THE PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE
OF THE HEGELIAN DIALECTIC

by

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INTRODUCTION

"Whatever deals with the fundamental and simple is bound to be difficult and complex, and it is no good ignoring the fact that philosophy, which is not lightly to be attempted by any, must always seem singularly like nonsense to some."

(C.E.M. Joad)

This world or complex of physical and social environment into which we are incontinently thrust at a somewhat early period in our existence presents, for those of us who are provided with a fair share of what Veblen used to call "idle curiosity," a whole series of problems which, in the last resort, resolve themselves into the question as to the nature of experience or common-sense reality. How? whence? and why? presuppose what? And this, notwithstanding the current belief that metaphysics is concerned only with things foreign to human experience, is the problem which philosophy sets herself namely, what is this experience or reality? or, what is the ultimate condition which this experience presupposes?

Now, this question, just because it is fundamental, is tremendously important, since the solution we find conditions and colors all our subsequent findings. Whether it begins with it or not every branch of human knowledge has to reckon with philosophy in the end. In the hey-day of its career, say a generation or more ago, Science, secure, as it thought, in its positivism, thought it could ignore metaphysics; to-day it is not so certain, witness the declarations of Jeans, Eddington,
"The whole method of science in its newest speculative and critical reaches is increasingly metaphysical; perhaps it is not too much to say it is Hegelian rather than Einsteinian in its relativity, and increasingly monistic. Although its monism is one that is purely tentative and hypothetical, it is the result of a new and very recent recrudescence of interest in the leadings of scientific experiments which point to the universal extension of a causality apparently teleological and purposive which science must recognize, if it cannot explain. It is not indeed a 'block universe,' as James used to call it, but it is still a universe with causal continuity. The excesses of anti-intellectualism appear to be passing in the world of science."

It is to my mind an evidence of the validity of the Hegelian formulation that D.G. Ritchie, over forty years ago could say: "The sciences ultimately refuse to recognize dualism. The world is only intelligible by science on the assumption that it forms one coherent system. A philosophy based on the special sciences cannot recognize anything outside the material universe. But then an examination of the nature of science (a criticism of the conditions of knowledge) shows us that the material universe can mean nothing except for thought. Science leads us to Monism; and Monism, to be philosophic, must be idealistic."

2. Ritchie, David G., "Darwin and Hegel," (Swan Sonnenschein 1893, p.91.)
To attain to a complete view of the world, to a comprehension of the totality of experience, to "see it steadily and to see it whole," such is the end and aim of philosophy. It, therefore, sees an ultimate identity in the contradictions which, on lower planes of thought, appear impossible to reconcile; it sees identity in opposition, being in becoming, the potential in the actual, and the matter in the form. In the flux of thought the old distinctions, once so sharp and clear, become blurred and lose their meaning, and, as aspects of a larger whole, become merely a matter of emphasis. There is, after all, but one philosophy as there is but one physical science and the history of philosophy is the record of the effort of the human mind to attain to such a unified view. True, there has always been a tendency to use or abuse philosophy in the interests of conflicting social institutions or to rationalize policies inspired by special or class interests. If, however, we hold that social history exhibits the dialectic flux and that Reality is a continuous Becoming, even this would warrant us in holding with Croce that the philosophy of history is very much the same thing as the history of philosophy.

It is a matter of common, everyday experience that the mind of youth accepts unhesitatingly all things just as they are presented to consciousness, in their immediacy, and holds uncritically the views dictated by common-sense and current morality. Presently there supervenes a stage in which

these common-sense views in respect of custom, tradition and whatnot, are negated in scepticism and cynicism. With some this phase assumes an extravagant form and may, as may also the first phase, last through life. Finally the mature mind effects a synthesis which consists in the recognition that the older views were not so empty of content as at first appeared: that they really expressed, however crudely, certain values having social or personal significance. In the synthesis, however, they are transmuted, sublimated and enriched by the critical experience.

Similarly, in the history of the race, we find that in the earliest period of human history man does not distinguish himself from the natural objects and forces about him. Nature, for him, is animated and conscious and may be friendly or otherwise. It is in this stage that we observe those beliefs, or rather, practices, which we cover by the terms totemism and animism. So also, in this phase, the individual does not distinguish himself from the group to which he belongs, nor has he interests as against it. With reflection, however, there comes a time when he separates the self and not-self and recognizes the world as something over against himself. It is probable that this change is more or less coincident with the development of the property concept which, by setting the individual over against the group, ultimately dissolves tribal society. So soon, therefore, as man having become self-conscious, thus separates himself in thought from nature, every department of experience falls apart into corresponding antitheses. Man is now mind as
opposed to matter and an individual as opposed to society. Later he will think of himself as subject as opposed to object; his soul as opposed to his body and God as ever against the world. The growth of science accentuates these antagonisms and there develops a one-sided and crude materialism opposed to a more or less idealistic theology. The continued development of individualism disintegrates society into a crowd of individuals, each seeking his own interest, loosely held together by the police-state; while the world, for philosophy, is dissolved in the scepticisms generated by materialism. But now the synthesis is well on its way. The power, complexity and co-ordination of the social productive forces are knitting together again and strengthening the social bonds. But social production is at war with individual ownership and thus the other antagonisms are but intensified. The battle is joined and, what is characteristic of our time, the opposing forces state their respective cases in philosophic terms. The catch-words of the philosopher have become the slogans of the politician.

Already Idealism has reconciled in thought the old antagonisms of knowing and being, subject and object, body and mind, and even of materialism and idealism. Only such a philosophy, recognizing the immanent dialectic flux in nature, in social life, and in thought can, it is my belief, point the way to a resolution of the antagonisms which rend society to-day.

Most discussions of the subject either take the dialectic method for granted or else explain it in such a way that it is, to my mind, unconvincing. It has occurred to me
that the dialectic can best be explained in terms of its own development and I have so set it forth.
CHAPTER I

THE FUNCTION OF THE IDEAL

For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle?

(Paul of Tarsus, I Corinthians 14.8)

All movements for social betterment are essentially idealistic in form. Their propaganda, whatever its content, must justify itself on ethical grounds, must appeal to the moral sentiment, since we conceive ourselves, not as pigs at the trough, fighting for a larger share of the swill, but as allies of the universe helping it to give birth to a juster human order. Only an intense ethical passion kindled by idealistic conceptions can sustain the discouraging battle that a militant minority must wage before it grows to be a majority, or better, attains its objective. And although, to be sure, men do not order their lives by the utilitarian calculus, yet the conditions of social life are such that no man will surrender present personal advantage for the future interests of others except under the urge of a compelling categorical imperative - a commanding sense of obligation to an ideal.

1. As world events of the comparatively recent past have shown, even propaganda of a more sinister character must assume such a form.

2. It is no accident that the movements associated with the rise of the middle-class in England and Northern Europe took on a religious color. So also with the early socialistic movements headed by such men as John Huss, Gerard Winstanley and even St. Simon.
An "ideal" may be defined as a mental picture of a state of affairs which, under the conceived circumstances, ought to exist, and which is capable of being brought into existence. Thus defined, an ideal is seen to rest on two conceptions: the conception of "right" and the conception of "possibility."

For the Liberals of the eighteenth century, as for the Socialists of the early nineteenth century, this "rightness" was absolute and authoritative since it was imposed, ab extra, by the fiat of a Supreme Being, or for some, existed of its own right in the nature of things - the Order of Nature. The possibility, on the other hand, was contingent and relative, being dependent on the receptivity and educability of the human mind - on its response to the appeal to Reason, in a word,

1. "Les lois naturelles sont ou physiques, ou morales. On entend ici, par loi physique, le cours réglé de tout événement physique de l'ordre naturel, évidemment le plus avantageux au genre humaine.
   On entend ici, par loi morale, la règle de tout action humaine de l'ordre morale, conforme a l'ordre physique évidemment le plus avantageux au genre humaine.

2. "Nature acts and exists necessarily: all that she contains necessarily conspires to perpetuate her active existence. ... Matter acts because it exists, and exists to act." D'Holbach, "The System of Nature," p.35.
on the progress of the Human Spirit. For the later Socialists, who were, and are, in general, inclined to deny the existence of a Providential Order even in the attenuated form of "a power not ourselves, which makes for Righteousness," the melioristic trend must be asserted and explained on philosophical grounds. To be sure, oppression, poverty and misery breed discontent and moral indignation, even revolt, but a revolutionary movement requires more than this; there must be assurance that there is actually a definite trend and that it takes, or can be made to take, a direction towards an end, proximate it may be, which is in itself worth-while.

This, then, is the function of the Hegelian Dialectic as used by Marx and his school, with whom it becomes, as "Dialectic Materialism," a means of explaining the past, of understanding the present and predicting the future. Socialism, or Communism, is thus seen as something which "must" happen - rather than that which "ought" to happen - as "the result of a processus immanent in history."

The "possibility" becomes "inevitability" and the contingency a mere matter of "how soon" and "in what manner" the proletariat will accomplish its "historic mission." Since the process, which is both objective and subjective, is a "necessary" development the ethical factor tends, with the

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1. "Scientific socialism consists, in so far as it affirms the coming of communistic production, not as a postulate, nor as the aim of a free volition, but as the result of the processus immanent in history." Antonio Labriola, Essays on the Materialist Conception of History, (C.H. Kerr & Company, Chicago, 1904, p.190.)
doctrinaires, to be obscured. Thus Engels could write: "Upon this, (the exploitation of labor) therefore, Marx never based his communistic conclusions, but upon the inevitable breakdown of the capitalist mode of production which we see daily approaching its end." The animus in such a passage was due, no doubt, to a revulsion against the teachings of the Utopian socialists of the time. No one can read Marx, or consider the facts of his life, without feeling that, however much he may condemn mere sentimentality, he had a strong sense of justice and some system of ethical values, however obscure. Benedetto Croce is insistent on this point and observes: "It is, however, evident that idealism or absolute morality is a necessary postulate of socialism."

Notoriously, however, the socialist movement in practice neglects no opportunity of exposing the defects of capitalism, of contrasting these with the benefits hoped for from socialism, and of denouncing all those who, in their apprehension, oppose or delay the change. The emphasis here of course varies according to the school of socialism, but even


2. This animus is very apparent in passages such as: "The robe of speculative cobwebs, embroidered with flowers of rhetoric, steeped in the dew of sickly sentiment; this transcendental robe in which the German Socialists wrapped their sorry "eternal truths," all skin and bone, served to wonderfully increase the sale of their goods amongst such a public." Communist Manifesto (Whitehead Estate, Vancouver, p.49).

strict Marxists would agree with John Strachey when he says: "The conquest by comprehension of man's relationship to man, when it has been added to the conquest of man over nature, will not automatically usher in any impossible millennium of universal happiness. It would be childlike to believe any such thing. But it will make possible a whole new era of civilization, an era based on the full use of man's ever-growing power and knowledge; a civilization far richer, because a civilization which will embrace whole communities and not merely certain classes within communities, than any we have yet known.  

The point here is, that most Marxists would insist that moral standards, if not the higher ethical values, are not absolute, since each historical epoch generates its own morality, its own social consciousness. This is well illustrated in the following: "According to Christianity and the Ethics or religion of Introspection generally, regeneration must come from within, must begin in the heart and mind of the individual. The ethic and religion of modern socialism, on the contrary, look for regeneration from without, from material conditions and a higher social life. The ethic and religion of socialism seek not the ideal society through the ideal individual, but conversely the ideal individual through the ideal society. It finds in an adequate, a free and harmonious social life, at once the primary condition and the end and completion of individuality."


CHAPTER II

FROM BACON-TO KANT

Nihil est in intellectu quod non prius in sensu fuerit.

It is in the authentic Hegelian manner that Edward Caird characterizes modern philosophy, in its earlier period, as "the philosophical counterpart of the Protestant Reformation, which, for the first time, gave its due importance to the subjective and individualistic aspect of Christianity. .......

This reassertion of the rights of the finite and individual consciousness coincides with the great development of the secular spirit, which marks the end of the seventeenth, and beginning of the eighteenth, century. ..... The individual was becoming to himself the beginning and end of all truth and knowledge; he could not, it was argued, transcend his own limits as an individual; if there was a truth that could not be brought within those limits, it must be for him as good as nothing." 1

From a Marxian point of view, of course, he might have gone further, and explicitly connected this individualistic ideology with the rise of the middle-classes. In the seventeenth century the foundations of modern civilization in all its aspects were laid; the era of "free contract" was well on its way;

authority and status were undermined in all directions, and the middle class was asserting its power against all forms of feudal domination. Philosophy, although now free from the physical persecution of ecclesiasticism, still felt indirectly the influence of dogma; a constraint, however, which was more of a moral and social than a legal character. The bolder spirits among the philosophers could now reflect the changing ideology of the times, and this they did with greater freedom as time went on.

Though there is much to be noted in earlier writers, our present enquiry may very well begin with Bacon. "By eliminating the theosophic character which Natural Philosophy had acquired during the transitional period, by the limitation of its method to experience and induction, and by raising the fundamental characteristics of this method to a philosophical dignity free from the narrowness attaching to any special circle of physical research, Bacon of Verulam (1561-1626) is the founder, not indeed of the empirical method in natural science, but of the empiricist line of development in modern philosophy."

