HEGEL, MARX, AND ENGELS

by

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THE OBJECT of this essay is to fix the role and the essential contributions of Hegel, Marx, and Engels in the evolution of modern thought, taking it in its connections with economic and social evolution.

At first the movement of modern thought followed the development of the rising class, the bourgeoisie, and in this phase reached its highest point in materialist rationalism and in Hegel. Thereafter, it was taken up by the new rising class, the proletariat, and in Marxism attained a conception of the world which was adapted to a new mode of economic and social organization.

It took form under the influence of the great discoveries of the fifteenth century, which infinitely expanded the world's boundaries and provoked a rapid growth of needs and the consequent development of a new economic system based on a greater freedom of production and circulation of wealth. This system caused at once a profound change in men's way of life and a progressive transformation of the static conception of the world into a dynamic conception which was dominated, like the system itself, by the notions of liberty, movement, and progress.

This thought, which at the outset found its expression in the two

great movements of spiritual liberation, the Renaissance and the Reformation, took its first major form in rationalism, which adds the notion of progress to the idea of liberty, and, after Renaissance and Reformation, marked a second stage in the adaptation of the general conception of the world to the new way of life. Rationalism, the philosophy of the rising bourgeoisie, rejected the notion of an immutable and eternal preestablished order, and supported the revolutionary action of the bourgeoiesie in maintaining the necessity of transforming the world to give it a rational character and content. Rationalism tended to evolve from spiritualism to materialism, thereby expressing the growing importance of concrete material reality in human life, as a result of the unceasing development of production.

Despite its tendency to unite spiritual reality more closely to material reality, rationalism did not succeed in solving the essential problem of the integration of man into his natural and social milieu—a problem raised by the very development of production. For, being a reflection of bourgeois society, it came up against the fundamental contradiction, inherent in the capitalist system, between an increasingly collective mode of production, which brings men closer and closer together in their economic and social activity, and an individualist mode of appropriation based on private property and the quest for profit, which isolates men and sets them, as individuals, against society. Rationalism is led to conceive of man as an individual opposed to his social milieu and cannot therefore arrive at a conception of the world as an organic whole; it remains essentially dualistic and allows the traditional opposition to subsist between spirit and matter, between man and nature.

Yet the very development of the new system of production, which integrates man more and more deeply in the external world, brings about the need to go beyond this dualism and arrive at an organic conception of the world. However, all the attempts made by bourgeois thought in this direction failed by virtue of the fact that in defending the principle of private property and thus putting itself on the plane of the contradiction which the capitalist system gives rise to, it could abolish this contradiction only in a utopian manner, by an illusory surmounting of individualism and the integration of man in an imaginary milieu.

After Rousseau, who integrated man into an idealized nature and a

utopian society, and Kant, who gave this integration a formal character, reducing it to the *a priori* forms imposed by the mind on the external world, German idealist philosophy, whose greatest figure was Hegel, strove to pass beyond rationalist dualism to an organic conception of the world. It was inspired by Goethe who, after Spinoza's fashion, considered mind and matter as two manifestations of the divine, different in their forms but similar in essence, and held that man should plunge into nature in order to participate in the universal life which animates the world (Faust).

German idealist philosophy added to this idea of an organic union of man and the external world the notion of development and progress, which it applied to the totality of beings and things; it thus attained a new conception of the world, which was no longer considered as an ensemble of things ruled from without and functioning as a mechanism, but as the expression of a single life animating all beings, as an immense organism developing itself under the action of internal laws and forces.

Inasmuch as life cannot be conceived otherwise than in its unity and development, this philosophy was of necessity led to reduce spiritual reality and material reality to an organic unity, and to show how this organic totality changes and evolves.

Like rationalism, this philosophy adopted the point of view of bourgeois society and defended its economic and social organization; it was unable to go beyond individualism and bring about the effective integration of man into his natural and social milieu, and could only undertake this integration in an illusory manner, by the reduction of the whole of the real to mind.

Fichte, Schelling, Hegel—the German idealist philosophers—abolished Kant's *Ding-an-sich* which maintained for concrete reality an existence independent of the thinking subject. They reduced all of reality to mind, which, by virtue of its inclusion of concrete reality, became at once subject and object and constituted not only the tool of knowledge but the element which creates and regulates the world.

The real, thus reduced to spiritual activity, was identified with knowledge, in which the subject which knows and the object which is known merge, and whose movement is explained by the autodetermination of the spirit, by the exteriorization of what it potentially contains,

by the alienation of its own substance which becomes foreign to it, and which it recovers progressively in becoming aware that it constitutes its essence.

