the "*non-ego*," i.e., to the external world; such a counterposition can only lead us into the blind alley of the absurd. The solution of this particular question requires one to go beyond the limits of the "*ego*" and consider how "*it*" (an organism endowed with consciousness) stands in regard to the *external world* surrounding it. But as soon as the question assumes this — the only rational — form, it becomes obvious that the "subject" in general, and consequently my "ego" too, far from dictating laws to the objective world, represents only a component part of that world, *considered from another aspect*, from that of thought, not of extension, as Spinoza, an indisputable materialist, would have said, although historians of philosophy refuse to recognize him as such.*

This decisive act of thought cuts the Gordian knot of Humean scepticism. It goes without saying that as long as I

* Cf. Feuerbach's: "Was für mich, oder subjectiv, ein reingeistiger, immaterieller, unsinnlicher Akt, ist an sich, oder objectiv, ein materieller, sinnlicher." ["What to me, or subjectively, is a purely mental, immaterial, non-sensuous act, is, in itself, or objectively, a material and sensuous one."] *Werke*, II, p. 350.

doubt the existence of external objects, the question of the causal connection *between them* necessarily remains before me in the same form that it took for Hume: I am entitled to talk only of the consistency of my own impressions, the source of which is unknown. But when the work of my thought convinces me that doubt in the existence of the external world leads my mind into absurdity, and when *I, no longer "dogmatically," but "critically,"* declare the existence of the external world indubitable, by that very fact I then admit that my impressions are the result of the action on me of external objects, i.e., I attribute an objective significance to causality.

Of course to a thinker in a certain state of mind the mental *salto vitale* I alluded to may appear unjustified, and he will feel inclined to return to Hume. But Hume's standpoint condemns thought to complete immobility: Hume himself abandoned it every time he began, in his desire to think, to "believe" in the existence of the external world. That is why a return to Hume is a step back compared with materialism, as Engels justly remarks. Incidentally, this step back is now being taken by the *empirio-monists*, whose philosophy Riehl quite correctly calls a revival of Hume's philosophy (*Zur Einleitung in die Philosophie der Gegenwart* [*Introduction to Modern Philosophy*], Leipzig, 1903, p. 101).›

NOTE 8

In this connection it may be remarked that both chemistry and biology will in all probability be finally reduced to molecular mechanics.[21] But the reader can see that Engels is not talking of the mechanics which the French materialists did

not and could not have in mind, any more than Descartes, their teacher, had when he spoke of building an "*animal machine.*" We can see at least from the first part of Descartes' work *On the Passions* (*Des passions en général, etc.*) what mechanical causes he resorted to in explaining phenomena occurring in the animal organism. But how little the mechanical outlook of the French materialists tallies with the historical view of nature is best shown by the famous *Système de la nature* (*The System of Nature*). In Part I, Chapter 6, its authors come up against the question of the *origin of man.* Although the idea of his gradual (*zoological*) evolution does not seem "*contradictory*" to them, everything makes clear that in their eyes it is a very improbable "guess." If anybody had objected to this guess, if anybody had told them that "nature acts through a definite aggregate of universal and immutable laws" (as though universal and immutable laws are contradictory to evolution!!); if to this they had added that "man, the quadruped, the fish, the insect, the plant, and so on, have existed through the ages and remain for ever immutable," the authors "would not have opposed this either"; they would merely have remarked that this view was not contradictory to the truths (of mechanical materialism) which they were expounding. In the end they get out of the difficulty with these considerations: "It is not given to man to know everything; it is not given to him to know his origin; it is not given to him to penetrate into the essence of things down to the primary causes; but he is capable of reasoning and having good intentions, he is capable of sincerely admitting that he does not know what he cannot know and of not substituting incomprehensible words and absurd propositions for his ignorance" (*Système de la nature*, London edition, 1781, Part I, p. 75). A warning for those who

like to philosophize on "the limits to our knowledge of nature."

The authors of *The System of Nature* explain all the historical misfortunes of mankind by lack of "*reason.*" "The people did not know the true foundations of authority, they did not dare to demand happiness from their rulers, who should have given it them. . . . The inevitable consequence of these opinions was the degeneration of politics into the fatal art of sacrificing the happiness of all to the caprice of one or several privileged persons," etc. (Ibid., p. 291.) With such views one could fight successfully against existing "privileges," but one could not even think of a scientific conception of history. ‹For further details see Beltov, *The Development of the Monist View of History*, and my book *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Materialismus* [*Contributions to the History of Materialism*].›

NOTE 9

What is the categorical imperative? Why does Engels speak of it with such scorn? Is it only because it hints at ideals which are too lofty? ‹No, this is not the reason.›