Bacon, to be sure, invented neither experience nor induction, which are the essential elements of all knowledge whatever, but he stressed their importance as just principles and pronounced the method of all investigation to be the observation, colligation and comparison of the individual facts.

A disciple of Bacon, Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury, (1588-1679) takes a distinct stand on experience and observation as the sole source of knowledge. There is, for Hobbes, no metaphysical problem other than that which concerns the constitution of our knowledge. "Concerning the thoughts of man," says he, "I will consider them first singly, and afterwards in a train of dependence upon one another. Singly, they are everyone a representation, or appearance of some quality or other accident of a body without us, which is commonly called an object, which object worketh on the eyes, ears, and other parts of a man's body; and, by diversity of working, produces diversity of appearances. The original of them all is that which we call "sense." There is no conception in a man's mind which hath not at first, totally or by part, been begotten upon the organs of sense. The rest are derived from that original."

The views expressed by Hobbes were amplified and reinforced by John Locke (1632-1704) in his Essay on the Human Understanding which is, ostensibly, a polemic against the doctrine of "necessary" or "innate" ideas. The understanding is, for Locke, originally a tabula rasa. Every idea must be the result of some experience and experience was of two kinds - sensation and reflection. The experience due to sensation was that received from outside the mind through the organs of sense, while that due to reflection was the result of the mind reflecting

"on its own operations within itself." But whether what we perceive be an outward or an inward fact, our understanding is in either case nothing more than the mirror in which it is reflected. The capacity of an object to produce an idea in our understanding is called its "quality." Where the idea is similar to the state of the object producing it, it is termed a "primary" quality. External objects possess two primary qualities. "Solidity" (impenetrability) and "extension." In respect of these the idea corresponds to the object. But with most qualities the case is otherwise. These "secondary" qualities, as Locke calls them, such as color, odor, taste, smoothness, beauty, unpleasantness, and so forth, only indicate a certain relation between our organs and the object, but nothing existent in the object itself. The simple ideas thus received are worked up in reflection into "complex" ideas which, however, since they are figments of the imagination correspond to nothing real, for there is nothing real but the particular. Locke here revives, unconsciously it may be, the teaching of William of Ockam and the scholastic nominalists concerning the unreality of "Universals." Locke holds, however, that we are compelled to postulate a substratum as that in which the qualities of things inhere, and which, although we have no evidence of it in experience, and cannot even form any definite idea of it, we cannot help regarding as real. The idea of "substance" corresponds therefore to a reality, albeit an unknown reality.

1. Essay, book III, Chapter III.
"If," says Caird, "we begin with the individual mind, we are forced to conceive its knowledge as limited to the simple ideas of its own sensations and actions, and the various complex ideas which may be got by combining these simple ideas. In this view, objective reality, or things in themselves, lie altogether beyond the possibility of knowledge. If we begin, on the other hand, with the idea of a world, which immediately acts on the mind of the individual through the senses, we assume a knowledge of things in themselves, independent of the sensations of the individual, and explain by this means these very sensations themselves. In this case, in addition to the difficulties which, on individualistic principles, beset any ontological theory whatever, we have to encounter the double difficulty of a materialistic ontology. For even if we admit that things in themselves can be known, and known to be material, the relation of the physical impression which the material object makes is the thought which is its consequent, remains utterly unintelligible.

The philosophy of Locke reduces itself to an attempted synthesis of two contradictory theories. For one of two things is inevitable. Either consciousness must be conceived as transcending the individuality of the human animal, as embracing in one thought the duality of subject and object, which then can have no existence in themselves apart from the unity in which they are known. Or if, on the other hand, the individual consciousness is not to be conceived as transcending itself, then we must be in earnest about its limits and we must give up all pretence of knowing things in themselves, or construing
out of our own affections a reality not included in them.
It is impossible to preserve both the sensationalist view of
the development of knowledge, and the materialistic account of
the origin of sensation."

Comes now George Berkeley (1685-1753) who, on Lockeian
grounds, denies the Lockeian Substance. "If," he says, "we
enquire into what the most accurate philosophers declare themselves
to mean by "material substance," we shall find them acknowledge
they have no other meaning attached to these sounds than the
idea of being in general, together with the relative notion of
its supporting accidents."

Or again: "I cannot conceive how it is possible to
speak of the absolute existence of things without their relation
to the fact that somebody perceives them. To exist means to be
perceived. (Esse est percipi). "Some things there are," says
Berkeley, "so near and obvious to the mind, that a man need
only open his eyes to see them. Such I take this important one
to be, to wit, that all the choir of heaven and furniture of
the earth, in a word, all those bodies which compose the mighty
frame of the world, have not any subsistence without a mind;
that their being is to be perceived or known; that consequently
so long as they are not actually perceived by me, or do not
exist in my mind or that of any other created spirit, they must
either have no existence at all, or else subsist in the mind of
some eternal spirit. To be convinced of which the reader need

3. Ibid., paragraph 4.
only reflect, and try to separate in his own thoughts the being of a sensible thing from its being perceived.\textsuperscript{1}

The conclusion Berkeley draws from his analysis is that "there is not any other substance than spirit or that which perceives" and that the existence of external things consists in their being eternally present in the mind of God, by whom they are revealed to us. It is not that Berkeley denies the existence of an "external" world. What he does, in short, amounts to "substituting in the interpretation of the data of sense-perception the concept "object-for-mind" for the concept "quality-inhering-in-substance."\textsuperscript{2} The change, no doubt, makes a profound difference in the way we think about what we perceive, but it makes none in what we actually perceive. As Berkeley himself says: "I do not argue against the existence of any one thing that we can apprehend by sense or reflection. That the things I see with my eyes and touch with my hands do exist, really exist, I make not the least question. The only thing whose existence I deny is that which philosophers call Matter or corporeal substance. And in doing this there is no damage done to the rest of mankind, who, I dare say, will never miss it."\textsuperscript{3}

The significance of Berkeley, for our present purpose, lies in the fact that he opened up the question of the meaning of the general name "matter." Hume, as we shall see presently,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1} Berkeley, G., op. cit., p.VI.
\item \textsuperscript{2} Hoernle, R.F.A., "Idealism," p.69.
\item \textsuperscript{3} Ibid., p.35.
\end{itemize}
in effect took up the application of his method at the point where Berkeley dropped it, and proceeded to inquire into the meaning of the general name "mind." Berkeley, while rejecting the Lockeian substance, that is, the substratum in which qualities inhere, in so far as the material world was concerned, never once thought of rejecting the same conception in respect of the internal or mental world. For Berkeley, as we have seen, the only possible substratum for external objects was the mind or minds by which they are perceived. Hume, on the other hand, contends that the concept of a Soul-substance - "mind," "spirit" or "self" - is no less an absurdity than the conception of an independent substance or substratum of matter. "This question," says Hume, "we have found impossible to be answered with regard to matter and body. But besides that in the case of mind it labours under all the same difficulties, it is burdened with some additional ones which are peculiar to that subject. As every idea is derived from a precedent impression, had we any idea of the substance of our minds, we must also have an impression of it: which is very difficult, if not impossible, to be conceived. For how can an impression represent a substance otherwise than by resembling it? And how can an impression represent a substance, since according to this philosophy it is not a substance and has none of the peculiar qualities or characteristics of a substance?"


2. Treatise, pt. IV, section 5.
As we see in this passage, Hume draws a distinction between "impressions" and "ideas." Both Locke and Berkeley had employed the term "idea" for the objects of both sense and reflection. Every idea, according to Hume, has its origin in an impression or combination of impressions. The having of impressions is feeling; the having of ideas is thinking. The fundamental principles of connection or association among ideas Hume finds to be three, namely - resemblance, contiguity, and cause and effect.

"A picture naturally leads our thoughts to the original (resemblance); the mention of one apartment in a building naturally introduces an inquiry or discourse concerning the others (contiguity); and if we think of a wound, we can scarcely forbear reflecting on the pain which follows it." 1

For Hume, again, the objects of human reason or inquiry may be divided into "relations of ideas," and "matters of fact." The former alone are susceptible of demonstration. (This statement recalls the distinction made by Leibnitz between "necessary" and "empirical" truth.) Now, all reasonings concerning matters of fact are founded on the relation of cause and effect. "But," says Hume, "causes and effects are discoverable, not by reason, but by experience?" He, therefore, categorically denies the existence of any causal nexus, of any principle, that is, uniting the cause with the effect.


In mathematics alone can we have certitude. "All other inquiries of men regard only matter and existence; and these are evidently incapable of demonstration. Whatever is may not be; no negation of a fact can involve a contradiction; the non-existence of any being is as clear and distinct an idea as its existence. The proposition which affirms it not to be, however false, is no less conceivable and intelligible than that which affirms it to be. The case is different with the sciences, properly so-called. Every proposition which is not true is there confused and unintelligible. That the cube root of sixty-four is equal to the half of ten is a false proposition, and can never be distinctly conceived; but that Caesar or the angel Gabriel, or any being never existed, may be a false proposition, but still is perfectly conceivable and implies no contradiction."

In respect of Science, Hume's findings have been summarized thus: "Science is entitled to our confidence on two conditions only - all its elements must bear the stamp of necessity and universality. But our ideas being the effect of variable impressions or of pure habit, present nothing universal or necessary. Therefore there is no absolutely true science. Our knowledge is mere belief and probability, and therefore contingent."

Science, to be sure, was not much concerned about Hume's conclusions, since, for all practical purposes, his

1. Inquiry, sect. XII, pt. 3, p.163.
"probability" was just as good as certitude. Hume's scepticism does not suppress the ideas it explains; it merely teaches us to employ them with a full knowledge of their nature. As a matter of fact the tremendous development of science in England and Europe generally proceeded apace as indifferent to Hume's nihilism as it remained to Mill's definition of matter as "permanent possibility of sensation," or Spencer's statement that "By Reality we mean persistence in consciousness."

Notwithstanding then, the scepticism of Hume, British Empiricism, worked out by the Scottish School, became the dominant philosophy in England, under the name of Associationalism, for the greater part of the nineteenth century. In the hands of Hamilton, Mill, Bain and others, while always suspect to the clerical mind, it avoided the crass materialism of the French school and commended itself to the English mind by its air of sound common-sense.

From Hume we should go immediately to Kant, but it will be necessary to notice the development of British Empiricism in France, a process which resulted in the formation of the French Materialist School.


"It is usual for the Englishman, with the bluff common-sense of a nation of shopkeepers, to hold philosophies and broad generalizations in contempt. The tradition of our thought is empiricist. The pride of our thinkers is to be practical, to turn paradox into the obvious and to translate the mysteries of the universe into the language of the best-seller. The scepticism of Hume strikes us as eminently urbane and reasonable contrasted with the stupendous dogmatism of Hegel; and we prefer even to be frankly inconsistent if consistency means a striving after architectonic systems of thought in the manner of classic German philosophy."
The teachings of Locke were popularized in France by Condillac (1715-1780) who introduced them to his countrymen in his "Essay on the Origin of Knowledge" published in 1746. This work is little more than an exposition of Locke's "Essay," but in his "Treatise on Sensation" he develops his own contribution to the theory of knowledge. Locke, as we have seen, had admitted the activity of reflection as well as sensation in the formation of ideas. Condillac considered this a concession to the intellectualists of the time and insisted that, no matter how ideas may be combined and recombined, in no matter how complex a manner, they are all ultimately reducible to sensations. "The Ego of each individual is but the sum-total of the sensations he experiences, or of those revived by memory; it is at once the conscience of what he is, and the recollection of what he has been." Penser c'est sentir.

Helvetius carried on the work of Condillac. His teaching is of a marked hedonistic and utilitarian character. The end of life is happiness and there is no such thing as disinterested conduct. Since society is merely the sum of individuals, individual satisfaction, as such, contributes to the general well-being. Since Self-love is the only motive of conduct, all practical action in life is traceable to self-interested motives. From this it follows that no moral teaching, whose aim is not to show that virtuous conduct is that most conducive to individual happiness, is of any value.

La Mettrie (1709-1751) combined the mechanistic and materialist side of Descartes' philosophy with the sensationalism of Condillac and Helvetius and thus opposed an atheistic doctrine to the Deistic teachings of his contemporaries.

Denis Diderot (1713-1784), who originated and edited the "Encyclopedia," was one of the outstanding men of his time. Belfort Bax says of him: "Diderot may most accurately be described as a materialist monist. To him all nature was one; the difference between organic, inorganic, animal and human, were only differences of degree. There was no such thing as dead matter; the molecule was no less an active agent than the man. To employ an illustration of his: 'the great musical instrument we call the universe plays itself.' Matter is itself active by its very nature, itself sentient, itself conscious, potentially when not actually. In other words matter, i.e., physical substance, is the ultimate of all existence; nature is the sum of its combinations."