In this conception of evolution as progressive penetration of concrete reality by the spirit, the philosophers were under the inspiration of the French Revolution, which seemed to them to have solved the double problem of the rational changing of the world and the integration of man into his social milieu by going beyond immediate reality and traditional economic and social organization under the action of reason, and by subordinating the individual to the state.

But while the French revolutionaries changed the world effectively, these philosophers, because of Germany's backwardness in economic and social evolution, gave action a theoretical and abstract character, transposing it to the plane of thought. They changed political, economic, and social problems into philosophical problems which they reduced to the central problem of the epoch, the problem of liberty, and proposed to realize the latter by the way of the spirit, convinced that in virtue of the correlation between the development of material reality and that of spiritual reality, it was possible to act on the world and transform it by the unaided power of ideas.

Despite their idealist nature, the systems of these philosophers are distinguished by an ever more marked tendency toward realism, a tendency which led them to ascribe to the world, which was at first considered to be a mere expression of the spirit, an ever more objective and concrete reality.

Fichte, expressing the revolutionary aspirations of his times, put the stress not on the past which has been wiped out, nor on a present which does not change, but on the future. He thereby subordinated to the spirit the external world which should be transformed; he abolished the external world, reducing it to the not-I and making of it the tool of the I, which rises, by a continual surmounting of the not-I which it sets up against itself, to a higher morality and a great autonomy.

Schelling expresses the counterrevolutionary tendencies of the feudal class. He gives the present the task of going back to its source, that is to the past, under the inspiration of the Middle Ages, an epoch of high and strong spirituality, when the Spirit penetrated vitally all the elements of life and the world. In this way he evolves toward a

more objective idealism, and, in accord with Spinoza, he assigns Nature an existence distinct from that of the mind, and shows how, by a progressive interpenetration of Spirit and Nature, the world comes in the work of art to a state of complete indifferentiation, where Nature is Spirit and Spirit Nature.

Finally, in Hegel the evolution toward an organic conception of the world, intimately combining the Idea and the concrete reality, man and the external world, is even plainer to be seen. Hegel is the interpreter of the tendencies of a semiconservative bourgeoisie; what he sets himself to justify is not the future nor the past, but the present. Like all doctrinaire conservatives, he stops the evolution of the world at the present moment, to which he gives absolute value as the definitive and perfect result of rational evolution. To this end he strives to give idealism a concrete character. He transposes to the ideological level the ever more powerful action which the development of productive forces enables man to exert on his milieu; and he shows how the spirit integrates itself progressively into the real, which thereby assumes an ever more rational character.

Since he does not succeed, as Marx was later to do, in understanding reality as the object of man's concrete practical activity, and thereby penetrating to the efficient cause of the transformation of the world, he remains essentially idealist in his evolution toward realism, and like Fichte and Schelling considers the real as the object of spiritual activity.

The fundamental problem which then faces him is to show how concrete reality merges in effect with its spiritual representation, and how the development of the spirit not only expresses but determines the evolution of the world. Hegel therefore neglects the contingent, the accidental elements of the real, concentrating on those which express a phase of the spirit and carry out the work of Reason.

Once concrete reality has thus been purged and sublimated to the point of being nothing more than the expression of the spiritual reality, it can be included in the spirit, after which Hegel is enabled to mold as it were the development of the world in the form of the development of the spirit, which is elevated into the creator of the real.[1]

Hegel, unlike Fichte, desired to justify present reality and derived the development of the world not from an absolute will, which no determinate reality can satisfy, but from a reason which is higher than

the subjective reason—namely, objective reason, which combines within itself spirit and being.

This objective reason is incarnated in the Absolute Idea, which creates the world by the exteriorization or alienation of its substance, which it then proceeds to resume within itself in stages. The identity of the real and the rational which existed originally in the Absolute Idea is broken by virtue of the exteriorization of its substance in a reality which seems alien to it; but the identity is progressively reestablished by the activity of the spirit, which eliminates the irrational elements from the real and thus leads it to surmount itself constantly, to take a form and a content more and more suited to the reason. This progressive union of the rational and the real, of spirit and being, is realized under the form of concrete ideas which are not a mere representation of beings and things, which man makes for himself, but constitute the reality itself in its essence.