What is an ideal? "An ideal," the philistine answers, "is a goal towards which we are morally obliged to strive but which is so lofty that we will never attain it." From this the philistine draws the conclusion — an extremely pleasant one for him — that "faith in an ideal" is compatible with actions which, to say the least, have nothing in common with the "ideal." In the seventies there were such "ideal" gendarme officers in Russia who when arresting a "nihilist" assured him that socialism was indeed a very good thing, that nothing

better could be imagined, but that at the same time the ideal was unattainable, that, living on earth, one must think of earthly things, that what was "earthly" demanded that he, the ideal gendarme officer, "should track down and arraign" the no less ideal nihilist, and that was just what he was doing. Doubtless the gendarmes were lying when they spoke of their striving towards an "ideal." But let us take another example. Our "legal" Narodniks strove for their "ideals" with complete sincerity. But see what came of their sincere attitude to those ideals. Their social ideal was a free "people," developing independently, without any hindrance from the government and the higher estates. Both the government and the higher estates were completely erased, if not completely annihilated, in the Narodist ideal. But what did the Narodniks do to fulfil their ideals? Sometimes they simply moaned over the disintegration of the "foundations" ("they wept over the figures," as G. I. Uspensky put it).[22] Sometimes they advised the government to increase the peasants' allotments and to lighten the burden of taxation. Sometimes — these were the most consistent and irreconcilable — they "settled on the land." But all this did not bring Russian reality any closer to the Narodist ideal. That is why the Narodniks wept not only over figures, but over themselves too. They were conscious of the complete impotence of their ideals. But what was the cause of this impotence? It is clear: there was *no organic connection between their ideals and reality*. Reality went in one direction and ideals in another, or, to put it better, they remained in one spot, continuing "*to sit on the land*" with Messrs. the legal Narodniks, so that the distance between ideals and reality kept on increasing, as a result of which their ideals became more and more impotent day by day. Engels would, of course, have laughed

at *such* ideals, as indeed Hegel did. However, the mockery would have been directed not against the loftiness of the ideals, but precisely against their *impotence*, their severance from the general course of the Russian movement. Engels dedicated his entire life to an extremely lofty goal, the emancipation of the proletariat. He also had his "ideal," but it was not permanently cut off from reality. His ideal was that same reality, but *the reality of tomorrow*, a reality which will be fulfilled, not because Engels was a man with an ideal, but because the nature of the present reality is such that out of it there must develop, by its own internal laws, that reality of tomorrow which we may call Engels' ideal. Uneducated people may ask us: If the whole point consists in the nature of reality, then what has Engels to do with it, why does he interfere in the inevitable historical process with his ideals? Can't the business proceed without him? *Objectively* the position of Engels appears as follows: in the process of the transition from one form to another, reality seized on him as on one of the necessary instruments of the impending revolution. *Subjectively* it turns out that it was a pleasure for Engels to take part in the historical movement in this way, that he considered it his duty and the great task of his life. The laws of social development can no more be fulfilled without the mediation of people than the laws of nature without the mediation of matter. But this does not in any sense mean that the "*individual*" can ignore the laws of social development. In the best of cases he will be punished for this by being put in the position of a ridiculous Don Quixote.

‹In his well-known work *Wirtschaft und Recht* [*Economics and Law*] Stammler expressed amazement at the fact that Social-Democrats considered that the proletarian revolution

is *inevitable*, on the one hand and found it necessary to promote its advent, on the other. In his opinion this was just as strange as creating a party to promote astronomically inevitable eclipses of the moon. But this remark shows that he did not understand the *materialist* philosophy underlying modern socialism, as in fact does his whole book. Long ago J. Priestley said quite correctly: "Though the chain of events is necessary, our *own determinations* and *actions* are necessary links of that chain" (*Disquisitions*, Vol. I, p. 110). Kant considered Priestley a fatalist. But where is the fatalism in this? There is no trace of it, as Priestley pointed out in his controversy with Price.

Now let us speak of the categorical imperative. What is it? Kant calls imperative rules which have the "stamp of obligation." An imperative can be *conditional* or *categorical.* A conditional imperative determines the will only in relation to a given desirable action. A *categorical* imperative determines the will *independently* of this or that desired end; it determines the will as such, "even before I ask myself whether I have sufficient ability to perform the desired action or what I must do to perform it." Besides the stamp of obligation, the categorical imperative has, therefore, the stamp of unconditional *necessity.* If somebody is told that he must work and put money aside for a rainy day, this is a *conditional imperative*; he must put money aside only if he does not want to be in need when he is old and has no other means of protecting himself against poverty. But the rule *not to make false promises* applies only to man's will as such and does not depend on the aims pursued by a given man. By this rule the act of will is determined *a priori.* This is a *categorical* imperative. "Thus," Kant says, "practical laws

refer to the will only, without considering what is attained by its causality, and we may disregard this latter . . . in order to have them quite pure." (*Critical Examination of Practical Reason,* Russian translation by N. M. Sokolov, St. Petersburg, 1897, p. 21 [Abbott, *Kant's Critique of Practical Reason and Other Works on the Theory of Ethics,* Longmans, London, 5th ed., 1898, p. 107].)

There is, properly, only one categorical imperative which states: "Act as if the maxim of thy action were to become by thy will a Universal Law of Nature." (*Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* [*Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals*], Leipzig, 1897, p. 44 [Abbott, op. cit., p. 39].)

To explain his thought Kant cites several examples. A particular person is so unhappy that life has become a burden to him and he asks whether it is permissible to do away with himself. Where shall we look for the answer to this question? In the categorical imperative. What would happen if suicide were made a universal law? Life would cease. Therefore, suicide is incompatible with morality. Another example. Somebody has trusted his chattels to the safekeeping of another man. Is it permissible for the other man to appropriate them? To Kant this question too seems just as easy to answer with the help of the categorical imperative: if all people appropriated what they had been entrusted with, nobody would entrust property to others. A third example. A well-to-do man could help a poor man but refuses to do so. Is this not contrary to moral duty? It is: nobody can desire that such conduct should be the general rule, since each may find himself in difficulties.

