

## MARXISM IN SOCIAL THEORY.

(Continued from page 2)

Now for a rapid narrative of Marx's personal history in respect of its points of contact with the intellectual influences that played upon him in the formative years of his youth as a student, and during the creative years of his theoretical output and activity in the working class movement.

After quitting public school, Marx (at 17 years of age) went to the University of Bonn to study jurisprudence. A year later, in the fall of 1836, he entered Berlin University, throwing himself into the study of philosophy, the then great exponent of "new-thought" being Hegel, jurisprudence, history, geography, literature, the history of art, etc. In 1841 he had the degree of Doctor of Philosophy conferred upon him at Jena. His desire was to follow up an academic career, but the universities were no place for free enquirers, and Marx was too violent in the expression of his opinions to find such a career open to him. Marx then took to free-lance journalism as a way out of this blind alley. This profession led him into the arena of public affairs in which he entered into the struggle for freedom agitating the continent of Europe by which he, at this stage, understood freedom in religion and liberalism in politics. Marx entered public life with a thorough philosophical training and as a member of the group of Young Hegelians, criticism was the great weapon used against the old order to force the positive and rigid which had become ineffectual to make room for a living stream of thought and being, or, as Marx expressed it in 1844, "to make the petrified conditions dance by singing to them their own tune." The tune, of course, being the dialectic. In 1842 he became editor of the "Rheinische Zeitung." Marx, in his position as editor, found the need of a thorough study of political economy and socialism. A short sketch of his editorial life by himself may be found in the introduction to his "Critique of Political Economy."

Between the years 1843 and 1844 we have the second, and probably the most important critical period in the intellectual development of Marx. In 1837 he had become a disciple of Hegel, into whose philosophy he penetrated deeper and deeper during the two years which ensued. Between 1843 and 1844 he became a socialist and in the following two years he laid the foundations of those social and historical doctrines associated with his name. The most productive years of Marx's life were between 1837 and 1847, the first period, and between 1857 and 1871. All his valuable work falls within these years: "The Poverty of Philosophy," 1847; "The Communist Manifesto," 1848; his activity in the International, 1864; "Das Capital" and "The Civil War in France," for the later period, to name a typical example of his public activities and some of his best known works. From 1845 to 1848, as an exile in Brussels he was mainly occupied with economic studies for which Engels placed his library of works on political economy at his disposal. The immediate result of these studies was the "Poverty of Philosophy," a reply to a work of Proudhon, the anarchist. English political economy henceforth occupied the place with Marx which German philosophy had held. The years during which the elements of his conception of society were accumulating in his mind and shaping themselves into a system were involved in a revolutionary atmosphere. Marx's writings during these years are, of course, the favorite recourse for those who wish to quote him in support of violence. In June 1848 appeared the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung," of which Marx was called to be editor to defend and advance the cause of the revolution in Germany, a cause which had been successful temporarily at least, in France. The revolution in Germany proving abortive, Marx proceeded to Paris in 1849, where he witnessed not the triumph of the Red Republic but that of the counter-revolution. In July, 1849, he was banished by the French government to the boggy country of Morbihan, in Brittany; he preferred, however, to go over to London, where he remained to the end of his days.

Let us now turn to Hegel and his philosophy and its then influence on the world of thought in order

to appreciate that training of Marx's during the early formative youthful years of his intellectual life as concerned with the problems of social life and destiny. At the same time we may bear in mind my opening remarks in which I attempted to define the limits of the creative powers of man. No matter how exalted or fantastic the elaborations of a philosophical system in particular hands may be, such systems are significant in their essential features of their times—they are their times grasped in thought, the informed, confused thought of dumb multitudes made articulate. Says Hegel: " . . . But if it is as good as granted that every philosophy has been refuted, yet at the same time it must also be asserted that no philosophy has been refuted, nor ever can be refuted . . . for every philosophical system is to be considered as the presentation of a particular moment, or a particular stage in the evolutionary process of the idea. The history of philosophy . . . is not, in its totality, a gallery of the aberrations of the human intellect, but is rather to be compared to a pantheon of deities."