Since the idea is indissolubly attached to the concrete reality, with which it is loaded, so to speak, the movement of the idea does not occur on the plane of pure logic, but is bound up with the general evolution of the world, with the process of history.

This association of logic with history in the development of the spirit gives rise to the particular character of Hegel's doctrine which tends, by the integration of the idea into the real, to eliminate the transcendental conception, which attributes to the spirit a special existence foreign to and distinct from the sensible world. This association also explains Hegel's opposition both to dogmatism (which by separating thought from being renders thought impotent and sterile) and to utopianism (which seeks to subject reality to an arbitrary ideal), as well as to empiricism (which fails to rise above immediate reality and loses itself in the infinite mass of facts, entities and objects, instead of concentrating on the essential part, the spiritual reality).[2]

True reality is linked to the development of the spirit, and is not to be confused with immediate reality. Like spirit, it has a rational character and its movement is in accordance with the principle of a logic adapted to a dynamic conception of the world, dialectics.

As opposed to the ancient logic—which corresponds to a static conception of the world and accordingly considers entities and things in their eternal and immutable aspect, fixing them in their identity by the exclusion of contraries—dialectics is tied up with the very development

of entities and things and does not obey the principle of identity, which does not enable us to explain the connections which unite the various elements of the real, and the reasons for their transformations.

Dialectics is founded on the opposite principle, the principle of contradiction; it does not move on a spatial plane of inclusion or exclusion, like the old logic, but on a temporal plane which enables the contradictory elements of the real, instead of merely excluding each other, to imply each other mutually and, by their transformations, to determine the evolution of the world.

The old logic considered contradiction as constituting a defect in things; in dialectics, on the contrary, contradiction appears as the positive and fertile element without which there is no development nor life.[3] For in the world, when considered in its changeableness, contraries unite to form a new and higher reality, the synthesis. The latter does not result from an adjustment or compromise between the contraries, which could only end in a stagnation of the real; it results from a crisis brought about by the accentuation of the contradictions, in whose course the contraries are abolished as such and reabsorbed in a higher unity.[4]

This is the dialectic process in which the contraries change and unite into syntheses within which new contradictions arise, which in turn are reabsorbed in new syntheses; it is in this process that there finds expression the movement of the spirit which, in its movement to go beyond the contradictions which rise continuously, progresses from concept to concept, each of which represents a new level of spiritual reality and of material reality included within it.

Such is the general conception of the world from which Hegel starts, in order to reconstruct and explain the totality of the real reduced to concepts, and to show how in its development it follows a rational course and expresses the movement of the spirit.

After he has, in the *Phänomenologie des Geistes* and the *Logic*, described the somewhat theoretical evolution of the spirit up to the point where it becomes perfect reason and Absolute Idea, he shows how the latter realizes itself in rudimentary fashion in Nature, which appears as its antithesis, and then in a more and more perfect way in history, where it gradually detaches itself from objective reality by considering it as the expression of its own substance. The Absolute Idea reaches its full realization in art, religion, and philosophy, attain-

ing its last stage in the Hegelian philosophy, which encompasses the world as a rational totality in which the identity of the subject and the object, thought and being is realized.

This conception of the dialectic development of the world permitted Hegel to solve the hitherto insoluble problem of the organic union of spirit and matter, of man and the external world, considered in their development. But the solution which he gave this problem took on an illusory character by reason of the fact that in reducing concrete reality to spiritual reality he took away from the world its own nature, and integrated man into an imaginary milieu.

This inability, which he shared with all bourgeois thought, to solve the problem of man's integration into the world, otherwise than on an ideological level, explains the contradictory aspect of his philosophy which, like his entire epoch of transition from a still semifeudal organization to the capitalist system, presents a character of transition and compromise.

From the philosophical point of view, this doctrine constituted a compromise between transcendental idealism, which places the principle and end of entities and things outside themselves, and realism, which is inspired by the idea of immanence and explains their development by their intrinsic nature. Despite the idealism of the doctrine, which reduced the evolution of the world to the movement of concepts, it marked the passage to realism by the integration of the idea in the real. All that was required was to invert the system (as Marx was to do) and subordinate the development of the spirit to the development of economic and social reality in order to arrive at a materialist conception of the world.

