

SECOND ALTERNATIVE *← Marx 1840*

What Marx felt stirring in him as he ~~was~~ worked on his doctoral dissertation -- his relationship with the left Hegelians/<sup>at its height/</sup>approaching an end, and the search for new beginnings -- is seen clearest in his notes for the dissertation rather than the dissertation itself which was granted him on April 15, 1841. We will compare the two and note that directly after he turned first to journalism, which he considered the daily practice of philosophy, and with journalism came the direct confrontation with ~~the~~ censorship from the Prussian state, totally different attitudes ~~to~~ to the peasants involved in the wood theft. And finally his resignation from the paper and his total break from the bourgeoisie in 1843. The 3 aspects -- philosophic dissertation, journalism which deals with ~~the~~ daily ~~life~~ life on different class levels, and the break with the bourgeoisie -- cannot be separated. To act as if he was a mere Hegelian idealist in writing the dissertation, or "at best" choosing a subject to which he would add mere details to the greater achievement of the analysis of the same subject by Hegel, is not to understand what is meant by the new stirrings of a totally new view of life, of history, of science, of philosophy, ~~and~~ to think that the brushup against the injustices meted out to the Moselle peasants was the <sup>root</sup> cause of his turning "Marxist", is to fail to see the very contradiction <sup>in the total philosophy of Hegel</sup> ~~which~~ which was supposed to have achieved that central point of all philosophy, the unity of philosophy and reality, <sup>it</sup> is to fail to see a genuine "root cause" that was inherent in both Hegel's philosophy and the left Hegelians. That is to say, how total the break will be with Hegelianism, not because he has turned his back on Hegel half as much as on the Hegelians, but what is far more important that he was about to discover a totally new continent of thought.

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Let's take it step by step to see those three years ~~1841-44~~  
~~1841-44~~ 1841-44, year by year. First, then, ~~the~~  
~~the fun, pivotal~~ /notes on the dissertation--1) the nodal points in the development  
of philosophy and 2) philosophy after its completion. In the first,  
Marx shows that the nodal point when a philosophy has achieved complete-  
ness, like Aristotle in the Ancient Society and Hegel at the beginning  
of the 19th century. The discontinuity, the break that occurs after  
completion, signifies philosophy turning its eyes to the actual world,  
the relationship of philosophy to reality. It is what Marx called a  
Shrove-tide of philosophy, the fasting which would reveal the ~~discontinuity~~  
discontinuity. In a word, two totalities confront each other -- the  
world of philosophy, and the ~~real~~ actuality, the world of non-philosophy.  
Marx says there is no reason to be frightened by the 'storm'; yes,  
there is a crisis in philosophy and there is a crisis in the world.  
Those who are frightened by historical necessity and want to retreat,  
such fearful souls take the reverse point of view of valiant commanders,  
~~Themistocles~~. They believe they are able to repair the damage  
by decreasing forces, by dispersal, by a peace treaty with real needs,  
while Themistocles, when Athens was threatened with devastation,  
persuade<sup>d</sup> the Athenians to leave it for good and found a new Athens on  
the sea, on another element."

Very clearly, Marx thinks that that's the only way to have a  
new beginning, worthy of history and of philosophy, and that the reason  
why one shouldn't be afraid of the great diremption that a crisis brings  
is that once a new unity of philosophy and reality is achieved, the  
unity is <sup>a</sup>great as the diremption was. The proof of which, and the  
model, and the one Marx considers the greatest of all philosophers is

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Prometheus. Here is how he points to that new beginning: "Just as Prometheus, having stolen fire from heaven begins to build houses and settle on the earth, so philosophy, having extended itself to the world, turns against the apparent world. So now with the Hegelian philosophy."

The first criticism of the <sup>left</sup> Hegelians is the rapidity with which they ran from the ship and ~~considered~~ considered Hegel's reconciliation with the Prussian state as an ~~example~~ "accommodation", that is to say, opportunism. Marx insists that that <sup>explains</sup> ~~explains~~ nothing, that even if the accommodation was not only true but Hegel ~~was~~ himself consciously did so, it would prove nothing because "he is not conscious that the possibility of this apparent accommodation is rooted in the inadequacy of his principle ..." In a word what is serious is not whether the man is an opportunist or not but whether there is such a gaping inadequacy in the philosophy itself that it was inevitable that that would happen; and that's what his disciples must show. That is exactly what Marx will reveal in 1844 in the Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic, which he will call a "lie." But here he is ~~limiting~~ limiting himself . . .

