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KARL MARX
as
A Religious Type

His Relation to the Religion of
Anthropotheism of L. Feuerbach

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THE SOURCE OF THE RELIGIOUS NATURE OF MODERN SOCIALISM

The theme of this study may provoke bewilderment and, therefore, it needs some explanation. I often have had to express my conviction that the determining power in the spiritual life of a man is his religion—not only in the narrow sense of the word, but in a wider sense as well, i.e., the highest and ultimate values which one admits as being beyond him and higher than himself and also his practical relation to these values. To determine the real religious center in a person, to discover his genuine spiritual core, is to find out the most intimate and important things about him, and then everything external and derivative will be comprehensible. In this sense, one may speak of every man's religion, whether he be religiously naive or he who consciously denies any specific form of religiousness. Furthermore, within the Christian concept of life and history, there is no doubt that real mystical principles, being polar and irreconcilable, struggle with each other to govern the spirit and move history. In this sense, there can be no religiously neutral persons and, in fact, the struggle between Christ and the "Prince of this World" goes on within every human being. We know people who
do not know Christ but who serve Him and do His will; and, on the other hand, we know people who call themselves Christians but are in fact alien to Him. Finally, even among unbelievers and religious hypocrites, there are those who his spirit foreshadows a deceiver who is supposed to come “in Christ’s name” and will find many adherents. Whose spirit dominates this or that historical figure? Whose “seal” is stamped on this or that historical movement? These are the usual questions which one must ask while reflecting upon the complex phenomena of an ever more complicated life. Such questions must be pondered time and again in ever new ways when applied to as complex, contradictory, and, at the same time, as significant a phenomenon as the socialist movement. In particular, as a phenomenon of our spiritual life, the basic economic aims of socialism need not give rise to any doubts or controversy on points of principle. The silent and passive “historical flesh” of socialism, i.e., the socialist movement, may have different sources of inspiration and, while belonging primarily to the kingdom of light, may also have the ability to fall prey to darkness. There is a mysterious dividing line between light and darkness which merge into coexistence but, even so, cannot integrate.

In reflecting upon the religious nature of modern socialism, one’s thoughts inevitably turn to the man whose spirit put such a deep imprint on the modern socialist movement that he has to be regarded as one of its spiritual fathers—Karl Marx. Who was he? What was his religious nature? Which god did he serve in life? What kinds of love and hate kindled his soul?

The uncovering of an answer to this basic and decisive question for Marxism in as definite and final a manner as possible became a personal goal for the author. First of all, for several years he had been under the strong influence of Marx and had devoted himself entirely to the mastering and development of Marx’s ideas. Secondly, because he subsequently managed with trials and tribulations to free himself from the influence of this influence. I wish to make both ends meet, to examine myself for the last time and, leaving my former abode forever, to look over the subject of my passionate young enthusiasm with a cool, critical view.

The reader should not expect, of course, to get a simple textbook answer to such a question. The answer that Marx’s whole soul was made up of socialist sentiments, that he loved and pitied the oppressed workers and hated the capitalist exploiters, and, furthermore, that he wholeheartedly believed in the coming bright era of socialism—such an answer would be able
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to satisfy perhaps only zealous beginners in Marxism.

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If everything were as simple as that, there would be, of course, nothing more to talk about. However, things are not so simple, though at times they may be; but, in any case, they are immensely more complicated and difficult. To begin with, in my view of Marx's psychology and personal sentiments, it seems doubtful whether such feelings as love, spontaneous compassion, and warm sympathy for human suffering in general really played the most important role within him. It was not without reason that his own father mentioned in a letter to Marx in his student days: "Is your head, are your talents, true to your heart?" In all likelihood he (the father) must have been in doubt about it. Unfortunately, as far as Marx's personality and life are concerned, we are faced with a nearly complete lack of any written testimony. Practically no descriptions of his personality were made by sensitive and competent observers, unconcerned with giving a strictly social-democratic account of his life (cf. Lafargue's and Liebknecht's memoirs [Paul Lafargue, Marx's son-in-law; Wilhelm Liebknecht, collaborator of Marx and Engels]). That is why descriptions of Marx's character
inevitably are found to be subjective. If we judge Marx by his published works, his heart was far more open to hatred and vengeance than to the opposite kind of feelings. Of course, sometimes his anger was righteous but more often it was completely unjust. When Marx thunders against the cruelty of capitalists and capitalism and the heartlessness of the social system of his day, his anger deserves every sympathy and respect. Somehow, however, one reacts differently, when alongside this thunder one meets haughty and vindictive slurs directed against all who think differently, whoever they may be—Lassalle, McCullough, Herzen or Malthus, Proudhon or Senior. It was unusually easy to draw Marx into personal polemics and one must confess that generally his arguments were highly unconvincing, much as there have