It is in the text-book, however, of the materialist movement that we must look for the systematic statement of its doctrines. This is the celebrated "Systeme de la Nature" of D'Holbach. (Paul Heinrich Dietrich, Baron von Holbach, 1721-1789). In this book we find the Empiricism of the British school, the sensationism of Condillac, the self-interest ethics of Helvetius and the Epicureanism of La Mettrie; the whole

1. Lenin speaks of him as "one of the great materialists - Diderot, Feuerbach, Marx and Engels." "Materialism and Empirio-criticism, p.28.

forming the bible of materialism as understood in France during the eighteenth century and, for that matter, of all the freethinkers in Europe for long after.
CHAPTER III

KANT

Nihil est in intellectu quod non prius
in sensu fuerit, sed ipse intellectus

(Leibnitz)

For the English Empiricists, as for the French Materialists, who drew on Locke and his school, the human mind, in the act of perception, was essentially passive. To be sure the mind was active in reflection but only in relating and combining the sense-data provided by perception. The only source of knowledge was experience. But this line of reasoning, if logically followed out, as it was by Hume, leads inevitably to a form of scepticism which is fatal to all certitude, all "universal and necessary" ideas, Eternal Verities and Absolutes whatever. It was equally deadly to Theology in spite of Hume's ironical "accomodations."

Now, Materialism has always been vulgar and disreputable and may, therefore, be frowned down. Scepticism, however, bears another complexion; it is urbane, polished, and insidious. It must, therefore, be met by argument or by a restatement of the position attacked. To be sure science and industry could get along quite well with materialism, whether modified by an infusion of scepticism into positivism, naturalism, agnosticism or whatnot. But it was otherwise with the theological and dogmatic schools which were thrown into confusion by the impact of the Humean scepticism. It was thus that Immanuel Kant was,

1. Hume's concession in respect of mathematical concepts, on his own principles, was doubtfully valid.

2. Kant was born at Koenigsberg in 1724 and died 1804 in the same place.

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as he tells us, "awakened from the dogmatic slumber."

"Metaphysic," he says, "has been the battlefield of endless conflicts. Dogmatism at first held despotic sway; but from time to time scepticism destroyed all settled order of society; and now a widespread indifferentism prevails." And again: "The unavoidable problems, set by pure reason itself, are God, freedom, and immortality, and the science which brings all its resources to bear on the one single task of solving them is metaphysic."

As a matter of fact, the development of the "Theory of Knowledge" which was Kant's main preoccupation does not immediately involve these matters at all, as Kant himself proves, but he had to make up his account, some way or other, with the old question of dogmatics and it must be admitted he does so with remarkable ingenuity. What he did do, in the "Critique of Pure Reason," was to lay the groundwork of the movement which led up to Hegel and German Idealism.

In insisting on the importance of perception as the only source of Knowledge the Empiricists had reduced philosophy to the status of psychology and had really evaded the main problems of philosophy proper. Had they enquired into the conditions of experience itself they could have seen that their postulates were not ultimate in themselves, and presupposed conditions not recognized in their theory. With Locke, Kant

2. Ibid., p.11
3. The "Critique of Pure Reason," was published in 1781.
admitted that every concrete concept can come only through experience, but his great merit lies in having seen the issue which lies beyond this mere psychological question, the problem, namely, as to the conditions of experience itself.

The question which Kant asked himself was this: How, then, is experience possible? Clearly, if we have perceptions, there must be acts of perceiving for the sense-data and also things as collections of sense-data to exist. But what about the nature of the act? The sense-data which at any given moment we perceive are, taken thus as momentary events, mere shreds of that total world of which we believe them to be a part. If we were restricted at any moment merely to what, at that moment, we actually perceive, we should be aware only of a confused mass of manifold sense-data. We could not be aware of Nature as a "World," that is, as an ordered whole, and the term "law of nature" would have no meaning for us at all. Kant's answer to his own question was the assertion of the essential activity of the human understanding in the act of perception as well as in that of conception. If conceptions without perception are empty, it is equally true that perceptions without conception are blind.

"If sensibility is the receptivity of the mind in the actual apprehension of some impression, understanding is the spontaneity of Knowledge, or the faculty that of itself produces ideas. ...... Understanding can perceive nothing, the senses

can think nothing. Knowledge arises only from their united action."

An act of Knowledge, therefore, is an act of judgment, and an act of judgment is an act of synthesis. If it be true that even for ordinary common-sense, let alone for science, Nature is not a mere stream of sense-data but is given as a system, a whole ordered according to laws, it is not in virtue of mere seeing, or hearing or touching that we thus know nature, but in virtue of acts of judgment affirming the universal relations in which sense-data stand to each other. These relations are, firstly, those of space and time, both forms of sense. Upon the "matter," that is, the impression or sense-data received from "without," sensibility imposes its own unifying forms. In space the manifold sense-data are united in co-existence, in time as sequence.

"Time and space are not real things or objective realities, neither are they any qualities, relations, or determinations of such things. ... Space, therefore is simply the form of external sense, and hence the formal condition of all external phenomena. Time, in like manner, is simply the form of internal sense, and hence the form of all phenomena whatever."

Secondly, the sense-data, thus unified in space and time, are combined by the understanding in another series of relations or categories, typically those of substance and

accident, causality, and relativity.

"It has been justly remarked that space and time in, the "critical philosophy," are the warp of Knowledge, across which the shuttle of thought has to throw its woof before reality, objectivity or experience can obtain. A world of three-dimensioned space, and of one-dimensioned time, forms the warp. This material is supplemented by the spontaneity of the understanding or pure form of thought. The function of the understanding may be compared to the action of an electric spark, passing along and illuminating the whole series of sensations. Sensations, even though unified in space and time, are, to use Kant's expression, "blind," until they are reacted upon by the understanding. The understanding synthesizes them, and thereupon a fully-fledged objective or experienced world arises. This system of experienced objects is the "nature" with which science is concerned. Science, no less than common experience, is based upon the pure thought forms or categories." 1

"Further, while the unity of space and time is thus presupposed as conditioning all the objects of experience, presupposition is also made, tacitly if not explicitly, of the identity of the self which is the subject of it." That is to say, that the experience of an ordered objective world, unified in space and time, presupposes unity and continuity in the experient. "The identity of the self is, in fact, but the subjective counterpart of the unity of the world as one whole,

existing in space and time."

"No knowledge whatever, no unity and connection of objects, is possible for us, apart from that unity of consciousness which is prior to all data of perception, and without relation to which no consciousness of objects is possible. This pure, original, unchangeable consciousness I call Transcendental Apperception. .... The numerical unity of this apperception is, therefore, just as much the a priori foundation of all concepts as the various determinations of space and time are the a priori foundation of the perceptions of sense. It is this transcendental unity of apperception which connects all the possible phenomena that can be gathered together in one experience, and subjects them to laws."

Now, all the unifying acts we have been considering eventuate, or find their ground, in time; this one, the transcendental unity of apperception, is not in time, but time is for it. Belfort Bax interprets Kant to the effect that: "This primary synthesis is identified by Kant with the productive or pure ego, the ultimate datum of "theory of Knowledge, as opposed to the empirical ego or subject-object with which psychology is concerned. The transcendental synthesis of apperception includes the secondary or psychological synthesis (the empirical self) as it does the whole world of experience. From the synthesis of apperception, the primordial "I think," every other synthesis is deducible."

This objective world, however, which is the only one we can possibly experience is merely phenomenal. Reality in itself - the Kantian ding-an-sich - is unknowable. Kant says on this point: "if the conception of a noumenon is interpreted in a problematic sense, it is not only admissible but indispensable, serving as it does to define the limits of sensibility. In that sense, however, a noumenon is not a special kind of object for our understanding, namely, an intelligible object; on the contrary it is problematic whether there is any understanding that could have such an object actually before it."

Nevertheless Kant, somewhat inconsequently, retained the thing-in-itself, not so much because he required it as a ground for sensation, but for reasons connected with his theories of free will and free causality, which do not concern us here.

"Jacobi wittily remarks that Kant's thing in itself 'as in itself real, but unknown and unknowable by us, enjoys a position of otium cum dignitate,' which is the next thing to non-existence!"

The practical outcome of the Kantian philosophy was modest enough and its burden a warning against the pretensions of the metaphysicians but the impact of the "critical philosophy" on the intellectual world of his day was tremendous and marks a turning point in the history of human thought. Kant had built, possibly, better than he knew, and it was on Kantian principles and the critical method that philosophy moved toward the solution of the problem of Reality.

1. Watson, G., op. cit., p.133.
2. Ibid., "Critique of Practical Reason," passim.
CHAPTER IV

HEGEL

"The light dove, piercing in her easy flight
the air and perceiving its resistance, imagines
that flight would be easier in empty space."

(Kant)

For the thinkers of the Age of Reason the universe
was a rounded out whole, fixed for all time and governed by
rigid and unchanging laws. The things and beings which it
contained were rigidly divided into orders, genera and species
and were co-existent in space and succeeded one another in time.
Activity in plenty, there was, to be sure, but it worked round
in a perpetual circle of growth and decay, composition, recom-
position, and decomposition. Changes there were but not change.

"To form the universe," says D'Holbach, "Descartes
asked but matter and motion: a diversity of matter sufficed for
him; variety of motion was the consequence of its existence, of
its essence, of its properties; its different modes of action
would be the necessary consequence of its different modes of
being. Matter without properties would be a mere nothing:
therefore as soon as matter exists, it must act; as soon as it
is various it must act variously; if it cannot commence to
exist, it must have, it must have existed from all eternity;
if it has always existed, it can never cease to be; if it can
never cease to be, it can never cease to act by its own energy.
Motion is a manner of being, which matter derives from its
peculiar existence. ..... These elements (earth, water, air, and fire) which our senses never discover in a pure state which are continually and reciprocally set in motion by each other, which are always acting and reacting, combining and separating, attracting and repelling, are sufficient to explain to us the formation of all the things we behold. Their motion is uninterruptedly and reciprocally produced from each other, they are alternately causes and effects. Thus they form a vast circle of generation and destruction, of combination and decomposition, which it is quite reasonable to suppose could never have had a beginning, and which, consequently, can never have an end. Let us therefore content ourselves with saying ..... that matter always existed; that it moves by virtue of its essence; that all the phenomena of Nature is ascribable to the diversified motion of the variety of matter she contains; and which, like the phoenix, is continually regenerating out of its own ashes."

So far as objective nature is concerned there is not, therefore, any conception of change in the sense of "process" or development towards an end, proximate or final. Veblen is undoubtedly correct when he says that "the 'natural laws' were looked upon as intrinsically meritorious and beneficent, and were held to carry a sanction of their own." But he is as certainly wrong when he goes on to say: "Hence these 'natural


laws, as traditionally conceived, are laws governing the accomplishment of an end—that is to say, laws as to how a sequence of cause and effect comes to rest in a final term.  

Rather must we say with Dr. Beard: "This is a scholastic-Newtonian scheme of thought, founded on a fixed-order notion of things—not on the concept of eternal flow or change, either Hegelian or Marxian."

Development and progress, it was held, took place rather in the order of ideas and resulted from the study of nature, the increasing Knowledge of her laws and processes, and hence a greater conformity and adaptation thereto.

"Improvement is the necessary effect of the laws of nature; for by the law of sensation, man as invincibly tends to make himself happy, as the flame to ascend. His ignorance is the obstacle which misleads him as to the means, and deceives him respecting causes and effects. By force of experience he will set himself right; he will become wise and good, because it is his interest to be so; and ideas communicating themselves through a nation, whole classes will be instructed, science will be universally familiar, and all men will understand what are the principles of individual happiness and of public felicity. .... Individuals will feel that private happiness is allied to the happiness of society."

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Now these are excellent sentiments but they do not indicate the existence of any concept of development. This attitude, however, is neither arbitrary nor accidental. When we remember that, up to a time well within the century in which these writers lived, Europe was still carrying on the activities incidental to getting a living, agriculture, transportation and industry generally, - in very much the same way as had been employed for, say, eight thousand years. As we have already noted, the expansion of the market and the rise of the middle-class profoundly affected the thought of the seventeenth century; so now the tremendous development of industry in the eighteenth century had its reflex in the philosophic thought of that time and of the early nineteenth century. The first indications of the changing ideology are to be observed in the sciences, naturally enough, since the scientists are more intimately associated with industry. But, as D.G. Ritchie has noted, "the method and leading conceptions of philosophy are specially affected by the sciences." Already, in 1755, Kant, although the idea of evolution is entirely absent in his philosophy, had advanced the Nebular Hypothesis. In 1790 Goethe published his "Metamorphoses of Plants," while Erasmus Darwin foreshadowed the work of his grandson in his "Zoornomia" (1794). Hegel thus grew up, and developed his philosophy, in an intellectual atmosphere in which the concept of development formed no inconsiderable part.


2. "Natural History and General Theory of the Heavens."
Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) is in the direct line of thought represented by Kant, Fichte and Schelling. The contribution of Fichte and Schelling consisted in the transformation of Kant's dualistic phenomenalism into a monistic idealism. The ideas of universality and necessity grounded on the transcendental unity of apperception were taken up and developed while the thing-in-itself was rejected as a self-contradictory and impossible abstraction. Kant had assumed as had Locke before him, that there must be a ground or cause for sensations. But, on Kantian principles, this assumption is seen to be absurd since, if we assert that the thing-in-itself exists and is a cause, then we apply the categories of "existence" and of "cause and effect" to it and, therefore, know it; but it is, by hypothesis, unknown and unknowable. "Thus the thing-in-itself which Kant had reduced to a phantom, is banished from the intelligible world and the consciousness of man finds no limit in itself to preclude it from the knowledge of its object."\(^1\)

Now Kant had already proved the essential activity of mind and that the forms of knowledge, space, time and the categories, are the product of minds, and arise from nothing external. But he had also assumed that the content of these forms was given as the thing-in-itself. If this, however, be rejected then both matter and form are the product of mind and this leads, unavoidably, to the conclusion that the whole object, and every object, and finally the entire universe, is a product of mind.