<sup>For that</sup> task of the disciple Marx declares that "it is a psychological law that the theoretical mind, having become free in itself, turns into practical energy." He further insists that indeed the "praxis of philosophy, however, is itself theoretical. It is criticism, which measures ... particular actually against the Idea."

[Philosophy must turn outward/  
Criticism is the key. / Action is needed to realize philosophy.

"What seems to be, first of all, philosophy's wrong relation to and direption with the world, turns secondly into a direption of the individual philosophical self-consciousness in itself and finally appears as philosophy's external separation and duality, as two opposed philosophical direction."

Far from saying that that's exactly what is happening in ~~the actual thesis~~, he says that of course ~~the actual thesis~~ "in the admirably great and bold plan of his history of philosophy... it was impossible in some way to go into detail ... " It isn't true however as ~~some~~ both academics and Marxists have claimed that he thereby shows he was still a total Hegelian. Quite the contrary -- the same half sentence continues "and in some way the gigantic thinker was hindered by his view of what he called the speculative idea par excellence from recognizing in these systems the great importance that they have for the history of Greek philosophy and for the Greek mind in general." (Livergood's translation, p. 61; my emphasis.)

I stressed the word, history, because that is the key to every0 thing, i.e. both to what he brings out that is deficient in Hegel and he chooses the very point in which Hegel is recognized as the greatest and on the very subject that Hegel considered the greatest -- history of Greek philosophy and mind; and the very first sentence of that foreword dissertation to his ~~work~~ stated "The form of this treatise would have been on the one hand more strictly scientific, on the other hand in many of its arguments less pedantic, if its primary purpose had not been that of a doctoral dissertation."

mss. for the Holy Family, ~~German Ideology~~ and the <sup>and the</sup> German Ideology, and when Engels found him deciphering Marx's writing, he did help him and let him take some issues of Deutsche Jahrbücher. Finally Engels offered to expound for him Marx's doctoral dissertation, drawing attention to the fact that Marx even then was critical of Hegel and took him on in the very sphere in which Hegel was strongest, the history of thought.

In 1895, Engels made the statement that after the publication of Feuerbach's Essence of Christianity (1841) they were all "for the present, Feuerbachians." (MEW 21, p. 272, tr. Moscow II, p. 367)

① The truth is the exact opposite. First of all, it is not the 1841 thesis of Feuerbach that had gotten Marx excited; he had long since separated from religion and indeed, as early as 1842, criticised Feuerbach, saying, "his own ideas concerning the nature of religion would conflict with those of Feuerbach though only as regards the form (Fassung) and obviously not to the advantage of religion." (Nicholas Lobkowitz, Theory and Practice: History of a Concept from Aristotle to Marx;

Notre Dame, Indiana 1967, p. 251, refers back to MEGA I, 1/2, p. 272)

② This was obviously a remark Marx made in a perspective article on religious art. Before Marx left the R2 in March 1843, he wrote Ruge that he ~~disliked~~ disliked Feuerbach's insistence on nature to the disadvantage of politics.

The third instance in which Marx spoke against Feuerbach (actually, I have an earlier third instance -- rd) is the letter to Schweitzer, Jan. 24, 1865:

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the creative act of ~~the~~ dialectic, as against Feuerbach's "contemplative materialism." Engels evidently did not find this thesis until he was actually publishing his own book on Feuerbach in 1895, but he should have known the 1845 stand from the fact that they both collaborated in the German Ideology in which Feuerbach is criticised extensively.

We have already referred to the 1865 letter to Schweitzer. Even more important is the April 24, 1867 letter to Engels himself (NB NB NB -- the latest issue of Selected Correspondence, 1975 edition, does not include that letter). Marx was then with Muelman who had a collection of Marx's early works, including the Holy Family, upon which Marx remarks as follows: "I was pleasantly surprised to find that we need not be ashamed of this work; although the cult of Feuerbach produces a very humorous effect upon me now."

Lobkowitz has a quite profound remark on the differences between Marx and Feuerbach on religion: [Marx, of course, understands religion in the same way as Feuerbach did. Like Hegel's Aufklärer and like Feuerbach's he mistakes an historically conditioned form of religion for religion's true nature. But, contrary to Feuerbach and together with Hegel, he does not treat religious alienation as an independent phenomenon, but reduces the escapism of 'belief' to a more fundamental alienation. Thus, whereas Feuerbach remained a figure in a drama written by Hegel, Marx succeeded in truly rewriting Hegel's drama of the 'spirit alienated from itself'... Feuerbach's 'alienation' ul-