These examples provide a good explanation of Kant's thought, but they also reveal its groundlessness. Hegel has

already noted,* with justice, that the example of giving chattels for safekeeping is not convincing, for one may ask, where is the harm if things are not entrusted for safekeeping? And if anyone replied that it would then be more difficult to safeguard chattels and that property itself would finally become impossible, it could also be objected, what is property needed for? Kant's teaching, as Hegel says, does not contain a single law of morality which is intrinsically clear, without any further arguments and without contradictions, independently of other specifications. This is correct and it is especially noticeable in the example of suicide. Indeed, in this example it is a question of the suicide not of all people in general, but only of such as are broken by life's difficult struggle, and the suicide of such people would not put an end to life.

Besides, Hegel says that with Kant each definite law of morality is an empty statement, a meaningless tautology like the formula A = A, entrusted chattels are entrusted chattels, property is property. That is also correct and quite comprehensible. For Kant there were simply no such questions as those which Hegel counterposes to his "empty statements": Where is the harm if things are not entrusted for safekeeping? Why is property needed? etc. *Kant's ideal,* his "kingdom of ends" (*Reich der Zwecke,* cf. *Grundlegung* [*Fundamental Principles*], p. 58 [Abbott, op. cit., p. 51]) *was the abstract ideal of bourgeois society, whose standards seemed to Kant to be unquestionable commands of* "practical reason." Kant's morality is bourgeois morality, translated into the language of his philosophy, whose main defect, as we have seen, was the

* Cf. Hegel, *Werke,* Vol. I, Berlin, 1832, pp. 349-59. For an exposition of this part, also see Kuno Fischer, *Geschichte der neueren Philosophie* (*History of Modern Philosophy*). — *Ed.*

complete inability to cope with the questions of *development.* To support this I shall dwell on the third example cited above and borrowed from Kant himself. But first I ask the reader to note that Kant was a resolute opponent of utilitarian morality. In his opinion, the principle of happiness contains no other foundations for determining the will than those which are inherent in the capacity to desire; but reason, determining the will, cannot take his inferior capacity into account. Reason is so different from this capacity that even the slightest admixture of the motives deriving from the latter "impairs its strength and superiority; just as in a mathematical demonstration the least empirical condition would degrade and destroy its force and value." (*Critical Examination of Practical Reason,* p. 27 [Abbott, op. cit., p. 112]) The principle of morality consists in being independent of the desired object.

This independence from the desired object has long provided occasion for jokes and epigrams (cf., for example, Schiller and Goethe *Xenien,* pp. 388-89). I cannot give them here.* All I wish to say is that Kant's third example cited above can be considered as convincing *only in the event of our adopting the standpoint of utilitarian morality and com-*

* Here is one of the *Xenien* (*Epigrams*):

Gewissenskrupel

Gerne dien'ich den Freunden, doch thu'ich es leider mit Neigung
Und so wurmt es mir oft, daß ich nicht tugendhaft bin.

Decisum

Da ist kein andrer Rat, du mußt suchen sie zu verachten,
Und mit Abscheu als dann thun, wie die Pflicht dir gebietet.

[I.e., *Scruple of Conscience*: I willingly serve friends, but alas I do it with pleasure and I often have misgivings that I am not virtuous. *Decision*: There is no other way out: you must try to despise them and do with loathing what duty commands you.]

pelling our "practical reason" to take into account our "capacity to desire": for even according to Kant I must help others because I too may be in need of their help. What could be more utilitarian? Besides, I wish to draw the reader's attention to the circumstance that, while objecting to utilitarians, Kant always has in mind the principle of *"personal happiness,"* which he correctly calls the *principle of self-love.* This is precisely why he cannot cope with the basic questions of morality. Indeed, morality is founded on the striving not for *personal happiness,* but for the *happiness of the whole*: the tribe, the people, the class, humanity. *This* striving has nothing in common with *egoism.* On the contrary, it *always presupposes* a greater or lesser degree of *self-sacrifice.* And as social feelings can be transmitted from generation to generation and strengthened by natural selection (cf. Darwin's most apt remarks on this point in his book on the descent of man[23]) self-sacrifice can sometimes take a form suggesting that it is a question of "the autonomous will," without any admixture of "the capacity to desire." But this indisputable circumstance does not in the least exclude the *utilitarian basis* of this lofty capacity. If self-sacrifice were not useful for the particular society, class, or, finally, the particular animal species in its struggle for existence (remember that social feelings are *not* characteristic of man *alone*), then it would be alien to the individuals belonging to this society, class or species. That is all. A particular individual is born with an *a priori* "capacity for self-sacrifice" just as he is born — according to the remark by Reinke quoted above (in Note 7) — with an *"a priori"* capacity to breathe and digest; but there is nothing mysterious in this *"a priori* character": it was formed gradually in the long, long process of evolution.

From the standpoint of evolution and social utility it is easy to answer those questions by means of which Hegel refuted Kant's moral laws: What is the safekeeping of chattels needed for? Why is property needed? etc. But — I repeat — his inability — and that of his followers — to adopt the standpoint of evolution is displayed still more clearly in his ethical teachings than in his theory of knowledge. And here, just as often as with Kant's theory of knowledge, we have to remember Kant's own words: "Consistency is the highest obligation of a philosopher, and yet the most rarely found" (Abbott, op. cit., p. 111).