"What Hegel says here about philosophy is true also of systems of social science, and styles and forms in art. The displacement of one system by another reflects the historical sequence of the various stages of social evolution." (M. Beer). And so, critics, in the correspondence of your or my conclusions, on the social problem and on ways and means of forwarding the working class cause, with what lies in the social situation of our time constitutes the real issue between us. What intellectual influences we are under or what we read, is another matter.

"Until towards the end of the eighteenth century, learned and unlearned people had some such general notions as the following. The world has (either been created, or it has existed from eternity. It is either governed by a personal, supernatural god or universal spirit, or it is kept going by nature, like some delicate machine. It exists in accordance with eternal laws, and is perfect, ordained to fulfil some design, and constant. The things and beings which are found in it are divided into kinds, species, classes. All is fixed, constant, and eternal. Things and beings are contiguous in space, and succeed one another in time, as they have done ever since time was. It is the same with the incidents and events of the world and of mankind. Such common proverbs as "There is nothing new under the sun," and "History repeats itself," are but the popular expressions of this view. Correlative to this philosophy (of a "fixed" world) was logic, or the science of the laws of thinking. . . . (first) founded (as a science) by the Greek philosopher Aristotle (384 to 322 B.C.)" (At this point M. Beer illustrates the method of this logic, for which I have not space) " . . . It is at once apparent that this logic operates with rigid, constant, unchanging, dogmatic conceptions, something like geometry, which deals with definitely bounded spatial forms. Such was the rationale of the old-world-philosophy.

"By the beginning of the nineteenth century a new conception of the world had begun to make its way. The world as we see it, or get to know it from books, was neither created, nor has it existed from time immemorial, but has developed in the course of uncounted thousands of years, and is still in process of development. It has traversed a whole series of changes, transformations and catastrophes. The earth was a gaseous mass, then a ball of fire; the species and classes of things and beings which exist on earth have partly arisen by gradual transition from one sort into another, and partly made their appearance as a result of sudden changes. And in human history it is the same as in nature; the form and significance of the family, of the State, of production, of religion, of law, etc., are subjected to a process of development. All things are in flux, in a state of becoming, of arising and disappearing. There is nothing rigid, constant, unchanging in the cosmos.

"In view of the new conception, the old formal logic could no longer satisfy the intellect; it could not adequately deal with things in a state of evolution. In ever increasing measure it became impos-

sible for the thinker to work with hard and fast conceptions. From the beginning of the nineteenth century a new logic was sought, and it was G. W. F. Hegel (1770-1881) who made a comprehensive and thoroughly painstaking endeavor to formulate a new logic in accordance with the universal process of evolution. This task appeared to him the more urgent, as his whole philosophy aimed at bringing thought and being, reason and universe, into the closest connection and agreement, dealing with them as inseparable from each other, regarding them as identical, and representing the universe as the gradual embodiment of Reason. 'What is reasonable is real; what is real is reasonable.' The task of philosophy is to comprehend what is. Every individual is the child of his time. Even philosophy is its time grasped in thought. No individual can over-leap his time. (Pref. to Phil. of Law.) It is evident that, in his way, Hegel was no abstract thinker, divorced from actuality, and speculating at large. Rather he set himself to give material content to the abstract and purely ideal, to make it concrete, in fact. The idea without reality, or reality without the idea, seemed to him unthinkable. Accordingly his logic could not deal merely with the laws of thought, (formal logic) but must at the same time take account of the laws of Cosmic evolution. Merely to play with the forms of thought, and to fence with ideas, as the old logicians, especially in the Middle Ages, were wont to do, seemed to him a useless, abstract, unreal operation. He, therefore, created a science of thinking which formulated not only the laws of thought, but also the laws of evolution, albeit, unfortunately in a language which offered immense difficulties to his readers.

"The essence of his logic is the dialectic." (M. Beer.)

Further description will be given of this Hegelian dialectic in next issue in which I also hope to carry on my review of Marx's theory of history to its conclusion. I proposed to confine my reply to one issue or two, but my argument spreads itself out when I sit down to plot and plan how the controversy shall be made educational and stimulating to thought for those who are interested, whether they, in respect of the points in dispute, agree with me or not. Otherwise, controversial strife is sheer waste of time and energy needed for educational work and social reconstruction.

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