From another point of view, this doctrine constituted a compromise between the static and the dynamic conceptions of the world. It was completely imbued with a dynamicism, which expresses the continuous change, the incessant evolution of the world considered in its becoming. But this dynamic quality was not yet fully inherent in the concrete reality, whose development still seemed to be determined by a first principle, the Absolute Idea existing of itself from all eternity. The Absolute Idea is the stable element in the eternal process whose cause and end it is; containing in potentiality all the reality which it creates, it is at the terminus of its development that which it was at the origin. Evolution thus remained illusory, and took the form of an involution,

which made this system once more akin to the old static conception of the world.

Finally, in the political field, this compromise between static and dynamic world views was evidenced in the attempt to reconcile a conservative system, which considered the Prussian state and the Christian religion as the perfect and definitive forms of the Absolute Idea, with the dialectic movement of history, which implies a continual change, an unceasing becoming, to which we cannot assign a determinate form as limit and end.

The Revolution of 1830, which destroyed the system of the Holy Alliance and in Germany was marked at once by a rapid economic upswing and by the development of liberalism, was to blow to the surface the inherent contradictions of the Hegelian doctrine, entailing the collapse of the entire system.

Within the Hegelian school itself a division took place between a conservative Right and a revolutionary Left, within which Marx and Engels passed their political apprenticeship. The Hegelian Left, expressing primarily the aspirations of the bourgeoisie, brought about a dissociation and transformation of the Hegelian doctrine in order to adapt it to liberalism.

It rejected the conservative elements of this philosophy and retained only its revolutionary dialectics, forming out of it, in the person of Karl Marx's friend Bruno Bauer, a doctrine of action. Bauer opposed consciousness to substance, making the latter, after the fashion of Fichte's non-ego, the tool which consciousness uses to rise to an ever greater autonomy; he posited in principle consciousness' need to free itself continually from substance, in which it realizes itself and which, by its determinate form, constitutes an obstacle to its development. This liberation is carried out by an incessant criticism of the real which eliminates its irrational elements.[5]

The ideological character of this doctrine, which reduced revolutionary action to a critique of the real, had as its source the fact that the Hegelian Left found no support in the German bourgeoisie, which at that time, like all the European bourgeoisie engaged in a war on two fronts against feudal reaction and the revolutionary proletariat, adopted a policy of the "golden mean." Without this support, the Hegelian Left very soon failed in its liberal activity, and its action rapidly turned into a sterile critique of reality, a mere play of the spirit.

Most of its members evolved with B. Bauer toward individualism and egocentrism, reducing the development of the universal Conscience to that of the Ego. One of them, Max Stirner, drew all the consequences of this tendency toward individualism. He rejected any limitation of the individual's autonomy and recognized only a single reality, the Ego, only a single principle, the cult of the Ego; he made absolute egoism the only motive force of human activity, and ended up in nihilism and anarchism.[6]

At first, Marx and Engels tried, with the Young Hegelians, to adapt the Hegelian doctrine to liberalism and felt that in order to determine the rational course of the world it would suffice to eliminate the irrational elements from the real. But as apart from the other Young Hegelians, Marx, in this point faithful to the basic thought of Hegel, refused to dissociate thought from the real, and rejected the conception of an arbitrary and absolute power of the spirit to transform the world. From the time of his thesis on the *Philosophy of Nature of Democritus and Epicurus* (1841), he showed that philosophy, in contraposing itself to the world by its criticism, changes into a practical activity, which implies its integration into the world and thereby its suppression as abstract principle opposed to the world.[7]

As director of the *Rheinische Zeitung* in 1842, he set about reforming the state (which he with Hegel considered as the regulatory element in society) by a critique of political and juridical institutions. The speedy and total failure of this attempt, signalized by the suppression of the *Rheinische Zeitung,* led him to revise his conception of the state and to study its relations with society.

Along with some members of the Hegelian Left (L. Feuerbach, M. Hess, F. Engels), he turned away from liberalism; he no longer expressed the aspirations of the bourgeoisie but those of the proletariat, and evolved towards communism. In this evolution he, like Hess and Engels, was guided by Feuerbach who drew from a critique of the Christian religion and Hegelian idealism a social doctrine of collectivist nature.

Feuerbach's critique of religion showed that God is the product of man, who projects and alienates in him his own essential qualities, and that as a result of this inversion of subject and attribute the real subject, man, becomes the attribute of God, which he has created. Applying this critique to Hegelian idealism, Feuerbach emphasized that

Hegel, by an analogous inversion of subject and attribute, made the idea the creative subject, and man and the world its product.