Jacobi, a contemporary of Kant's, revolted against his teachings and said in a letter to Fichte: "Yes, I am a godless atheist, who desires, contrary to such wills as desire nothing, to lie like Desdemona when she was dying; I want to lie and deceive like Pylades when he tried to pass as Orestes; to kill like Timoleon, to break laws and oaths like Epaminondas and Jan de Witt; to commit suicide like Otto; to plunder the temple like David and even to pluck ears of corn on the Sabbath just because I am hungry and because the law is made for man and not man for the law." That is very good, and Hegel was perfectly right when he held that these ideas of Jacobi's were "perfectly pure, since their expression in the first person, 'I am,' 'I desire,' cannot hinder their objectivity."* But the absolutely correct thought that the law is made for man and not man for the law provides an *unshakable foundation for utilitarian morality understood in its true, i.e., objective sense.*›

* Cf. Hegel, *Werke,* Vol. I, Berlin, 1832, pp. 105-06. The passage quoted by Hegel is from Jacobi, *Werke,* Vol. 3, pp. 37-38. — *Ed.*

NOTE 10

Hegel had already noted that it is absurd to consider historical events from the moral point of view (cf. his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History,* first edition of his complete works, Vol. IX, p. 67). But our "advanced writers" still fail to understand the correctness of this remark (which, I admit, they have hardly heard of). They lament with the utmost sincerity the deterioration of morals which accompanies the disintegration of the old "foundations" of the people's life, foundations on which whole forests of birch-rods and mountains of hard clouts have grown. The factory proletariat is the receptacle for all kinds of vices in their eyes. Scientific socialism takes a different view of the matter. The representatives of scientific socialism knew long before "advanced" Russian writers noticed it that the development of capitalism inevitably leads to what may be called the demoralization of the workers, i.e., first and foremost to a break with traditional established morality (cf. for example Engels' *Die Lage der arbeitenden Klasse in England,* Leipzig, 1845, pp. 120 et seq.).* But Engels did not dream of a resumption of patriarchal relationships, and, what is most important, he understood that out of the "*immorality*" of the factory proletariat there grows a new "*morality*," the morality of *revolutionary struggle against the existing order of things,* which in the end will create a new social system in which the workers will not be "depraved," because the *sources* of their "depravity" will disappear (pp. 256 et seq.). The contemporary condition of Russian "advanced" thought can be expressed as follows: we have no idea even of what really advanced thought in the West already knew half a century ago. Really, it is enough to drive one to despair!

‹These lines were written in 1892 when our arguments with *illegal* Narodism (still in existence as remnants of the Narodnaya Volya trend) were continuing and our polemic with the *legal* Narodniks, which became particularly sharp in the second half of the nineties, was as yet only in preparation. Nowadays our "advanced" writers have no time to mourn over the disintegration of the "old foundations," and they no longer regret the appearance of the *proletariat* in our country: life itself has now shown them the great revolutionary significance of this class; and the "advanced" press now lavishes its praise on it. *Better late than never,* as the saying goes. But I say: better early than late. If our "advanced" people had earlier abandoned their absurd view of the proletariat as of a mere "*ulcer*"; if, in renouncing this view, they had promoted with all their might the development of the consciousness of this class, the infamous "*Black Hundreds*"[24] would not now be playing their dangerous role in politics. The stubborn and persistent defence of the prejudices of Narodism by the "advanced" intelligentsia actually constitutes their *political crime* for which implacable history is now severely punishing them.›

* "The Condition of the Working-Class in England," Marx and Engels, *On Britain,* Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1962, pp. 148 and 247 et seq. — *Ed.*

NOTE 11

As for primitive society, Marx's historical views are brilliantly corroborated by *Morgan's* studies (cf. his *Ancient Society* which was first published in English; now there is a

German, ‹Russian› and, if we are not mistaken, a Polish translation). Some dishonest critics maintain that Morgan's conclusions regarding tribal life are founded only on the study of the social life of the Red Indians in North America. It is sufficient to read his book to be convinced that such "critical" remarks are completely unfounded. In the same way it is sufficient to become acquainted in detail, i.e., from the original sources, with the history of the antique world to see the indisputability of all that Morgan and Engels say about it (cf. the latter's *Der Ursprung der Familie, des Privateigenthums und des Staats* [*The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*]). ‹But notwithstanding the malevolent attitude of many scholars towards Morgan's work, his brilliant thinking has not been lost for modern ethnology. Under his influence a whole school of ethnologists has arisen in North America whose works are published in the annual — and most noteworthy — reports of the Smithsonian Institution and provide many most valuable data for the materialist explanation of the history of primitive society. Among the works in Europe based on the studies of Morgan we must include first of all the valuable works of our German comrade H. Cunow on the systems of relations among the Australian Blacks, the social structure of Mexico and the Inca state, and finally on matriarchy in connection with the development of the productive forces in "savage" tribes.[25] However, one must admit when speaking of Europe that the influence of Morgan's ideas is still relatively weak. But there is no doubt that here too "ethnology" resorts with increasing frequency to purely materialist explanations of social phenomena. I don't think that an investigator such as Karl von den Steinen takes any interest in historical materialism; in his works at any rate there is not even a hint of the slightest