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If all this be granted then the gulf between subject and object is bridged; we know the objective world directly and immediately since it is not only of the same stuff as we ourselves but forms part of the same all-inclusive whole. Further, there is nothing in the universe which is unknowable. An unknown reality, a reality not an actual object of knowledge, may be spoken of, but certainly not an unknowable reality, since reality simply means the possibility of being an object of consciousness. To avoid misunderstanding:—"As commonly understood, Consciousness is regarded as the attribute of the individual. Each individual mind is supposed to have its own consciousness over against other individual minds and the world without. But Consciousness, in a philosophical sense, does not mean consciousness conceived as appertaining to this or that individual, which at best constitutes the subject-matter of empirical psychology, but consciousness considered in its essential nature. This is what is meant by consciousness-in-general, or consciousness as such. To say that the whole system of things stands or falls with your, or with my, individual consciousness, or psyche, (the position of Solipsism) is a palpable absurdity."

The precise relation of consciousness-in-particular, which concerns the individual mind, to consciousness-in-general, which concerns the system of things, or reality, is the problem, to find an adequate formula for which has been the constantly

recurring pre-occupation of philosophy, in its wider aspect, from Plato to the present day. The Hegelian system represents the most elaborate and comprehensive of these attempts, and forms the culmination of the idealistic movement which took its rise in Kant. That Hegel did not find a final solution of this problem, as the differences among his successors would indicate, does not immediately concern us. In its more practical aspects his system purported to effect, not only the transcendence of that dualism of ideal and material which had persisted even in the Kantian philosophy, but to account for the moving, historical and social aspects of reality while yet providing a method of investigation and a criterion of certainty which would bring the apparently chaotic flux of experience into some kind of order.

The acquisition of Knowledge is a synthetic process in which things or events are brought into a new relationship; some content is brought into a new unity, the particular under the universal. Every unification of this kind constitutes an apperception or, as Kant would say, an apperceptive synthesis of knowing and forms a step in the constitution of higher and more comprehensive categories. It is the bringing of particular contents—things or events—under new unifications. The more comprehensive the unifying thought form or generalization, the higher the point of view as science. In physical science this process of the reduction of the "sense manifold" to unity reaches its highest point in the bringing of the world of objects, making up the content of space and time, under the
generalization matter-in-motion. The higher unifications have, hitherto, lain within the province of philosophy. The drift of recent scientific research, however, is towards a quest for ultimate reality. Sir James Jeans, in a recent book, comes to the interesting conclusion that "either our supposed laws of nature become a mere specification of our own mental processes, telling us little or possibly nothing about nature, but certainly something about ourselves," or "reality must have something of a mental nature about it."

Thus even the scientist is driven to conclude that Reality, in the last resort, is nothing but a synthesis of thought relations. It is a Unity which, while self-consistent, includes and transcends all distinctions whatever. It is an "identity in differences." This ultimate principle of all Knowledge,


It is worthy of note, however, that the reviewer (William Gruen) of this book, in the Nation of July 19, 1933, takes occasion to chide Sir James for thus venturing beyond the traditional limits of science. Referring to physical laws he says "their function is not - as Jeans supposes - to tear the veil of phenomena from the "real" substratum of nature. Their function in science and technology is rather to disclose some order and connection between events and to endow the arts with intelligent foresight and some measure of control." One is reminded of Veblen who also says: "Modern technology makes use of the same range of concepts, thinks in the same terms, and applies the same tests of validity as modern science. .... Hence the easy copartnership between the two. Science and technology play into each others hands. The processes of nature with which science deals and which technology turns to account, the sequence of changes in the external world, animate and inanimate, run in terms of brute causation, as do the theories of science. These processes take no thought of human expediency or inexpediency..... Modern science carries on its inquiries and states its conclusions in terms of the same objective character as those employed by the mechanical engineer." "The Place of Science," p.17, ff.
which is Experience-in-general, or Consciousness-as-such, is the system of all possible momenta or determinations of Knowledge, thought or consciousness. It is what Kant called the "Synthetic Unity of Apperception," Fichte the "Pure Ego," and Hegel the "Concrete Idea."

Now the Absolute, thus conceived, is all-inclusive, and therefore embraces all differences, oppositions and antagonisms whatever. But it must also transcend and unite all contradictions in a coherent whole. And thus the drive toward Unity, to the thought of the universe as a self-consistent whole is a process of the elimination of contradictions.

We have already seen that Empiricism and Scepticism, in undermining the distinctions of the ordinary consciousness, and of the philosophy immediately arising from it, pave the way for a truly synthetic view. Thus scepticism shows us, that on the ordinary crude dualistic assumption of the independence of subject and object, mind and matter, perceiver and perceived, Knowledge would be impossible. We are therefore forced to reconsider the assumptions which we have hitherto received as unquestionable truth. So with every fixed distinction, great and small, whether important or seemingly irrelevant; every such distinction will be found on examination, when consistently carried out, to refute itself, that is, to contain the germ of its own destruction or negation. As Hegel has it, it contains its own "internal dialectic." It is in this word Dialectic that we have the key to the whole Hegelian system. The method of Hegel is the dialectic method, and it is the
discovery of the full significance of this dynamic principle which has given Hegel that pre-eminence he enjoys in the philosophic world. It is the principle which Herakleitos of E Ephesus foreshadowed when he said, "all things flow," and "there is nothing that comes into being but it forthwith ceases to be." Zeno of Elea, the Sophists and Socrates, Plato and Aristotle all recognized this principle though even Plato never definitely transcended the contradiction between the unity and permanence of Reality and the multiplicity of the sense-world, between Form and Matter, between the One and the Many. Goethe catches the beat of the world-rhythm when he makes the Erdgeist in Faust exclaim:

"In Being's floods, in Actions storm
I walk and work, above beneath,
Work and weave in endless motion!
Birth and Death
An Infinite ocean,
A seizing and giving
The fire of Living
'Tis thus at the roaring loom of Time I ply,
And weave for God the garment thou seest him by."

"Whoever," says Croce, "feels the dignity of man and the dignity of thought can find satisfaction in no other solution of conflicts and of dualisms than in the dialectical, the solution won by the genius of Hegel."

The Hegelian dialectic is based on the recognition of identity in difference, of the fact that all affirmation implies negation, and all negation affirmation. In all things there is a capacity unrealised, and a capacity realised; the first in

the "material" moment, the second the "formal" moment. The
acorn is the unrealised capacity of the oak, it is realised as
oak. The realisation of the capacity of a thing is the nega­
tion of that thing as actually existent. The possibility or
capacity present in the child is realised in the man, but manhood
is the negation of childhood. The dialectic runs through all
things, and may be discovered by analysis on every plane of
reality of which it is the ultimate expression. From this more
comprehensive viewpoint the old formal logic is seen to be
inadequate to deal with a universe in flux. So far from its
being the case, as the law of contradiction asserts, that a
thing cannot both be and not be, we now see that, in a sense,
everything is, and at the same time is not. Since reality,
that is, the synthesis of experience, consists in the union of
contradictories, it necessarily follows that for experience
pure affirmation is precisely on the same level as pure negation;
all distinctions, affirmations and negations are dissolved in
the Absolute. This is all that Hegel means by the somewhat
paradoxical statement, with which he begins his "Logic," that
"being" and "non-being" are the same. Absolute = Being = Nothing.

Hegel himself somewhere observes that it was
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Spinoza who first introduced into European thought the monistic
conception that the first principle of the universe must be a
single principle, and that this principle must be a unity; an
absolute unity in which finite and infinite are merged. For

Clarendon Press, 1874, p.137.

2. Baruch de Spinoza, 1632-1677.
the ultimate reality is only real in virtue of the fact that it is dependent on nothing outside itself; to be thus self-dependent is to be self-determined and what is self-determined must be a unity. This unity Spinoza defined as Substance - the One Substance. And, since it was substance, and a unity; thought was definitely excluded and remained over against it. He could not therefore deduce thought from it nor the multiplicity of the finite since thought is of the essence of these things.

Many philosophies have asserted that "all is one" and that, in some sense, the first principle is a unity. Even for science the world is only intelligible on the assumption that it forms one coherent system. The word "all" as used above clearly means the many, the multiplicity of things. The statement then means that the "many" is identical with its opposite the "one." Again, it is said that the "one" is the infinite, while the "many" is the finite. The infinite produces the finite out of itself, becomes finite, and therefore is finite. The infinite is identical with its opposite the finite.

Thus the problem appeared to Hegel and, as thus stated, it is half solved. The older philosophies, however, remained, more or less explicitly, of a dualistic character since they could not bridge the gulf between the one and the many. The materialists emphasized the multiplicity and could never compass the unity, while the subjective idealists and pantheists stressed the unity and could not account for the multiplicity. For Hegel, of course, the problem had to be stated in logical terms, since
the universe was a mental fact and the thought process a progression from category to category until the Absolute is reached. The Absolute contains all the categories; in fact is the categories.

Now, it had hitherto been assumed, on Aristotelian principles - the laws of identity, of contradiction, and of the excluded middle - that, speaking logically, a positive and its negative simply excluded each other; were reciprocally exclusive and separated from each other by an impassible gulf. If, as these laws enjoin, we can only say A is A, and never that A is not-A, we obtain nothing but a sterile identity which even as truth is inadequate since it obscures that relativity which is of the essence of truth in a coherent system. This was, partly, Spinoza's difficulty. He regarded the infinite and the finite as being mutually exclusive and found it impossible to solve the problem as to how the finite could ever issue out of the infinite. If we cannot say other than that A is A, or the infinite is the infinite, then A must remain A for ever and the infinite remain infinite, and therefore sterile, for ever and never give birth to the finite world. This problem can only be solved on the basis of the Hegelian principle that the infinite contains the finite, just as being contains non-being; that the infinite is the finite; that A is not-A.

It was, however, Spinoza's famous formula, all determination is negation, (omnis determinatio est negatio) which, possibly, suggested to Hegel his conception of the importance of the contradiction or negation. To determine an
object is to mark it off; to separate it from a more general class, to limit it. A thing is known by its limitations. What we affirm of it denies something else of it. If we say it is within certain limits then we deny that it is outside those limits. Affirmation, therefore, involves negation. To be sure, it is generally in the converse form— all negation is determination— that Hegel uses this principle.

"It has been hitherto one of the rooted prejudices of logic and a commonly accepted belief that the contradiction is not so essential or so inherent a characteristic (in thought and existence) as the identity. Yet in comparison with it the identity is, in truth, but the characteristic of what is simply and directly perceived, of lifeless existence. The contradiction, however, is the source of all movement and life; only in so far as it contains a contradiction can anything have movement, power; and effect. .... Only active reason reduced the mere multiplicity and diversity of phenomena to antithesis. And only when pushed to this point do the manifold phenomena become active and mutually stimulating, producing the state of negation, which is the very heart-beat of progress and life. Only through their differentiation and unfolding as opposing forces and factors is further progress beyond the antithesis to a higher positive stage made possible. Where, however, the power to develop the contradiction and bring it to a head is lacking, the thing or the being is shattered on the contradiction."  

So far we have two elements or momenta, an affirmation or positive and a contradiction or negation, reciprocally determined. And, since reality cannot remain at war with itself, a reconciliation or synthesis must be effected. Thus, as we have seen the contradiction provides the drive, the forward impulse implied in all development. There is, thus, a triple articulation in each stage of development which is completed by the negation of the negation or synthesis. But it is important to note that neither negation is absolute; both momenta are preserved in the synthesis. The identity is not the whole truth, nor is the contradiction the whole truth; the whole truth is the identity in difference.

"In so far as the resultant, the negation, is a definite negation, it has a content. It is a new conception, but a higher and richer conception than the preceding one; for it has been enriched by the negation or antithesis of this; it therefore contains it and more than contains it, being indeed the synthetic unity of itself and its contrary."

The synthesis, thus formed, becomes the thesis, or positive, of a new triad which again develops an antithesis leading to a new synthesis and so on, the process representing a necessary movement leading up to the Absolute which is the sum total of these determinations. Hegel thus sought to show that every separate idea logically involves every other separate idea, and that the world of ideas as a whole is an organic,

self-explained, self-determined unity, and finally that the actual world of objects follows by logical deduction from this self-determined unity.

In his "Logic" Hegel proceeds to make this deduction, or series of deductions. They are here, however, presented, not in the order in which they present themselves, the understanding trying to comprehend the universe, but in the necessary or logical order. He, therefore, begins with the most abstract category (which is also the most concrete, since, for Hegel, the end is the beginning) which is presupposed by, and logically prior to, all other categories. The categories of quantity, quality, substance and cause all presuppose being. From this, then, the summum genus, Hegel proceeds to deduce the species, and, treating the species, thus obtained as a new genus, passes from it to lower species, and so on. But he can only proceed from genus to species adding a differentia to the genus, and where can he find the differentia in a pure abstraction such as being. It is axiomatic that the consequent should be contained in the antecedent, otherwise we commit the fallacy of illicit process, since the genus expressly excludes the differentia and ex nihilo nihil fit.