To arrive at an exact notion of the relations between God and the world, between the Idea and Being, we must, Feuerbach said, start not from God or the Idea but from concrete and living reality; we must integrate spirit into matter and not matter into spirit, and consider man with his sensibility and needs as the organic expression of that synthesis.[8] His criticism of religion ended up in a social doctrine, in which he showed that religion strips man of his true nature, of his essence, and transfers it to God, and that to restore man's essence to him, his qualities, alienated in God, must be reintegrated in him. The collective being, the species, which constitutes the human essence, and which, if exteriorized in God, is but a transcendental illusion, then becomes a reality for man, who abandons egoism and individualism, and makes the love of humanity the law of his life.[9]

By his inversion of Christianism and idealism, Feuerbach restored their intrinsic reality to the external world and to man; but by his return to mechanist materialism, which subordinates man to the influence of his milieu without considering the action he exerts upon it, Feuerbach's final result was a contemplative and sentimental theory which placed human life outside the social milieu and historical process, a vague collectivism which was a pale reflection of the French socialist doctrines born of a more advanced economic and social development.

This doctrine by its solution, however imperfect, of the problem of man's integration into his natural and social milieu constituted a transition between Hegelianism and Socialism. It opened the way which Moses Hess, Marx, and Engels were to take, to arrive at a new solution of the problem by linking man's integration into the world not to his religious emancipation but to his social emancipation.

Moses Hess gave Feuerbach's extremely vague collectivism a more markedly social character, and showed that the alienation of the human essence in God was the ideological reflection of the alienation which takes place in the capitalist system, where the proletariat exteriorizes its labor power in the commodities it produces, which enslave it by opposing themselves to him in the form of money, capital.

To liberate man from this servitude and enable him to recover his thus alienated essence, Hess said, we must replace the capitalist regime

by a communist system; but, being unable to obtain from society itself the sources of its transformation, Hess, like the utopians, transposed the economic and social problems raised by this transformation to a moral plane, and offered as solution the struggle against egoism, and the love of humanity.[10]

For all its defects and inadequacies, this doctrine constituted a transition between Feuerbach's philosophy and French socialism; it was to serve as a guide to Marx and Engels who, starting from an analogous critique of alienation, furnished a new solution to the problem of action and to the social problem. Marx, having been led to review his Hegelian conception of the state and to study the interrelations of state and society, began this revision by a critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Law,*[11] from which he had drawn the core of his political and social ideas. Now, under Feuerbach's influence, he shows how Hegel reverses the real relations between society and state, making the latter the creator and regulator of society, whereas actually it is but society's instrument. The real state, which is an expression of society, and in which private interest triumphs, is contrasted with the ideal state, a sphere of general interests, created, like God, by the exteriorization in it of the highest social qualities, in which man lives, only in an illusory fashion, a collective life. In order to put an end to this duality between real and ideal states and give the collective life an effective existence, society must be given a collective character.

This criticism of Hegel's *Philosophy of Law* marked the moment at which Marx rejected liberalism by putting the problem of alienation on the political and social plane, but yet found only a vague solution to it, in the form of what he called true democracy.

But after he had taken the content of the ideal state to be the true democracy where there no longer exists any opposition between individual interests and the public interest, he was drawn, by his criticism of bourgeois society conceived as the negation of collective life, to see communism as the solution of the social problem.

He returned to the fundamental idea of his criticism of Hegel's *Philosophy of Law* in his articles in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* (1844), where he showed that if we are to do away with the dualism between society and state, which makes man lead the life of an egoistic individual in society while he leads an imaginary collective life in the state, we must integrate the state into society, giving the

latter a collective character.[12] This will be the work of a social revolution carried out by the proletariat, which in liberating itself will emancipate all of society, establishing communism.[13]

Marx was now deliberately orienting his thinking toward communism, acting as spokesman for the revolutionary proletariat. He raised the question of alienation, no longer on the plane of undifferentiated humanity, but on the plane of the struggle of classes. Thus he changed the opposition between egoism and altruism, to which Feuerbach and Hess had reduced economic and social contradictions, to a conflict between bourgeoisie and proletariat; he cast social development in the form of dialectics, making the proletariat the antithetic element charged with bringing progress about.

Following a parallel evolution to that of Marx, Engels was then passing, under the influence of Feuerbach and Hess, from liberalism to communism. With Feuerbach and Hess, he considered alienation as the basic phenomenon of present society; but, instead of following them to a utopian plane for the abolition of this alienation, he sought, as Marx did, to find the sources of its elimination in economic and social reality.