acquaintance with this theory. But in his instructive book *Unter den Naturvölkern Zentral-Brasiliens* [*Among the Aborigines of Central Brazil*], Berlin, 1894, this method, recommended by the "economic" materialists, is invariably applied right through, and in the majority of cases successfully. Even Ratzel, who considers it necessary to defend himself against the reproach of materialism (cf. his *Völkerkunde* [*Ethnology*], II, S. 631), makes the development of "spiritual" culture causally dependent on the development of "material" culture. He says: "The sum of cultural acquisitions of each people at each stage of its development is composed of *material* and *spiritual* acquisitions. These acquisitions are achieved by various means, with varying ease and at different times. . . . At the basis of spiritual cultural acquisitions there lie the material ones" (ibid., Vol. I, p. 17). This is the same historical materialism but not thought through to the end and therefore partly inconsistent, partly naive. We come across the same, so to speak, spontaneous and therefore naive and more or less inconsistent materialism in a large number of works on the development of different special fields of primitive "culture," or, to use Marx's expression, different *ideologies*. Thus, the investigation of primitive *art* has taken a firm stand on *materialist* ground; this could be confirmed by quoting a long list of works published in Europe and in the U.S.A., but I will confine myself to indicating the works of Grosse, *Die Anfänge der Kunst* [*The Beginning of Art*], and of Bücher, *Arbeit und Rhythmus* [*Work and Rhythm*], of which there are Russian translations. It is interesting that this latter work was written by a man whose view of the basic causes of social development is directly opposed to the materialist view (as can be seen from what Bücher wrote about the mutual relations of *play* and *labour*). But clearly even a bourgeois

scientist nowadays cannot altogether escape the influence of truth, although he dislikes acknowledging it because of some prejudice or other. Everything shows that we are now rapidly approaching the time when what we can now observe in natural science will be repeated in the social sciences; all phenomena will be given a materialist explanation, but the basic idea of materialism will be rejected as groundless. It is not difficult to understand the explanation of this dual attitude to materialism: the consistent materialist outlook is *primarily a revolutionary view of the world,* and the "educated classes" in the Western countries are by no means inclined towards revolution at present. It can be seen from an interesting book, *The Economic Interpretation of History,* New York, 1902, by an American, Edwin R. A. Seligman, that I am not slandering the "educated classes." Professor Seligman says expressly that historical materialism is doing itself a lot of harm in the eyes of scientists through its close connection with socialism (cf. p. 90) and its alleged "absurd exaggerations," including its negative attitude to religion in general and to Christianity in particular (see the whole of his Chapter IV). As Seligman considers the materialist explanation of history to be correct and as he wishes to have its correctness recognized by other scientists, he tries to prove that one can adhere to the materialist explanation of history without sharing the atheist and socialist conclusions at which the enormous majority of its supporters have so far arrived. It must be admitted that Seligman is right in his way: *with a certain inconsistency* the logical operation he suggests is obviously possible. It would be useful for the social sciences if bourgeois scientists listened to the advice Seligman gives them: by renouncing the "exaggerations" of modern Marxism they would, of course, be making a big mistake. But

by rejecting historical materialism they are making not one, but many mistakes; of the two evils the former would therefore still be the lesser. . . .

However this may be, the late N. Mikhailovsky was cruelly mistaken when he maintained in his debate with the "Russian pupils of Marx" that, because of its inherent unsoundness, historical materialism is incapable of attracting the attention of the scientific world. This attention is now being drawn to it from all sides, and although the majority of bourgeois scientists still show little inclination to acknowledge its scientific worth for the reasons cited above, it is not rare nowadays even for experts in *geography* to speak about it in specialized works, and, for example, certain members of the Berlin Geographical Society have spared no efforts to fight it. This is a gladdening sign of the times, and one that is of no little importance.›

DELETIONS FROM NOTES TO THE FIRST RUSSIAN EDITION

END OF NOTE 6

On German "true socialism" see the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* by Marx and Engels (a new Russian translation of which was published in Geneva in 1882) and also Adler (*not the* Adler, the leader of the Austrian Social-Democrats) in his *Geschichte der ersten sozialpolitischen Bewegungen in Deutschland* [*History of the Early Social-Political Movements in Germany*]. In this same book — which incidentally is far from satisfactory — the reader will also learn about the activities of *Karl Grün.* German "true" socialism was one variety of Utopian socialism, but without any trace of the profound ideas for which the works of such Utopians as R. Owen, Saint-Simon and Fourier are consistently remarkable. The supporters of "true socialism" *rebelled* against "*politics*" *and could not understand the class struggle at all.* It is well known that certain Russians, who are equally "true" socialists, still sin in the same way. Nowadays we all think differently from the "true" socialists on the question of "politics," we

all acknowledge it to be necessary. But this does not mean that we all have a correct view of politics. Whoever counterposes socialism to politics, whoever fails to understand that every class struggle is a political struggle, whoever says, for example, "let us engage *first* in politics, let us overthrow the autocracy, and then we shall go on to socialism," such a man hasn't risen by a hair's breadth above the Utopian socialist position, he does not understand working class policy, and he will in all probability defend a policy having no direct relation at all to the political tasks of the socialists.

END OF NOTE 7

Thus, for example, we know that, according to Kant's teaching, things-in-themselves, when they act on us, yield material which is processed by our consciousness. But as Überweg correctly notes (p. 233 of the Russian translation of his *History of Modern Philosophy*), "action contains temporality and causality, which, as *a priori* forms, on the other hand, Kant acknowledges as having significance only within the world of phenomena, not beyond it." Many more contradictions of a similar nature could be pointed out, but not, of course, in this short note.