It is the dialectic method which performs for Hegel this apparent miracle. He finds his differentia neatly tucked away in the category as the contradiction which, it will be remembered, was preserved, as well as abolished, (aufgehoben) in the formation of the synthesis.

Now, pure "being" abstracted from all determinations whatever, has neither content nor form. Being, therefore, is
the same as nothing. "Being, as Being, is nothing fixed or ultimate; it yields to dialectic and sinks into its opposite, which, also taken immediately, is Nothing." The pure concept of being may thus be said to contain the idea of nothing. Since, therefore, they are identical the one passes into the other. Being passes into nothing, and, conversely, nothing passes back into being; for the thought of nothing is the same as the thought of being. The idea of "passage," of transition from one concept to another gives us the third term in the triad, namely, Becoming. This, then, is the explanation of the statement that everything "is" and "is not." If it be asked how a thing can both be and not be, the answer is that it both is and is not when it becomes.

Since it is the dialectic method rather than the Hegelian system we are concerned with here the above should suffice to illustrate the process. There are altogether an indefinite number of categories but all on the same plan. We may note, however, that the category "becoming" does not become the thesis of the next succeeding triad but is substituted for by "determinate being." The element of "change" is thereby eliminated, which seems to be a somewhat arbitrary procedure, since, on Hegelian principles, nothing is ever lost in the process. The reason for this was, no doubt, that Hegel was describing a logical process of which the result was to be a unity of pure thought forms. The Absolute for him was an eternally complete

1. Logic of Hegel, op. cit., p.137.
system of thought determinations; eternal because timeless. Any formulation that makes thought per se the beginning and end of all things necessarily issues in a conception which regards the universe as completed and static. In its final result it inevitably assumes the form of a complete and perfect divine mind composed of purely rational elements, from which is eliminated all the material element in reality, all feeling, all particularity, all contingency, and all impulse or will as such - in short, all the dynamic factors in experience. We may very well agree that all objects whatever are nothing but determinations of consciousness and yet insist that these material and dynamic factors are essential elements in all mental activity. The logical form is always static, it is a process of fixing, of defining things, while the dynamic element in the real is always incapable of comprehension under logical forms - it is infinite. The one is thought, but the other is being which, while nothing in itself, contains the infinite potentiality of becoming. For this reason Hegel fails, in any adequate manner, to make the transition from the Ideal to nature. Hispanlogism reveals itself as a species of dualism, as must all formulations which hypostatize the purely formal element in experience. If then there be, admittedly, a contingent and arational element in nature which cannot be compassed or explained by the logical and formal element, there exists a division between nature and spirit, and the latter appears

as a somewhat over against the world of nature which Hegel will characterize as "God in his eternal essence before the creation of nature and of the finite spirit."  

"We can," says Croce, "very well think God in nature and in the finite spirit, Deus in nobis et nos, but certainly not a God outside or prior to nature and man. ... This dualism not overcome, in which Hegel's absolute idealism becomes entangled is the reason of the division of the Hegelian school into a right and a left, and for the eventual extension of the latter to an extreme left. The right wing interpreted Hegel theistically ... while the left wing was opposed to all transcendence and to the whole conception of a personal God. It emphasized the character of immanence of the system, and finally came to sympathize with philosophic materialism, in so far as this in its own way has an immanent and not a transcendental character. It would be impossible to decide which of the two interpretations was the more faithful to the thought of Hegel; for both of them were founded upon Hegelian doctrines, and were opposed and hostile to one another, precisely because those doctrines were contradictory."  

1. Quoted by Croce, op. cit., p.201.  
CHAPTER V

FROM HEGEL TO MARX

"Als Hegel auf dem Todbette lag, sagte er:-
'Nur einer hat mich verstanden!' Aber gleich
darauf fügte er verdreisslich hinzu. 'Und der
hat mich auch nicht verstanden!'"

(Heine)

Hegel himself somewhere observes: "A party shows
itself to have won the victory first when it has broken up into
two parties; for then it proves that it contains in itself the
principle with which at first it had to conflict, and thus that
it has got beyond the onesidedness which was incidental to its
earliest expression. The interest which formerly divided itself
between it and that to which it was opposed, now falls entirely
within itself, and the opposing principle is left behind and
forgotten, just because it is represented by one of the sides
in the new controversy which now occupies the minds of men.
At the same time, it is to be observed that when the old principle
thus reappears, it is no longer what it was before, for it is
changed and purified by the higher element into which it is now
taken up. From this point of view, that discord which appears
at first to be a lamentable breach and dissolution of the unity
of a party, is really the crowning proof of its success."

Hegel, therefore, might very well, on his own principles,
have foreseen the breakup of his school but this was prevented,


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not only by a very natural conceit in his own offspring, but by the fact that, in his zeal for the Prussian bureaucracy, he had contrived to show that German nationalism, the Prussian State church, and the Prussian State itself were the highest objective expressions of the universal mind. He had sought to re-establish a modus vivendi between Theology and Philosophy - albeit at the cost of the former - by an ingenious esoteric interpretation of leading dogmas. And, what is more important, he abandoned the individualistic ethics stressed by Kant, and restored the old conception of social virtue, the morality which has for its end the family, the city, and the State. Whereas the Kantian philosophy represented the revolutionary period, that of Hegel typified the Restoration. Germany, however, was on the eve of a tremendous scientific and industrial development and the German middle-classes were daily becoming more insistent in their demands for popular government and democratic institutions. Since, therefore, the official philosophy, in a sense, apotheosized class despotism on the ground that "what is, is necessary and, therefore, ought to be," it was not long before a rift appeared

1. "Observe, however, that of Christianity as understood by us he leaves nothing but the essence, a something, one knows not what, equivalent to zero, what M. Renan, for instance, will later on call the "sentiment of the divine."

2. Beer accounts for Hegel's support of the Prussian institutions by reference to his "strong patriotic sentiments" (Life and Teachings of K. Marx, p.XXVII) but Strauss may be closer to the facts of the case when he says that "a philosopher may have very good reasons (grunde) for calling himself a Christian, but he can have no reason (grund)."
in the Hegelian school, which rapidly developed a right and left wing after the death of the master in 1831.

"No philosophic statement has so invited the thanks of narrow-minded governments and the anger of equally narrow Liberals as the famous statement of Hegel: "All that is real is reasonable, and all that is reasonable is real." This was essentially the blessing of all that is, the philosophical benediction of despotism, police-government, star-chamber justice and the censorship. So Frederick William III and his subjects understood it; but, according to Hegel, not everything which exists is, without exception, real. The attribute of reality belongs only to that which is at the same time necessary. Reality proves itself in the course of its development as necessity. But what is necessary proves itself in the last instance as reasonable also. .... So in the course of progress all earlier reality becomes unreality, loses its necessity, its right of existence, its nationality; in place of the dying reality comes a new vital reality, peaceable when the old is sufficiently sensible to go to its death without a struggle, forcible when it strives against this necessity. And so the Hegelian statement through the Hegelian dialectic turns to its opposite - all that is real in the course of human history becomes in the process of time irrational and is, therefore, according to its destiny, irrational, and has from the beginning inherited want of rationality, and everything which is reasonable in the minds of men is destined to become real, however much it may contradict the apparent reality of existing conditions.
The statement of the rationality of everything real dissolves itself, according to the Hegelian mode of thought, in the other, "all that stands has ultimately only so much worth that it must fall."

The intellectual life of Germany during the seventeen years from the death of Hegel to the revolution of 1848, is mainly taken up with the controversies liberated by the dissolution of the original Hegelian school, and, since political controversy was a somewhat dangerous game in the Germany of those days, this took the form of philosophical arguments in the press, which quite naturally criticised Hegel's idealism and the state religion. The Hegelian right wing, under Gans, Rosenkrantz, Michelet and others, took part in these discussions but presently ceased from troubling and ultimately died out. The fact is, that while the content of the Hegelian/dynamic in respect of its dialectic method, the official form was static and thus but ill-accorded with the ideology of a country in a state of transition.

A passage from Joad's Modern Philosophy may be usefully cited here:

"Since the Absolute, that is the Universe, in its character of Infinite Totality, cannot in itself be supposed to change, or, in other words, to be historical in character, since history presupposes change in what it records. .... This


conception is attacked more particularly because, by locating the Absolute, with which Reality is identified, behind and beyond our finite experience, it makes reality transcend our experience and so precludes the possibility of Knowledge of reality; because, by making the Absolute the immanent spring from which all thought rises as well as the all-embracing sea into which all thought merges, the universal presupposition of experience as well as the final synthesis of experience, it renders progress non-existent and change unreal; and because for this very reason Reality becomes an embodiment of thought as a passive structure, and not an expression of thinking as an active principle.

If, in short, the Universe is really given and immutable as a whole, the apparent differentiation and multiplicity which it exhibits are equally given and immutable, and the Hegelian dictum that 'Philosophy is History' becomes meaningless."

Under the impact of developing German science the German mind, for a while, dropped its tendency to transcendentallism and reverted to those forms of "positivism" and "naturalism" which had served so well the corresponding development in England associated with the names of Bentham and the Utilitarians, of Mill, Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, and later, Karl Pearson. To be sure the continuity of philosophic thought was not completely broken: there was merely a change of emphasis imposed by the rapidly changing economic environment. Many sources fed the stream of naturalistic thought. We may discern the influence of the English Empiricists, of Hume, of the French Materialists,
and more immediately, of Kant himself.

"There was a strong naturalistic motive in Kant himself which had been overruled by his idealistic followers, and which was now revived. Although Kant gave no encouragement to materialism, his "Critique of Pure Reason," strictly construed, and separated from the "Critique of Practical Reason," could be cited as an indorsement of positivism; since it set forth the view that science alone fulfils the requirements of knowledge, as uniting the forms of intuition and the categories of the understanding with the data of experience. Hence, in the early 1860's, German positivism, as represented by Albert Lange and Otto Liebmann, adopted the shibboleth 'Back to Kant,' and appealed to the Master against his disciples."

"But while German naturalism may be said to have sprung in part from within the Kantian movement itself, it received its chief impetus at this time from the achievements of science. Although naturalism is inspired by science, it undertakes to satisfy the philosophical demand for a comprehensive view of the world, and is therefore influenced by the generalization of science, rather than by its particular items. And in the middle of the nineteenth century the most impressive scientific generalization was that of conservation, or the quantitative constancy of both matter and energy in all their

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1. This exhortation (also mussauf Kant zuruckgegengen werden!) appeared at the close of each chapter of Liebmann's "Kant und die Epigenen" (1865). Lange published his "History of Materialism" in 1866. With the name of Lange should be associated that of Eugen Duhring (1833-1921) now remembered only as the man against whom Engels wrote his "Anti-Duhring."
diverse qualitative manifestations. These principles suggested a new type of philosophical monism, in which nature was regarded as a fixed amount of energized matter proceeding in a ceaseless and circular round of change. Life and mind were regarded as parts of this closed system, the organism being one of the forms assumed by matter, and consciousness one of the forms assumed by energy."

The outstanding names of this school are: Karl Vogt (1817-1895), biologist; Jacob Moleschott (1822-1893) who published his "Circulation of Life" in 1852; and Ludwig Buchner (1824-1899) who published his famous book "Force and Matter" (Kraft und Stoff) in 1855. Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919) continued this tradition but was distinguished as belonging to a later period by the shift of emphasis from the principle of conservation to that of evolution, due to the influence of Darwin.

In England, in the meantime, capitalism had become stabilized after the storm and stress of its formative period and the English people had time, so to speak, to find their soul. The publication of Stirling's "Secret of Hegel" marks the beginning of that idealistic movement which dominated British philosophy in the last third of the nineteenth century. This movement did good work in its attempt to rehabilitate philosophy properly so-called in Britain, that is to say, the problem as to the constitution of experience or reality, which

occupied the attention of Plato and Aristotle in the ancient world and which was revived in its full meaning by the main line of the post-Kantian thinkers. A brilliant coterie of thinkers, mainly Scottish, contributed to the influence of this school. Among these we may mention T.H. Green, Robert Adamson, the Cairds, Edward and John, the Haldanes and the Wallaces. The line was closed by F.H. Bradley (1846-1924) and Bernard Bosanquet (1848-1923). The latter writer is important because of his work on the Hegelian theory of the State-embodied in his "Philosophical Theory of the State" published in 1899. This book elicited a powerful and destructive attack in the Metaphysical Theory of the State" by L.T. Hobhouse. Nevertheless the theory exerts a sinister influence in certain quarters to-day and will have to be reckoned with as one of the props of Fascist theory. Finally, in the early years of the present century the Neo-Hegelian school petered out because it could not transcend the incurable contradiction which besets the right-wing formulation of the Hegelian position.

But to return to the German left-wingers. As we have already noted the revolt against the official right wing took a religious, or rather anti-religious complexion. In 1835 David Strauss published his "Leben Jesu" in which he reduced the orthodox dogmas to myths, and contended that the only religion consistent with a strict interpretation of Hegel's teachings was a naturalistic pantheism. He held that, to the philosopher, for whom there is no hard and fast distinction between this and the other world, for whom all such
distinctions, as mind and matter, subject and object, divine and natural, are at once embraced and transcended in a higher unity there is no greater enemy than a doctrine which affirms and perpetuates this dualism of conception. Strauss has an important place in the philosophy of religion and biblical criticism as founder of the Tübingen school.