In both Engels and Marx, this surmounting of ideology and utopianism was favored by the fact that they had left Germany—Engels to go to England, and Marx to Paris—and thereby took part in the life of two countries which were much more developed economically than Germany; Marx and Engels thus expressed the aspirations of a more powerful proletariat, already possessing a clear class consciousness.

Marx was then justifying communism from a point of view which was essentially philosophical and political. Engels at the same time made use of his study of the contradictions of capitalism—which were especially obvious in England, the most developed capitalist country of the time—to justify communism from an economic and social viewpoint.

In his article "Umrisse zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie" [14] in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher,* Engels showed that the capitalist system did not possess the absolute value assigned to it by the economists of liberalism, and that the economic categories which corresponded to the system—price, competition, profit—had only historic and relative application. His criticism of the capitalist system under-

lined that its result was to deprive the majority of producers of the fruit of their labor, and thus to reduce them to servitude and poverty. The crises caused by the inherent capitalist unbalance between production and consumption entailed the elimination of the weakest producers, the progressive ruin of the middle class, which was proletarianized, and a constantly increasing concentration of wealth, which finally left only proletarians and big capitalists. This increasing antagonism would cause a social revolution that would abolish private property and competition and inaugurate a communist regime, which would give the economic and social system a human character.

Engels thus reached communism by a route different from that of Marx, that is by a criticism of the capitalist contradictions which enabled him to go beyond utopian socialism and show how the future emerges from the present, adapting the Hegelian dialectic to the development of history thought of from the economic and social viewpoint. Engels made more precise and complete the still theoretical and abstract notion which Marx had of historic evolution and communism.

It was during his stay in Paris in 1844 that Marx came under the influence of the French socialist doctrines and Engels' critique of political economy, and with their aid arrived at a clearer conception of historical evolution and of communism, considering them no longer from a purely philosophical and political viewpoint but also and above all from one which was economic and social.

The merit of the French socialist systems was to give the first positive solution to the problem of the integration of man into the world which bourgeois thinkers had been unable to solve; this they accomplished by showing how it was possible to realize the effective and harmonious integration of man in his natural and social milieu by passing beyond the capitalist contradiction, by conferring on the mode of appropriation the same collective character as the mode of production.

But these systems had been formed at an epoch in which the contradictions of capitalism had not yet become so evident, and in which the proletariat was still only in its inception; hence they transposed economic and social problems to an ideological plane and thus remained utopian. After having criticized the economic and social organization of capitalism, the doctrinaire socialists were unable to go

forward and discern in society itself the factors of its transformation; they did not conceive the class struggle as a means of emancipation and put their projected reforms on a rational and moral plane, contrasting present society to an ideal society; they thought it would be enough to convince men of the excellence of this new society to have it realized.

This appeal to reason led them, after denouncing social antagonisms in the critical parts of their works, to take the position of an undifferentiated humanity in their plans for change, and to supplant the notion of class struggle by the notion of a vague antagonism between good and evil, between the just and the unjust, all of which imparted to the solution offered for the social conflicts a character no longer revolutionary but spiritual and moral.

Nevertheless, as the proletariat developed and the contradictions of capitalism became more obvious, these doctrinaires took up a sharper defense of the specific interests of the proletariat, and their ideas came closer and closer to socialism and communism, putting the primary emphasis on the revolutionary role of the class struggle and Marxism, which they announced and heralded.

By applying the Hegelian dialectic to the explanation of social process, Marx had already shown in his articles in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* how capitalist society, by reason of the accentuation of the opposition between bourgeoisie and proletariat, had to give birth to a communist society. This communism was still ideological; it acquired a more concrete content from the French socialist doctrines and their analysis of the economic and social contradictions of capitalism; finally, Engels' critique of political economy enabled Marx to pass definitely beyond utopianism by showing him how communist society was engendered by the aggravation of these contradictions; Marx gave communism a scientific character by basing it on the very development of society.

This transition from ideological to scientific communism is the distinguishing mark of the three works preceding the *German Ideology,* in which the main lines of his thought appear as definitively fixed for the first time: *Political Economy and Philosophy* (1844), *The Holy Family* (1845), and the *Theses on Feuerbach* (1845).[15]

Marx still reduced the social question to the problem of alienation, which remained in his view the essential problem; by means of it he

solved the problem of action, which enabled him to attain a new conception of historical development and of communism.