Some German and Russian "philosophers" like to expatiate on the subject of the unknowability of "things-in-themselves." They think that in doing so they are uttering very profound truths. But this is a grave error. Hegel was perfectly correct when he noted that a "thing-in-itself" is nothing but the abstraction of every determinate property, an empty abstraction about which *nothing can be known* for the very reason that it is an abstraction from any determina-

tion. We do not know what a thing-in-itself is. . . . Of course, we do not. The question "what is?" presupposes known properties of the thing which must be pointed out; but once *we abstract from all the properties of a thing,* we naturally cannot answer the question what it is because the impossibility of an answer is already contained in the question. Transcendental idealism "transports" into consciousness all the properties of things in relation to both form and content. It is understandable that from this standpoint it depends only on me, on the subject, that the leaf of the tree appears to me green, not black; the sun round, not quadrangular; sugar sweet, not bitter, and that when the clock strikes *two,* I perceive its strokes successively, not simultaneously, and that I do not consider the first stroke as either the cause or the effect of the second, etc. (*Wissenschaft der Logik* [*Science of Logic*], Book I, Section I, p. 55, Section II, p. 150).

But pardon, the reader may object, is not colour or sound something completely subjective, is the perception of colour and of sound the same thing as the movement which causes it? By no means, but "*every vibration or transition of sound according to the intensity, pitch or duration that we feel corresponds to a perfectly definite change in the movement of sound in reality.* Sound and light as sensations are products of the constitution of man; but the roots of the forms and movements we see, just as the modulations of sound we hear, lie outside us in the real world" (Sechenov, "Objective Thought and Reality," in the collection *Help for the Famine-Stricken,* ed. of *Russkiye Vedomosti* [*Russian Recorder*], p. 188). Generally, "whatever the external objects may be in themselves, independently of our consciousness — even if it be granted that our impressions of them are only conventional signs — the fact remains that the similarity or difference of

the signs we perceive corresponds with a real similarity or difference. In other words, the similarities or differences man finds in the objects he perceives are real similarities or differences" (Sechenov, ibid., p. 207). This cannot be refuted, and consequently one cannot speak of the *unknowability* of things-in-themselves even if it occurred to anybody to speak of these "things" after Hegel showed the *logical* origin of these alleged things.

Our sensations are in their way hieroglyphs which inform us of what is taking place in reality.[26] The hieroglyphs do not resemble the events conveyed by them. But they can *with complete fidelity* convey, both the events themselves, and — what is the main thing — the relations existing between them. Engels says that Kant's theory is best refuted by experiment and industry. Our quotations from Sechenov partly show how this is to be understood. But perhaps it will do no harm to dwell a *little* longer on this question. Every *experiment,* every *industry,* that is, production of the things man needs, the deliberate calling into being of certain *phenomena,* constitutes an *active* attitude of man towards nature. This active attitude sheds new light on it, a light far brighter than that which is given by a *passive* perception of impressions. Indeed, making use of his knowledge of the laws of nature, man can build an electric railway. This means that he himself *deliberately* calls into being definite phenomena (the transformation of electricity into motion properly so-called, etc.). But what is a phenomenon in the sense of Kant's philosophy? It is the resultant of two forces: 1) our "*ego,*" 2) the action produced on this "*ego*" by the thing-in-itself. Consequently, calling forth a definite phenomenon, I force this "thing" to act on my "ego" in a definite manner previously determined by me. Consequently, *I know at least*

some of its properties: namely those by means of which I force it to act. But that is not yet all. Forcing the thing to act on me in a definite manner, I become a *cause* in relation to it. Kant says that the category of causality cannot have any relation to "things-in-themselves"; consequently, experiment here refutes him better than he refuted himself when he said that the category of causality applies only to *phenomena* (and not to things-in-themselves), and at the same time maintained that "things-in-themselves" act on our "*ego*," that is, serve as *one of the causes* of phenomena. From this it follows that Kant was seriously mistaken when he said that the "forms of our thinking" (the categories, or "basic concepts of reason," for example, causality, reciprocity, existence, necessity) are only "*a priori forms*," i.e., that things-in-themselves are not subject to the causal relation, reciprocity, and so forth. In reality the basic forms of our thinking not only correspond fully to the relations existing between things-in-themselves, *they cannot but correspond to* them, because our existence generally, and consequently our "forms of thinking," would otherwise be made impossible. It is true that we are quite capable of error in the investigation of these basic forms; we can take for a category that which is not a category at all. But that is another question which has no direct relation to the present one. Here we will confine ourselves to one remark: when we speak of the identity of the basic forms of being and of thinking we in no wise mean that any philosopher you come across has a completely correct conception of it.

Well, granted that Kant is wrong, granted that his dualism cannot withstand criticism. But the very existence of external objects is still not proved. How will you prove that the subjective idealists are not right, that *Berkeley*, for

example, whose views you set forth at the beginning of this note, is not right? That can be proved too: at any rate read the works of *Überweg* on this question.

END OF NOTE 9

Concerning Kant's categorical imperative . . . but do we need to speak of it? Any history of philosophy will explain it better than we can in a few lines in a note. For one thing, read pp. 245-56 of the Russian translation of Überweg's and Heinze's *History of Modern Philosophy*. To anybody interested in learning how Hegel ridiculed the categorical imperative we recommend in particular pp. 550-81 of the *Phenomenology of Mind** (first German edition). In fact, we only wished to remark that if Engels adopts a scornful attitude to "non-realizable ideals," it is not because of some philistine propensity to being reconciled to every given social system; only that he scorns the Manilov attitude,[27] which incidentally Kant displayed to no small degree. Our aim, we think, is achieved.