On the other hand, owing to the highly synthetic character of the Hegelian doctrine, it could, by a slight shift of emphasis, be made to support a pluralistic view, from which an extreme individualism might be deduced. The Bauer brothers, Bruno and Edgar, took this turning and put forward a doctrine which, being worked out in a metaphysical form by Max Stirner, later formed the intellectual stock-in-trade of the extreme individualistic school or Philosophical Anarchists. "Stirner," says Engels, "remained a "freak" even after Bakunine had mixed him with Proudhon and designated his amalgamation "Anarchism." More immediately of interest to us in this connection is the contribution of Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1872) whose book the "Essence of Christianity" was very popular in its day and was translated into English by George Eliot. Feuerbach gave the movement a more practical and decidedly materialistic complexion. Engels says of him: "Feuerbach alone (of those mentioned) possessed any significance as a philosopher.

1. See on this point Hoernle, "Idealism," p.115. Also McTaggart, "Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic

2. Pseudonym of Caspar Schmidt (1806-1856) whose book "The Individual and his Property" (Des Einzige und sein Eigenthum is still well-known.

Fenerbach, p.92.
(but ...................... he stood as a composite philosopher) the under half of him materialist, the upper half idealist. He was not an apt critic of Hegel but simply put him aside as of no account, while he himself, in comparison with the encyclopedic wealth of the Hegelian system, contributed nothing of any positive value, except a bombastic religion of love and a thin, impotent system of ethics." Nevertheless, Feuerbach is rather important since it was his work which determined, in great measure, the path to be followed by Karl Marx, then a young man of twenty-three, and his friend and collaborator, Frederick Engels. Of this Engels says: "Then came Feuerbach's "Wesen des Christenthums." With one blow it cut the contradiction, in that it placed materialism on the throne again without any circumlocution. Nature exists independently of all philosophies. It is the foundation upon which we, ourselves products of nature, are built. Outside man and nature nothing exists, and the higher beings which our religious fantasies have created are only the fantastic reflections of our individuality. The cord was broken, the system was shattered and destroyed, the contradiction, since it only existed in the imagination, was solved. One must have experienced the delivering power of this book to get a clear idea of it. The enthusiasm was universal. We were all for the moment followers of Feuerbach. How enthusiastically Marx greeted the new idea and how much he was influenced by it, in spite of all his critical

1. Feuerbach, p.93.
reservations, one may read in the "Holy Family."

In this book, (Die Heilige Familie, Gegen Bruno Bauer und Konsorten) published at Frankfort in 1845, Marx freely criticizes the Young Hegelians, from whom he quite definitely separates himself. Henceforth he will develop and clarify his own position which is not yet, by any means, clear and distinct.

Marx is now, 1844-5, in Paris where he makes a number of important contacts, Heinrich Heine, Friedrich Engels, and Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865). Proudhon had already, in his "What is Property?" published in 1840, used the Hegelian formula but in a very amateurish manner, as Marx proved in his "La Misère de la Philosophie." The writing of this book, in answer to Proudhon's "Philosophie de la Misère" which had just appeared, "gave him the opportunity of developing his principles in opposing them to the ideas of the man who from then was to take a preponderating place among the French Socialists of his epoch."


2. The Holy Family has never been translated into English, with the exception of a single chapter, translated by Sidney Hook, which may be found in the "Modern Monthly" for September 1933. It is characteristic of the younger school of Marxian "activists" that they quote freely from this book and other, shall we say, juvenilia of Marx. "Je crois que pour une pleine intelligence du systeme de Marx, la lecture de la "Sainte Famille" est indispensable." Arturo Labriola, Le Marxisme, p.76.

However much Marx may have owed to Proudhon - a disputed point - there can be no doubt that his controversy with him did much to clarify Marx's own position. With the "Communist Manifesto," published in February of 1848, his doctrine becomes definitive. Marx now stands apart.
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 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."

Before writing the above Marx had just quoted, with apparently, full endorsement, a Russian reviewer who had said: "Consequently Marx only troubles himself about one thing; to show, by rigid scientific investigation, the necessity of successive determinate orders of social conditions, and to establish, as impartially as possible, the facts that serve him for fundamental starting points. For this it is quite enough, if he proves, at the same time, both the necessity of the present order of things, and the necessity of another order into which the first must inevitably pass over; and this all the same, whether men believe it or do not believe it, whether they are conscious or unconscious of it. Marx treats the social movement as a process of natural history, governed by laws not only independent of human will, consciousness and intelligence, but rather, on the contrary, determining that will, consciousness and intelligence."

Now, this was written in 1873 and may be taken to be Marx' considered and mature opinion. Thirty years earlier - to be exact, in 1845 - he had written in "Die Deutsche Ideologie":

2. Ibid., p.23.
"Social structure and the State constantly arise out of the processes of existence of definite people: of people not as they may appear in their own or another's imagination, but as they really are, that is to say, as they work, as they produce material things, in short, as they act under determinate material limitations, premises and conditions - factors independent of their wills. .... Consciousness can never be anything else but conscious being, and men's being is their actual process of existence. Consciousness does not determine life but life determines consciousness.

Similarly, in the "Poverty of Philosophy," written in 1846-7, we find him saying: "The same men who establish social relations conformably with their material productivity, produce also the principles, the ideas, the categories, conformably with their social relations. Thus these ideas, these categories, are not more eternal than the relations which they express. They are historical and transient products. There is a continual movement of growth in the productive forces, of destruction in the social relations, of formation of ideas; there is nothing immutable but the abstraction of the movement - mors immortalis."

In the "Communist Manifesto," written towards the end of 1847, we find the same doctrine, implicit throughout, but explicit in such statements as this: "When people speak of ideas that revolutionize society, they do but express the fact, that within the old society, the elements of a new one have

been created, and that the dissolution of the old ideas keeps even pace with the dissolution of the old conditions of existence."  

So also in "Wage-labor and Capital" and particularly in the well-known statement which appears in the preface of the "Critique of Political Economy" published in 1859. "The sum total of the relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society - the real foundations, on which rise legal and political superstructures and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness. ... this consciousness must rather be explained from the contradictions of material life, from the existing conflict between the social forces of production and the relations of production."

From all of which I gather that the body of doctrine here presented was consistently maintained during the period of Marx' active life. Marx seems to postulate:

Firstly, that the physical world exists independently of our Knowledge, but is capable of being known.

Secondly, that the multiplicity of objects which go

to make up this world form a system of interconnected things in a state of continual flux; a process which, controlled by immanent laws, is dialectic in its nature.

Thirdly, that men, in the acts incidental to living, come to know and react upon reality, of which they form a part.

Fourthly, that the relations of production, imposed by the conditions under which men make their living, determine the social institutional structure.

Fifthly, since both men and their thinking are conditioned by the natural and social environment each plane of development generates a corresponding ideology. There is thus an objective order conceived to be in a state of dialectical flux, and a subjective ideology or social consciousness which reflects more or less accurately the objective process.

It is important to notice that it is the social ideology that is stressed here, since only thus can the causal nexus be established. As Engels says: "Men make their own history in that each follows his own desired ends independent of results, and the results of these many wills acting in different directions and their manifold effects upon the world constitute history. .... In the majority of instances the numerous desired ends cross and interfere with each other, and either these ends are utterly incapable of realization, or the means are ineffectual. So, the innumerable conflicts of individual wills and individual agents in the realm of history reach a conclusion which is on the whole
analogous to that in the realm of nature, which is without
definite purpose. The ends of the actions are intended, but
the results which follow from the actions are not intended, or
in so far as they appear to correspond with the end desired,
in their final results are quite different from the conclusion
wished. Historical events in their entirety therefore appear to
be likewise controlled by chance. But even where according to
superficial observation, accident plays a part, it is, as a
matter of fact, consistently governed by unseen, internal laws,
and the only question remaining, therefore is to discover these
laws."

"For Marx," says Sydney Hook, "the motives which guide
individual men are quite various. And it is only the rare
individual who knows what his motives really are. But Marx is
not in the least concerned with the motives of individuals as
such except in so far as they typify a social or class attitude.
His problem is to explain why certain ideals prevail at one
period rather than at another; and to discover what factors
determine the succession of ideals for which men live and die."

From all this it would follow that in society events
are brought about by means of the human will, since all such
changes must go through the human mind, but they do not origin­
ate there; the individual man is subject to an unconscious
natural process which is the product of the individual wills.

Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire," (International Publishing Co.,
New York, 1898, p.5.)

2. Hook, Sydney,"Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx,"
(John Day Co., New York, 1933, p.149.)
Further, once a certain social result of the individual wills has been obtained, this social result determines the conduct of the individual.

"It may be said," says Bukharin, "that the social product (social phenomenon) dominates the persons. Thus we may set up the following laws:

1. Social phenomena are the resultant of the conflict of individual wills, feelings, actions etc.

2. Social phenomena determine at any given moment the will of the various individuals.

3. Social phenomena do not express the will of individual persons, but frequently are a direct contradiction of this will; they prevail over it by force, with the result that the individual often feels the pressure of social forces on his actions."

There is thus a history of ideas; a continuous process of development in the subjective order of things, but this does not consist in the "vicious circle of ideas that explain themselves." We must rise from the thing to the idea.

"The origin, change, and destruction of the association of ideas, under the influence of the origin, change and destruction of social forces, to a predominant extent explain the history of ideology."

And since these social forces have already been described as the material forces of production, any change in

their form must arise from some variable factor either in their operation or in objective nature. Now, it has been suggested that such material factors as race, geographical situation, or climate may be operative. So they are, no doubt, but they are constant, or relatively so, and merely form that constant environment in which any given society develops. When Marx insists on the economic factor it is not for any arbitrary reason or preconception, but because it is the only material factor which changes, and changes at a rate adequate to account for the observed effect.

"Material culture in changing causes other social changes in what we have defined as adaptive culture. But frequently there is a delay in the changes thus caused, so that the old adaptive culture hangs over into the new material conditions. This lag in the adaptive culture produces a period of maladjustment, which is less harmonious as an adaptation than the period which precedes or follows. ... The great size of material culture to-day, its rapidity of change, and its significance as a source of other changes in society make the material culture in modern society play a most important part. Since lags in social movements follow changes in material culture, and since there are many rapid changes in material culture, it follows that there will be an accumulation of these lags and maladjustments. .... If the material culture should continue to accumulate and change with increasing rapidity, it would seem that the cultural lags will pile up even more than at the present time. ... It is thinkable that the piling
up of these cultural lags may reach such a point that they may be changed in a somewhat wholesale fashion. In such a case, the word revolution probably describes what happens."

Now, the contradictions which thus develop in the social fabric press for a solution since the system cannot endure a permanent disequilibrium. The restoration of social equilibrium may proceed in either of two ways: there may be a gradual adaptation of the various elements in the social whole by an evolutionary process, or there may be a violent upheaval, a revolution.

"At a certain stage of their development, the material forces of production in society come in conflict with the existing relations in production, or - what is but a legal expression for the same thing - with the property relations within which they had been at work before. From forms of development of the forces of production these relations turn into their fetters. Then comes the period of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations, the distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, esthetic or philosophic - in short, ideological - forms in which men

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become conscious of this conflict and fight it out."

From this it would appear that Marx conceived of revolution as intervening only when the equilibrium between the productive forces of society and the foundations of its economic structure is disturbed; thus necessitating a transition from one form to another. But so long as the economic structure still permits the productive forces to evolve, the social changes will not take the form of revolution, but will be brought about in a more or less orderly manner by an evolutionary process. To be sure this solution may be delayed by the opposition of vested interests, the dead weight of custom, or just ordinary conservatism. It is only when the readjustment involves the transfer of class property in the means of production that revolution becomes imminent. It is thus that in any society in which groups of people stand in definite relations to the means of production, such as ownership or control, that these social contradictions manifest themselves and become acute. As the methods of wealth production develop conflicting class ideologies are generated which express themselves politically as Toryism, Liberalism, Socialism or whatnot, all of which imply some definite attitude in respect of the means of life. For Marx "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles."

There is nothing arbitrary or accidental in this development. "No social order ever disappears before all the productive forces, for which there is room in it, have been developed; and new higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society. Therefore, mankind only takes up such problems as it can solve; since, looking at the matter more closely, we will always find that the problem itself arises only when the material conditions necessary for its solution already exist or are in process of formation."

In all of this it is held that the initiative lies with the material or objective factor though, to be sure, since the category involved is not that of "cause and effect" but rather that of "action and reaction," man reacts upon nature, utilizes her resources and forces, and reshapes his social institutions to meet changing conditions.

Now, since the mind, or consciousness, here involved is either the individual or group mind, both of which come well within the province of science, of social psychology, and are purely empirical in their nature, it does not appear that there is anything in this doctrine to which an objective idealist could very well object. Many Marxian students have so held. Hegel himself would seem to agree: "Philosophy, as the thought

of the world, does not appear until reality has completed its formative process, and made itself ready. History thus corroborates the teaching of the conception that only in the maturity of reality does the ideal appear as counterpart of the real, apprehends the real world in its substance, and shapes it into an intellectual Kingdom."