He solved these two problems by a parallel critique of Hegelian idealism and Feuerbach's mechanist materialism, a critique inspired by the aspirations of the revolutionary proletariat. In distinction from utopian socialism, he put the problem of suppressing alienation and effectively integrating man in his natural and social milieu not on the theoretical plane but on the practical plane; and he was led thereby to a new conception of action which enabled him to go at once beyond utopian socialism, speculative idealism, and mechanistic materialism, the latter two of which he accused of considering man outside concrete activity taken as practical activity, that is as work. This ignoring of the leading role of practical activity in human life made speculative idealism and mechanistic materialism equally unable to explain the evolution of the world.

Hegelian idealism does stress the capital importance of human activity, pointing out that the world is its product; but since it reduces this activity to spiritual activity and thus suppresses concrete reality as such, it gives an illusory quality both to human life and to the integration of man into the world.[16]

In contrast to idealism, mechanist materialism assigns the object a reality outside thought; but in considering the exterior world as an object of perception and not of action it maintains a passive attitude toward it and therefore ends in a contemplative and deterministic conception of the world, which does not allow it to explain either the effective integration of man into his milieu or his action on the milieu to transform it.[17]

Marx went beyond both speculative idealism and mechanist materialism. He kept the intrinsic reality of the external world and considered it in its transformation by practical activity, work which plays the role of mediator between man and the external world, between spirit and matter, which Hegel attributed to the Idea.

It is by concrete practical activity that man effects his progressive integration into the world which he adapts to his needs. This integration takes place by the exteriorization of man's labor power in the object which he creates and by the appropriation of this object which enables him to recover in it his alienated substance.[18]

In present society this exteriorization becomes an alienation on the

part of the most numerous class, the proletariat, which is deprived of the objects it creates and becomes feebler to the very degree that it produces. To do away with this alienation a communist regime must be installed, which will enable all men to fully regain their substance exteriorized in the product of their labor.[19]

By this parallel criticism of idealism and mechanist materialism Marx arrived at a new conception of action. He did not reduce it to a spiritual action nor submit it to a fatalist determinism nor, as the utopians did, put it on the plane of opposition between thought and the real, the ideal and reality; he integrated action into reality.

It is on this new conception of action conceived as concrete practical activity, work, the only conception capable of explaining the effective integration of man into the world, that Marx based his conception of historical and dialectical materialism, the notion that from then on dominated and directed his thought and that of Engels.

He went beyond the problem of alienation, to which he had hitherto reduced the essence of the social question, and subordinated it to the ensemble of human activity, of which it was only one aspect. In the fundamental work which he wrote with Engels, *The German Ideology* (1846), he set himself the task of explaining the grounds of this activity and hence the transformation of society and the flux of history.

Seeking the essential causes and ends of human activity, Marx and Engels found them in the creation of the conditions of material life, in the satisfaction of humanity's primordial needs (food, clothing, shelter) and therefore in the organization of production. This is what gives their basic conception a materialist character.

This materialism is historical; it explains the movement of history essentially by the transformation of the conditions of material life, by the development of the forces of production, and not by an alteration of philosophical, political, or religious conceptions which are but the ideological forms assumed in men's consciousnesses by the real motives of their actions.

And this historical materialism is dialectic; it shows that the movement of history is linked to the development of the relations between the forces of production and the social forces. To determinate productives forces there correspond social relations adapted to the operation of these forces, and every important change in the latter necessarily entails transformation of society. In their continual development the

forces of production come up against the organization of society, which evolves more slowly, and sooner or later becomes an obstacle to the operation of these forces, so that it must be replaced by a new and better adapted social organization.

On the political and social level, this opposition between productive forces and social relations is expressed by class struggles, which constitute the motive element in history.[20]

The materialist dialectic conception of history not only furnishes the explanation of economic, political, and social evolution, but enables us as well to explain spiritual evolution. Marx refutes the basic objection of idealism, which asserts that it is impossible to prove that objects distinct from us correspond to the representation which we have of things, and denies too any correlation between material and spiritual evolution. Marx's answer is that man knows the world not as object of pure thought, but as object of his experience, and that the proof of the objective reality and the truth of knowledge is furnished by practical activity.[21]

The idealist conception, which ascribes absolute value and reality to ideas alone, comes from the division of labor, which separates spiritual from material activity, creating a class of thinkers who tend to consider ideas by themselves, apart from the men who conceive them and the circumstances which engender them and alone enable us to understand and explain them.[22]

Marx and Engels thus denied absolute value and reality to ideas, and showed that they develop parallel to men's real mode of life, that juridical, political, philosophical, and religious conceptions are modified as the economic and social organizations change, and that spiritual evolution is thus determined in its main outlines by material evolution.[23]

While thus establishing a correlation between spiritual evolution and economic and social evolution, Marx and Engels did not claim to establish a rigorous parallelism between them, for they do not go forward at the same rhythm. While the transformation of the forces of production is accompanied by a parallel transformation of the social organization, the change takes place in a slower manner in the realm of ideas, whose ties with the mode of production are less direct and immediate.