END OF NOTE 11

The role of economic wants and relations in the history of the ancient Orient is splendidly brought to light in L. I. Mechnikov's book, *La civilisation et les grands fleuves historiques* [*Civilization and the Great Historic Rivers*], although

* Translated into English by J. B. Baille, Allen and Unwin, London, 2nd ed., 4th impression, 1955, pp. 443-45. — *Ed.*

its late author did not set himself exactly that aim. However, the role of these wants and relations already strikes one forcibly in the voluminous *Histoire ancienne de l'Orient* [*Ancient History of the Orient*] by Lenormant. In the section on medieval history and the origin of medieval institutions we shall refer to Augustin Thierry, Guizot, Maurer and partly Fustel de Coulanges. Finally the significance of economic relations and the class struggle resulting from them in modern history is brought out with striking clarity in Marx's superb work, *Der achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte* [*The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*]. We do not even mention *Capital,* which is also outstanding as a historical work. In general, every step forward in the science of history brings new proofs of "economic materialism." Hence the fact that many historians and writers are now discovering — or more accurately, seeing in the very misty distance — small bits of a long-since discovered America, "independently of Marx," that is, without having the slightest notion of his theory. But that such "independence" of the most important historical theory of our times does not go unpunished is shown if only by Giraud-Teulon's book on the history of the family which has been translated into Russian.

Marx's theory of history must remain the basis for a great many specific historical investigations. And its full significance is still far from clear even to many Marxists. But when "philosophers" such as Mr. Paul Barth (see his *Geschichtsphilosophie Hegels und der Hegelianer* [*The Philosophy of History of Hegel and the Hegelians*]) ask with surprise in exactly which works the correctness of Marx's theory is proved, they only display their ignorance or their lack of reasoning power, a lack which Kant was quite right in recognizing as incurable.

NOTES TO PLEKHANOV'S FOREWORDS AND NOTES, BY EDITORS OF THE RUSSIAN EDITION OF *SELECTED PHILOSOPHICAL WORKS OF PLEKHANOV*

[1] Plekhanov's first Russian translation of *Ludwig Feuerbach* was published in 1892 in Geneva by the Emancipation of Labour group in the series *Library of Modern Socialism.* Plekhanov wrote a short foreword and notes for his translation. In 1905 a second edition was published by the *Library of Scientific Socialism* in Geneva, for which he wrote a long foreword and in which he made some changes and additions in the notes.

Plekhanov's notes are given according to the text of his *Works* (1923-27) checked with the Geneva editions of 1892 and 1905 and with the manuscripts, which are preserved in Plekhanov House. p. 71

[2] Plekhanov is referring to his Note 7. p. 77

[3] *Poprishchin* is a minor official suffering from megalomania in Gogol's tale *A Madman's Diary.* pp. 78, 156

[4] Lenin criticized Plekhanov with regard to the concept of "experience" in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism,* Chapter 3, Section 2, "Plekhanov's Error Concerning the Concept 'Experience,'" Eng. ed., Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1972, pp. 172-75. p. 78

[5] Plekhanov failed to show the essential differences between Marxism and pre-Marxist materialism, while stressing the uniformity of the starting point of pre-Marxist materialism and modern dialectical materialism in resolving fundamental questions of philosophy. He, therefore, made a

mistake in making Spinoza's "materialism" approximate the philosophic views of Marx and Engels. In his article "On the So-Called Crisis of Marxism," Plekhanov said, " . . . modern materialism is only more or less aware of its Spinozism." p. 83

[6] Heraclitus, about 536-470 B.C. p. 92

[7] *Rheinische Zeitung für Politik, Handel und Gewerbe* (*Rhenish Gazette for Politics, Trade and Industry*) was a daily published in Cologne from January 1, 1842, till March 31, 1843. Founded by radical representatives of the Rhenish bourgeoisie in opposition to the Prussian Government and with the support of certain Left Hegelians, it became a revolutionary democratic paper under Marx's editorship. (Cf. V. I. Lenin, *Karl Marx*, Eng. ed., FLP, Peking, 1974, p. 4.) p. 113

[8] In the same article, *Karl Marx*, Lenin points out that the period of his work with the *Rhenish Gazette* was marked by Marx's transition from idealism to materialism and from revolutionary democracy to communism (ibid., p. 48). p. 113

[9] The *Rhenish Gazette* is meant. p. 113

[10] The *New Rhenish Gazette* (*Neue Rheinische Zeitung*) was published from June 1, 1848 to May 19, 1849. In his "Marx and the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*" written in 1884 Engels said that Marx's editorship "made the *New Rhenish Gazette* the most famous German newspaper of the years of revolution." "No German newspaper, before or since, has ever had the same power and influence or been able to electrify the proletarian masses as effectively as the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*." (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Eng. ed., Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1958, Vol. II, pp. 332 and 336-37.)

Lenin called the *New Rhenish Gazette* "the best organ of the revolutionary proletariat which has never been surpassed." (V. I. Lenin, *Karl Marx*, Eng. ed., FLP, Peking, 1974, p. 50, translation revised.) p. 114

[11] See Feuerbach, *Selected Philosophical Works*, Vol. II. Plekhanov uses mainly Chapter 2, "The General Essence of Religion." p. 128

[12] This inquiry was called forth by the bitter struggle which the French Republican Government waged against the Catholic Church at the beginning of the century and which ended in the separation of church and state in 1905.