It was this insistence on the priority and predominance of the material factor and his protest against the prevailing tendency to seek the motive factors in society in human concepts and ideals which caused Marx to reject an idealism which could be made to support an "idealistic" attitude towards the facts of life.


2. "In human society thought or reflection enters in as a factor, lifting it above the merely natural organism, and so perhaps we may look at the nature of thought in order to find out the way in which society progresses. On every subject we think about we begin with some rough opinion, either received from others or the result of hasty observation. If we go on to think about this opinion, we have to question it, to examine it, and unless we come to a standstill at the stage of doubt or criticism, we go on to form some more adequate opinion, which may indeed be only the old opinion in a better form or may be something very different. But this new opinion may in its turn be questioned in order to be corrected, and soon, for the truth always proves itself more complex than at first appeared: and, unless we lazily acquiesce in dogmatic solutions, we cannot cease from the labor of thinking. It might indeed be more prudent to avoid mentioning Hegel's name; but this very commonplace process is his "dialectic method" in its simplest and most familiar form. This "advance by negation" is the way we think about everything. And if we apply this dialectic method to society, what does it suggest? That we cannot rest in the critical or negative stage of modern individualism. But does that mean a return to the medieval type of society? to "the good old days" of aristocratic and ecclesiastical domination? By no means. It implies an advance to a stage in which all that is most precious in individualism must be retained along with the stability of social condition which individualism has destroyed. And this new stage can best be described as "Socialism."

Ritchie, David E., "Darwinism and Politics," Humboldt edition 1890, p.27.
But, for Marx, the objective and subjective orders are not only co-related and interactive, they are, since they are dialectically antithetic, bound together as constituent elements of the social movement. While, therefore, the objective factor is fundamental and has priority, social change cannot be brought about in the absence of a felt need for change. We may go further and assert, on Marxian principles, that adjustments only take place when the social organism will no longer function in respect of the required service. Changes are effected, not so much because they are desirable in themselves, but because they are necessary. Men do, not what they would, but what they must. In the Manifesto Marx says: "And here it becomes evident, that the bourgeoisie is unfit any longer to be the ruling class in society, and to impose its conditions of existence upon society as an over-riding law. It is unfit to rule, because it is incompetent to assure an existence to its slave within his slavery, because it cannot help letting him sink into such a state that it has to feed him, instead of being fed by him. Society can no longer live under this bourgeoisie, in other words, its existence is no longer compatible with society." ¹

It is for this reason that the Marxists have always rested their case not on the desirability of socialism but on the "inevitable" break-down of the existing order.

¹ Marx, K., "Communist Manifesto," op. cit., p.27.
² Veblen holds that "it may well be that their training in subservience to their employers will bring them (the workers) again to realize the equity and excellence of the established system of subjection and unequal distribution of wealth." (op.cit. p.441) Marx, however, would answer: "But in order to oppress a class, certain conditions must be assured to it under which it can, at least, continue its slavish existence." Manifesto p.26,
Now, although it is true that in the year 1847 Europe was going through a period of severe depression, to be followed by a series of revolts in several countries, it is also true that these political disturbances served to extend middle-class power in those countries; while the capitalist world, under the impetus of the great scientific and technological discoveries of the time swept forward into a period of tremendous expansion. Capitalism had by no means exhausted its possibilities. Under these circumstances the revolution became the affair of a more or less distant future; a sort of "final aim" which would be approached by a whole series of gradual changes in the mutual relations of social classes. Obviously, the only thing the socialists could do was to contribute to the gradual changes and work for reforms. A minority of Marxists were addicted to the practice of keeping up a continuous criticism of both reforms and reformers and were, therefore, generally referred to as "impossibilists." It was not that they objected to the reforms as such but they disapproved of the reformers whom they stigmatized as "Utopians - which, as a matter of fact, they were. This, of course, refers more particularly to England and America. In Germany the movement was initiated under Marxian auspices and was committed to the Marxian doctrine. In practice, however, it could do no other and practically left it to the "scientific laws of social evolution" to bring about socialism while they busied themselves with electoral and social reforms. And so, in due time, the Social-democracy, each section in its
own country - came to support the imperialistic world war and, even, to denounce the Russian revolution on the ground that Russia had not undergone the necessary capitalistic development.

The Marxian doctrine as it was held during the greater part of the pre-war period may be summed up as follows:

1. The social revolution cannot be made at will.  
2. The social revolution comes as the culminating point of a long-drawn-out class-struggle.
3. This class-struggle is not created by class-consciousness: on the other hand, class-consciousness is created by the class-struggle.
4. The workers must continually fight for their daily demands; anything gained in this fight, whether political or social reforms, strengthens the workers in their fight against capitalism.
5. Socialism cannot be established before capitalism has developed all its possibilities though it may be "penetrated" by socialism to some extent.
6. The social revolution will be the mass-action of the majority of the workers and cannot be the act of a conspiracy by a revolutionary minority.

2. "To set about to make a revolution is folly, .... and it is equally foolish to attempt to repress a revolution which has once developed itself in the womb of a community." F. Lassalle, "Arbeiter-Programm" (New York, International Publishing Co., 1899, p.24.)
7. The first act in the social revolution is the conquest of political power, the inauguration of the proletarian dictatorship, although this dictatorship is nothing else than the political rule of the working-class, i.e., the majority of the population.

To be sure the rank and file of the German or any other pre-war Socialist party did not concern themselves overmuch with the niceties of Marxian doctrine; they did the things they had to do and the party pundits rationalized them afterwards in Marxian terminology fortified with appropriate quotations. But all this accommodation, coupled with the adjustments necessitated by the exigencies of the bitter controversies which raged both within and without the movement forced a reconsideration of the main philosophical basis. It was seen that the concept of a dialectical flux immanent in nature and history cannot rest upon a materialism of the baser sort. There was thus, on the part of the party theoreticians a steady drift back to Kant; not, of course, to Kant himself, but to some form of Neo-Kantianism of the schools of Lange, Mach, Avenarius, or Karl Pearson. This drift, it may be noted, still continues and is a matter of no small concern in official circles in Russia. This, however, is a matter which only became important in respect of the new orientation of theory imposed by the advent of the Revolution.
"What, then," says Joseph Stalin, "is Leninism in its last analysis? Leninism is Marxism in the epoch of imperialism and of the proletarian revolution, or, to be more exact, Leninism is the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution in general, and the theory and tactics of the dictatorship of the proletariat in particular. Marx and Engels worked in a pre-revolutionary epoch when imperialism was still in an embryonic state, when the workers were only preparing for the revolution, when the proletarian revolution was not yet a direct, practical necessity. Lenin, the disciple of Marx and Engels, worked in an epoch of expansion of imperialism and development of the proletarian revolution, an epoch when this revolution, triumphant in one country, destroyed bourgeois democracy there and ushered in the era of proletarian democracy, the era of the soviets."

From this we gather that, in the opinion of the Leninists, Capitalism has reached the peak of its development and has exhausted all the possibilities of expansion; that its internal contradictions have assumed an intense form, thus generating a revolutionary proletariat.

The impact of the Russian revolution was such as to shatter for the time being the ranks of the Social-Democracy, which, in spite of the bickerings caused by the left-wing sections that had developed even before the war, still presented a solid front under the Second International. The old-line Marxists, led by Karl Kautsky, George Plekhanov, Otto Bauer and others assailed the Bolsheviks on the grounds:

1. "That no social revolution could be made successfully by an armed minority.

2. That socialism could not be established in an economically undeveloped country.

3. That the Soviet government would not be able to hold out long against the capitalist countries of the world."

The communists could, and did, reply to the last item in the most realistic manner by simply holding out, but in respect of the others they had to rationalize the informalities of the revolution in Marxian terms as best they might. Hence arose a re-orientation of the entire theoretical structure of the movement. It was the subjective order of ideas rather than the objective order that was important. Activity was opposed to passivity and fatalism. But since activity is fruitless without definite direction, correct theory becomes of prime importance. Revolutions do not make themselves; they are made. And they are made well or ill in the degree that the participants

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have a correct ideology. On the other hand it is in action, in practice, that knowledge is discovered and verified. In the seventh gloss on Feuerbach Marx had said: "The life of society is essentially practical. All the mysteries which seduce speculative thought into mysticism find their solution in human practice and in concepts of this practice." And again in the second gloss: "The question if objective truth be possible to human thought is not a theoretical but a practical question; in practice men must prove the truth. ..... The materialistic doctrine that men are the products of conditions and education ..... forgets that circumstances may be altered by men and that the educator has himself to be educated."

Sidney Hook is undoubtedly correct when he says: "It is faith in action which makes of Marxism a critical hypothesis, instead of a dead dogma or a romantic myth." But he displays a characteristic weakness of the Communist Left when he adds: "What justifies Marx and Engels in holding that the mode of economic production is the decisive factor in social life is the revolutionary will of the proletariat which is prepared to act on the assumption." Quite apart from the fact that the "revolutionary will" of the proletariat, however vociferously it may be expressed by a small minority, manifests itself only in a feeble and sporadic manner, we have

2. Ibid., p.130.
4. Ibid., p.181.
to note that the economic factor is accepted as decisive by many whose only justification would be an appeal to the facts. And this, as a matter of fact, is precisely what Marx and Engels did. Similarly Dr. Hook, in another connection, asserts: "that the truth of Marx's theory of the class-struggle can be established only in the experience of social revolution, i.e., after class society has been overthrown." Now, it is true that Marx did insist on the importance of the category of consciousness, but he also insisted that it was not self-determined. Historical and social forces stand behind motives of action. It is all very well to protest the determinism and "mechanism" which was sponsored by the Second International, but the protest may be carried too far and it is precisely in this that the "left deviation," as the Russian official philosophers call it, consists.

Already in 1909 Lenin had denounced pragmatism of this sort, "which recognizes practice as the only criterion of truth," as being "reactionary bourgeois philosophy." He does so because it obscures, or denies, the dialectic process.

It is characteristic of such unstable combinations as Dialectical Materialism that their components tend to drift apart. We have already noted that the doctrinaires of the Social Democracy attempted to find a more secure basis for the dialectic in some form of Neo-Kantianism. Lenin's remarkable work, "Empiro-Criticism," was expressly directed against this


deviation, this time to the right, and in it he bitterly attacks the Revisionists and other Socialist theorists who accepted the views of Mach, Avenarius and Pearson. Lenin here insists on a return to Materialism and that of the crudest variety. "Such," he says, "is the view of materialism; that matter, acting on our sense organs, produces sensation. Sensation depends upon the brain, nerves, retina, etc.; upon matter organized in a certain way. The existence of matter does not depend upon sensation. Matter is of a primary nature. Sensation, thought and consciousness are the highest products of matter organized in a certain manner." Long before D'Holbach had said as much: "Since man, who is matter, who has no idea but of matter, enjoys the faculty of thought, matter can think; that is, it is susceptible of that particular modification called thought." So too Haeckel, whom Lenin quotes approvingly, asserts that: "Knowledge is a physiological process, with the brain for its anatomical organ."

So also in his epistemology is he singularly naive and matter of fact. For example, he holds:

1. "Things exist independently of our consciousness.
2. There is absolutely no difference between the phenomenon and the thing-in-itself, and there can be none. The difference is only between what is known and what is not yet known.

1. Lenin, N., op. cit., p.34.
3. In the theory of knowledge, as in other branches of science, we must think dialectically, that is, we must not regard our knowledge as ready made and unchangeable, but must determine how from ignorance knowledge is gradually built up, and how incomplete, inexact knowledge becomes more complete and more exact."

And again: "The recognition of the fact of natural order and the approximate reflection of that order in the mind of man is materialism." To support this position Lenin appeals, in the first place, to common-sense: "The naive belief of mankind is consciously taken by materialism as the basis of its theory of knowledge." Secondly: "The scientists recognize without hesitation the existence of nature prior to man and organic matter." The authority of Engels, however, is conclusive. "How do we know that our senses give us correct representations of the objects we perceive through them? .... human action had solved the difficulty long before human ingenuity invented it. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. From the moment we turn to our own use these objects, according to the qualities we perceive in them, we put to an infallible test the correctness or otherwise of our sense-perceptions."

Now all this is not very conclusive and really evades the main issue so far as philosophy is concerned. Nor is the

1. Lenin, N., op. cit., p.77.
2. Ibid., p.125.
3. " p. 47.
4. " p.221.
matter mended in a more recent statement which has, however, the merit of being at once lucid and concise: "Matter is a permanent process of transition in which organic and inorganic; consciousness and inconsciousness, living and non-living beget progressively an infinite succession of transformation of themselves and their own interactions. Hence the process is both material and dialectic."

From the point of view of any modern philosophy such a position is unthinkable. And so the Soviet philosophers kept drifting off, one way or the other, mostly to the "right." This, it appears, one might do in either of two ways. One might be a "mechanicist," that is, one of the old-line materialists who ignored the dialectic; or one might be an "idealist" and opposed to materialism. In either case one was suspect since both of these trends of thought had bourgeois or petty bourgeois affiliations, and, in any case, the "general line" of the official philosophy required a belief in dialectical materialism in its integrity.

Now the Soviet regime had inherited from the old order many specialists and scientific workers comprising the staffs of the cultural institutions of the country. "Cultural work in all fields," says Prince Mirsky," in so far as it was not a direct part of the political and administrative work of the Party was carried on by intellectuals who, though many of them were loyal to the proletariat, were essentially part and parcel of the ruling class."