Moreover, Marx and Engels, while denying ideas a primordial role

in historical evolution, nevertheless consider them to be a very important social reality which as such influences the development of history, being able to modify its rhythms and modalities, if not the general course. Marx and Engels, in effect, rejected ideology as the determining factor in historical evolution. They did not make man into a passive tool, the object of a fatalistic determinism; on the contrary, they showed the mounting importance of man's action on his milieu, which he changes more and more deeply, in order to free himself from its grip and adapt it to his needs.[24]

Marx and Engels applied this general conception of historical development to the study of the society of their time, stressing that man's rational alteration of the milieu should at the present time aim essentially at wiping out the contradictions inherent in the capitalist regime and doing away with alienated labor, which is opposed to the integration of man in his natural and social milieu. This abolition cannot take place, as the doctrinaire socialists had already shown, except by the inauguration of a communist system. But unlike the doctrinaires, Marx and Engels did not contrast an ideal to reality, a vision of the future world to bourgeois society, setting up a gap between present and future; instead, they picked out in the present economic and social organization the causes, the tendency, and the manner of its transformation, and showed that the abolition of capitalism will be the work of the economic and social contradictions inherent in this regime, which cannot but engender a social revolution. This, by doing away with alienated labor and transforming the social relations which have been hypostatized as personal relationships, will bring about the harmonious and complete integration of man into his milieu.

Thus with Marx and Engels a great phase of modern thought is completed, that modern thought which is born with capitalism and finds its conclusion in communism. This thought expresses on the ideological plane the successive steps of man's integration into his natural and social milieu, determined by the constant development of the forces of production; it is a thought which leads from a static and dualistic conception, which opposes spirit to matter, man to his milieu, to an organic conception of the world considered in its totality, in which man at last appears fully integrated.

References

[1] Cf. *Wissenschaft der Logik*, Vol. V, p. 26.
[2] Cf. *Philosophie des Rechts* ("Vorrede"), pp. 16, 19; *Encyclopädie*, p. 11.
[3] *Wissenschaft der Logik*, Vol. IV, p. 68.
[4] *Phänomenologie*, pp. 36, 37.
[5] Cf. *Die Posaune des Jüngsten Gerichtes über Hegel den Atheisten und Antichristen*, Leipzig, 1841.
[6] Max Stirner, *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum* (1844).
[7] Cf. Marx-Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. I, p. 64 f.
[8] Cf. Feuerbach, *Vorläufige Thesen zur Reform der Philosophie* (1843).
[9] Cf. Feuerbach, *Grundsätze der Philosophie der Zukunft* (1843).
[10] Cf. T. Zlocisti, *M. Hess: Sozialistische Aufsätze* (Berlin, 1921), pp. 37–60 ("Philosophie der Tat"), 60–78 ("Sozialismus und Kommunismus"), 158–187 ("Uber das Geldwesen").
[11] Marx-Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. I, pp. 403–553 ("Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrecht").
[12] *Ibid.*, pp. 576–606 ("Zur Judenfrage").
[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 606–621 ("Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie").
[14] *Ibid.*, II, pp. 379–404.
[15] Cf. *ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 29–172 ("Oekonomisch-Philosophische Manuscripte aus dem Jahre 1844"), ("Die heilige Familie"); Vol. V, pp. 533–535 ("Marx *über Feuerbach*").
[16] Cf. *ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 154–156.
[17] Cf. *ibid.*, Vol. V, pp. 533 f. (Theses 1 and 3).
[18] Cf. *ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 157–163.
[19] Cf. *ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 82–94, 115–117.
[20] Cf. *ibid.*, Vol. V, pp. 59–65.
[21] *Ibid.*, Vol. V, p. 534 (Thesis 2).
[22] *Ibid.*, Vol. V, pp. 15 f., 21.
[23] Cf. *ibid.*, Vol. V, pp. 26-28, 35 f.
[24] Cf. *ibid.*, Vol. V, pp. 10 f.