Answers received from the socialists in different countries were published in four issues of the journal in 1902 — Nos. 107-10, 1 and 15 November, 1 and 15 December. p. 131

[13] A reference to Berdyayev, Bulgakov and other "Legal Marxists" who, at the end of the nineties, "criticized" Marx from a Kantian viewpoint and went over to the God-seekers and religious mysticism after the 1905 Revolution. p. 132

[14] *Das Westfälische Dampfboot* (*Westphalian Steamboat*) — a monthly periodical issued by the "true socialist" D. Lüning in Bielefeld and later in Paderborn from January 1845 to March 1848. p. 133

[15] *Osvobozhdeniye* (*Liberation*) — a journal published under the editorship of P. B. Struve in Stuttgart and Paris 1902-05. From 1904 it was an organ of the liberal bourgeois League of Liberation, which in 1905 formed the nucleus of the Cadet Party. Its counter-revolutionary and anti-proletarian character was exposed in a resolution proposed by Plekhanov and Lenin and adopted by the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. in 1903. p. 135

[16] *Proletary* — the central organ of the R.S.D.L.P. — was published in Geneva from May 14 (27) to November 12 (25), 1905. Lenin was its editor. It succeeded Lenin's *Iskra* (*The Spark*) and the Bolshevik *Vperyod* (*Forward*), and became the ideological and organizational centre of Bolshevism during the period of the First Russian Revolution. The paper exposed the Menshevist tactics of compromising with the bourgeoisie. In the additions he made to the notes on Engels' *Ludwig Feuerbach* in 1905, Plekhanov, as a Menshevik, tried to discredit the theory of the hegemony of the proletariat in the bourgeois revolution followed by *Proletary*, representing it as a return to the ideas of the Narodnaya Volya party. p. 136

[17] Engels, *The Peasant War in Germany*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1956, pp. 138-39, translation revised. Lenin quotes the same passage from Engels in "Social-Democracy and the Provisional Revolutionary Government" (V. I. Lenin *Collected Works*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1962, Vol. 8, pp. 279 and 280) in which he shows the "difference between the point of view of revolutionary Social-Democracy and that of tail-ism" (p. 281). p. 137

[18] In pursuing his pro-Menshevik and anti-Bolshevik factional activity in 1905, Plekhanov accused Lenin of Blanquism and slandered Lenin's followers as Nietzscheans and Machians. He opposed the decisions of the Third Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. on the necessity for establishing a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants, limiting the tasks of the First Russian Revolution to the establishment of a

bourgeois-democratic parliamentary republic. Lenin, however, regarded the creation and the work of the Provisional Revolutionary Government as the most important condition for the passing of the bourgeois-democratic revolution into the socialist revolution. p. 137

[19] P. Holbach, *Système de la nature ou des lois du monde physique et du monde moral* (*The System of Nature or On the Laws of the Physical World and the Moral World*). Holbach's most important work, it was published allegedly in London but actually in Amsterdam in 1770 under the pseudonym of M. Mirabeau. For a long time it was ascribed to a group of authors. p. 143

[20] Here Plekhanov's use of Hume's word "belief," even though put in quotation marks "discloses a confusion of terms," Lenin points out (*Materialism and Empirio-Criticism,* Eng. ed., FLP, Peking, 1972, p. 159). p. 156

[21] The dialectical-materialist solution of the question of the impermissibility of glossing over the specific character of qualitatively different forms of motion of matter, of the impermissibility of reducing these forms to only one of them, was given by Engels in the *Dialectics of Nature,* Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1954, pp. 328 and 332-33. p. 157

[22] Uspensky, *Living Figures,* "This is the kind of complicated thing sometimes hidden in statistic fractions. You ponder and ponder over these little ciphers, you do all sorts of calculations, and suddenly a tear drops and smudges it all!" (G. I. Uspensky, *Collected Works,* Russ. ed., Vol. X, Book 2, 1954, p. 179.) p. 160

[23] Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex,* Chapter V. The attempt to transpose biological concepts to the domain of social science was criticized by Lenin in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism,* Eng. ed., FLP, Peking, 1972, p. 398. p. 166

[24] A reactionary, monarchist, pogrom-making organization set up by the tsarist police to combat the revolutionary movement. They murdered revolutionaries, assaulted progressive intellectuals, and organized anti-Jewish pogroms. p. 169

[25] Cf. H. Cunow, *Die soziale Verfassung des Inkareichs. Eine Untersuchung des altperuanischen Agrarkommunismus* (*The Social Structure of the Inca Empire. A Study of Ancient Peruvian Agricultural Communism*), Stuttgart, Dietz, 1896, and his article, "Les bases économiques du matriarcat" ("Economic Bases of Matriarchy"), *Le devenir social* [*The Social Future*], 1898, Nos. 1, 2 and 4. p. 170

[26] Lenin criticized Plekhanov's error on "hieroglyphs" in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism,* Eng. ed., FLP, Peking, 1972, pp. 275-83. p. 177

[27] Manilov is a character in Gogol's *Dead Souls,* whose name has come to typify smug complacency, empty and saccharine prattle, and pipe-dreaming. p. 179

恩 格 斯

路德维希·费尔巴哈和德国古典哲学的终结

*

外文出版社出版（北京）
1976年（32开）第一版
编号：（英）1050—2268
00120（精）
00070（平）
1/1—E—1333