2. The distinction here has a political rather than a philosophical significance.
of the old bourgeois world. Many of these had joined the Communist Party in good faith but, for the most part, they remained "mechanicists" constitutionally averse to all philosophy like all the rank and file of bourgeois scientists. Their slogan was 'Science is its own philosophy.' Subjectively they were good communists and honest materialists, but their adherence to the unphilosophical and antiquated mechanistic outlook of the 19th century and their contempt for philosophical training made them objectively ideological wreckers in so far as they tried to deprive the proletariat of such a powerful weapon as the dialectical method. Their inadequate philosophical equipment prevented them from realising the political implications of their mechanistic theory and its essential identity with the mechanistic and anti-dialectical pseudo-Marxism of Bukharin, which by the beginning of the period of reconstruction had become the theoretical gospel of the Right Wing.

Still more serious was the deviation represented by the followers of one A.M. Deborin, evidently a man of parts, editor of the review "Under the Banner of Marxism" which had been founded in 1922 as the organ of Soviet philosophy. This coterie soon became dominant as it included most of those engaged in teaching philosophy in the cultural centres throughout the Union. Now, Deborin and his group, as representing the official attitude, had conducted an active controversy with the mechanicists, but in so doing had unduly stressed the dialectic as distinct from Materialism and had adopted an uncritical

attitude towards Hegel and idealism generally. The Deborin group had gone too far in their opposition to mechanicism and were now themselves the object of attack on the ground that they had reduced dialectical materialism to "a dialectical scholasticism that was devoid of material content and was thus virtually idealistic." It was Stalin himself who raised the question during the great drive of 1929-30. He pointed out that the development of Marxist theory had been lagging behind Communist practice and that it was high time to take up the slack and indicated that, in his opinion, "this abstract formalism and neglect of practice were nothing less than a form of idealism, for materialism is materialism only as long as it regards abstract categories as one with their material content and theory as the servant of practice." The outcome of this controversy was that the editorial board of the review was overhauled and new men installed who knew how to keep to the "general line" and were possessed of an "unexceptionable line in politics as well as theory." The director of the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute, Mr. L. Rudas, informs us as to the manner of attaining to this unexceptionable line: "Whoever," he says, "wants to understand dialectical materialism must study the whole of Marxism-Leninism and then combine this theoretical study with practical participation in the revolutionary proletarian movement."

1. Mirsky, loc. cit.,
It is my opinion that M. Rudas, in spite of his dogmatism - and he is very dogmatic - does not himself understand the dialectic. For example he appears to hold that "a synthesis of materialism and idealism would in fact be no synthesis but another of the many vain attempts to reconcile the irreconcilable fundamental tendencies of philosophy - materialism and idealism." But it is precisely because they are fundamental and irreconcilable that they must be taken up and comprehended in a synthesis, otherwise the dialectic method has no meaning. To deny the possibility of a synthesis of matter and mind, of materialism and idealism, is to assert that two fundamental and self-determined entities exist, that is, to assert that Reality is a Dualism, and Mr. Rudas insists he is a Monist. It is the failure to effect this synthesis which is at the root of the whole problem. And so, despite the official insistence on the "general line," the Soviet theorists cannot help but drift off to one side or the other since the official attitude imposes on them the impossible task of conceiving matter as endowed with all the properties of the Hegelian Spirit.

"And so," said Hans Kepler, "we think after Him the thoughts of God."

"I confess," says Croce, "that I have never been able to understand — however much I have considered the matter — the meaning of this passage, (which ought however to be very evident, since it is quoted so often without any comment) in the preface to the second edition of "Capital": 'My dialectic method is not only different from the Hegelian, but is its direct opposite. To Hegel, the life-process of the human brain, i.e., the process of thinking, which, under the name of "the Idea," he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurgos of the real world, and the real world is only the external, phenomenal form of "the Idea." With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought.' Now it seems to me that the "idea" of the last phrase has no relation to the Hegelian "Idea" of the preceding phrase."

Croce is quite right; it has no relation, or at least, no direct relation, since the Idea of Hegel is the concrete Idea, consciousness-in-general, while that of Marx is the individual or empirical mind.

But when Marx thus substituted the empirical for the trans-empirical ego he thereby threw the whole question into

the empirical field - into the province of science. The structure and functioning of the individual mind, of society and of nature in general are all well within the ambit of science. But the dialectic, as developed by Hegel, was an a priori construct, deduced from the conditions of knowledge and had, therefore, transcendental validity. Only thus could we impute to concepts deduced by its employment the quality of "necessity" or "inevitability."

Whatever may have been the opinion of Marx on the subject does not appear; it was Engels, in this case as in many others, who drew the necessary conclusions. He frankly adopted the position that the basis for the necessity which he imputed to the Marxian variant of the dialectic was scientific and empirical. "Nature," he says, "is the proof of dialectics, and it must be said for modern science that it has furnished this proof with very rich materials increasing daily, and thus has shown that in the last resort, Nature works dialectically and not metaphysically; that she does not move in the eternal oneness of a perpetually recurring cycle, but goes through a real historical evolution."

Now, Hume had, long before, pointed out that the results of empirical observation, being mere "matters of fact," were merely contingent and by no means possessed the quality of necessity or the authority which appertained to the logical concept. True, an appeal to Kant would have saved for Engels

the quality of necessity in his empirical world but this resource was closed for him by his insistence on associating the crude materialism of the French school with his dialectic. If, however, we remember that, at the time Engels was writing, science was triumphant and therefore in its most dogmatic and positivistic phase we can well imagine that Engels thought he had warrant for founding the Marxian "inevitability" on scientific certainty, that is, on such necessity as can arise from the causal relation. So much was he impressed by the findings of contemporary science that he describes it as dealing "the death-blow to the old metaphysics in the realm of philosophy" and commends its method as being "pre-eminently an arranging of knowledge, the science of changes, of the origin and progress of things, and the mutual connection which binds these changes in nature into one great whole." The fact seems to be that the scientific doctrine of evolution, at that time new and striking, was taken by Engels to confirm the Hegelian dialectic and establish it as the "rhythm of the development of things, i.e., the inner law of things in their development."  

So too, Engels' unqualified acceptance of the well-known statement of Hegel: "All that is real is reasonable, and all that is rational is real," (a statement which is unexceptionable taken in its proper setting) coupled with the deterministic science of the day, no doubt contributed very largely to

the determinism, acquiescence and fatalism which characterized
the Social-democracy under the Second International.

For the time being, however, Engels' "inevitability,"
even if it had only empirical validity, was sufficiently
adequate. Senatore Pareto, even though he denied the scientific
character of Marxist doctrine, admitted its pragmatic usefulness
in providing an ideological justification for the aspirations
of the working class.

Science, however, in the course of time, grew less
sure of herself. The "irrefragable laws of Nature" were found
to be merely "observed uniformities" having only relative
validity. The ultimate entities, matter and force, were found
to be much less concrete and tangible than they had been
considered and by no means ultimate. The materialism -
Naturalism or Positivism - which had served science in its
eyearly years was now dissolved in Agnosticism and scientific
determinism faded into the past.

The "pragmatic revolt," which marked the early years
of the present century, under the leadership of James, Dewey
and others still further weakened the existing intellectual
structures. Science as well as philosophy felt the impact of
a movement which emphasized pluralism, conditional truth,
expediency and "activity." Thus Georges Sorel could write:
"Il ne faut pas esperer que le mouvement revolutionnaire puisse
jamais suivre une direction convenablement determinee d'avance,

1. Novack, Geo. E., "Vilfredo Pareto," New Republic,
July 19, 1933.
qu'il puisse être conduit suivant un plan savant comme la
conquete d'un pays, qu'il puisse etre etudie scientifiquement
autrement que dans son present. Tout en lui est imprévisible."

It is, however, in America, the cradle of the pragmatic
philosophy or, rather, method that we find the clearest expression
of this "left deviation" as the Russians would call it. At the
hands of the communist intelligentsia, nurtured in what passes
for philosophy in America, the dialectic suffers some strange
transformation as witness the acrimonious and generally ill-
informed controversy now raging in the radical press. Dr. Sidney
Hook of New York has written a book to prove to us that "There
are no musts in history; there are only conditional probabilit­
ies," and that "Neither God, man nor the economic process
guarantees the final validity and certainty of communism. Only
the objective possibilities are given." Further to the left
we find Max Eastman who after describing "the dialectic myth
bound up in scientific socialism" as a "wish-fulfilment mechan­
ism which has a value similar to that sometimes possessed by
the Christian Science myth in the eyes of a neuro-pathologist,"
goes on to say that "a revolutionary science would study the
material world with a view to changing it according to some
practical plan." It may be said of all this, that, whether
Eastman believes it or not, his Utopianism is also part of a
definite social response to the exigencies of the socio-economic
situation.

1. Sorel, Georges, "La Decomposition du Marxisme," (Marcel
Riviere, Paris, 1907, p.66.)
3. Eastman, Max, "Against the Marxian Dialectic," The New
Republic, February 21, 1934.
As a matter of fact the phrase "dialectical materialism" is a contradiction in terms and the concept for which it stands a philosophical monster. Belfort Bax, who was a philosopher as well as a competent Marxian scholar, observes: "The Hegelians of the "left" thought they could retain the method of dialectics apart from metaphysics. But the dialectical method without metaphysics is a tree cut away from its roots. It has no basis and therefore no justification as an instrument of research. Unless we recognize the fact that thought enters into the constitution of reality, that reality is nothing other than experience possible and actual, and that the unity of experience and the rationality which we find in the universe, or system of experience, is deducible in the last resort from the primal unity of the consciousness, and from the conditions of its synthesis - unless we recognize this, where is our locus standi in employing the dialectical method? Or, in fact, where is our ground for assuming a determinate order in things at all? The commonest categories must then be inadmissible, and we have no alternative but the Humean position in its most extreme and impossible form."

It is not, be it noted, that the validity of either factor in the combination is in question. Philosophy, in the Kantian tradition, has no quarrel with science in respect of any of its findings on the empirical plane, whatever they may be.

We may freely admit, if need be, that all physical facts or phenomena may be interpreted in terms of matter and motion and, further, that the individual mind presupposes material conditions, that is, that this particular mind, now functioning, is dependent on, and subsists by virtue of, a material, organic body, of which it may be said to be the function. The individual mind necessarily presupposes the whole conditions of experience as given. But, it is the object of metaphysics to inquire how they come to be given. And so we find that the "matter" and "mind" of common-sense apprehension are neither of them ultimate — the distinction between matter and mind falls within thought or the province of mind — but that both alike owe their reality to the fact that they are experienced, that is, to their apprehensibility. This, again, merely means that they are, in the last resort, the self-determinations or objects of a Subject of that consciousness-in-general the determinations of which comprehend and comprise the universe. It is this fact, that is, that matter and mind have a common basis, which alone gives the possibility of abstract thought. It is thus that we recognise the "law" reproduced in our minds as being identical with the law imbedded in the "object." In fact, our perception of the object itself is only possible simply because it is "of such stuff as we are made of."

The real is rational, no doubt, but is it all rational? Aristotle held that Reality was a synthesis of Matter and Form and Kant insisted that there was an element of sense as well as rationality in all experience. May we not have here the truth
of Kant's "thing-in-itself"?" For Aristotle, pure matter equals nothing, but it is also pure potentiality; it is in a perpetual process of assuming form; it is continually "becoming." Being is therefore the infinite possibility of Becoming, and is, in some sense, identical with the "I" which is not exhausted in the thought but stands over as the infinite possibility of thought. "It is the Subject for which all things mental and material are objects; the Universal one and indivisible, which includes all particulars that were, or that are, or that can be."^2

Some such formulation, it seems to me, would avoid the panlogism of Hegel and his school, while it would meet the objections not only of Croce, Gentile and Bergson but also of the Jamesian pragmatists. We should have an objective idealism which would give Croce and the others their creative, emergent universe, while the Pragmatists could enjoy its "blooming, buzzing confusion" and infinite particularity. There are difficulties, of course, but then there are always difficulties. The solution of these difficulties will, I imagine, have to wait. As Belfort Bax observed, nearly fifty years ago: "The immediate future of philosophy, the next formulation of the ultimate world-problem of being and knowledge must, we believe, be consequent on the realization of that vast transformation with which the current order is big. 'The republic has no need

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1. I am not forgetful of the fact that Kant would seem to traverse much of this in the "Transcendental Dialectic." But see, however, Caird's "Philosophy of Kant," p.534 ff.

of chemists,' Lavoisier was told. Thus with brutal frankness was the truth expressed, that in periods of great political and social change, Theory, as such, be it scientific or philosophical, must cede to the all-absorbing questions of Practice. The student as he lays down this little volume, should he by chance take up a newspaper, will inevitably light on accounts of great strikes, of armaments, of the struggle for colonies called imperial expansion, of vast popular revolutionary movements, all of which point to one thing, when followed out in all their bearings, the steady approach of the great class struggle. Let him ponder on this and bethink himself of the part even he, or if not he, his children, may be forced to take in the resolution of that great living contradiction - the contradiction between individual and society - expressed in what we term Modern Civilization."

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