1 On the very first page of the first volume of Das Kapital, observe Marx’s vindictive attack against his own co-worker and friend, long since deceased. Rather than rendering Lassalle his due, Marx accuses him of plagiarism in muddled expressions. This is one of the most striking examples of Marx’s personality.

2 Here is a model example: “One of the virtuosos in this pretentious idiocy, McCullough... speaks with the pretentious crotatism of an eight-year-old child” (Das Kapital, vol. 1, p. 363, footnote 218). Generally, in the footnotes of Das Kapital, epithets like “vulgar,” “absurd,” etc., are found everywhere. Unfortunately, this bad form was also adopted by Marx’s followers, particularly in our literature.

3 A rude and tasteless slur was directed against Herzen in the first volume of Das Kapital, first edition. It was removed by the author himself from later editions.

been efforts to deny this. Marx wrote three polemical books, to say nothing of his short writings, which make burdensome reading (and not because polemics generally are of greater interest to readers than to readers). The first of these books [Herr Vogt—1860] attacks Vogt and is filled with émigré bickerings and with mutual accusations of vilest actions, particularly of spying. The second book [The Holy Family—1845] is directed against Marx’s former friend, Bruno Bauer, whose removal from the University of Berlin caused Marx to refuse to think about a professorship there. This second book is packed with mockery and, for no reason, was given a blasphemous title, The Holy Family. Finally, the third book [The Poverty of Philosophy—1847], his best-known and most valuable book, is directed against Proudhon. Its tone is also inconsistent with either the theme or with Marx’s recent relationship to Proudhon.

How many of these polemic “gems” (which are hard to tolerate even in the time of greatest enthusiasm for Marx) are there in the bibliographical footnotes of the first volume of Das Kapital! How many gunshots at sparrows, unnecessary sarcasms, and just plain rude remarks are there! (For example, how otherwise can one define the comments on Malthus and the Protestant clergy and their disregard for birth control, pp. 516-18, in the version translated and
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edited by Struve.) Memoirs of some of his contemporaries from impartial circles agree with the spontaneous impression and they depict Marx as having a self-confident and imperious nature, intolerant of any objections. (We ought to recollect Marx's fight with Bakunin at the International [the First International, i.e., International Workingmen's Association, founded 1864] and, in general, the story of its disintegration.) Herzen's sharp description of Marx, based on a number of verified facts, is well known, although he personally did not know Marx. (See My Past and Thoughts, Vol. III, chapter "Germans in Emigration" in the new legal publication of Herzen's works, where he tells how Bakunin, imprisoned and thus unable to defend himself, was accused by Marx of espionage, as well as how Marx made a number of attempts to throw the shadow of guilt upon Herzen himself, whom Marx did not even know.) Thus Annenkov, in his well-known memoirs, defined Marx as the "democratic dictator." It seems to us that this description correctly expresses the general opinion about Marx, about that impatient and imperious self-

*George Adler, in his book Die Grundlagen der Karl Marx'schen Kritik der bestehenden Volkswirtschaft, Tübingen, 1887, quotes an interesting passage of a letter from the democrat Trekhkov who visited Marx in London. Here, incidentally, Trekhkov formulates his personal impressions:

"Marx impressed me as one gifted not only with rare

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affirmation of his which penetrates everything which bears the imprint of his personality.

intellectual superiority, but also considerable personality. If he possessed as much heart as brain, as much love as hate, I would be ready to go through fire for him, in spite of the fact that he has expressed for me absolute disdain, not only in different ways, but finally, quite openly. He is the only and the first among us to whom I would entrust the right to rule and who, faced with great events, would not get lost in trivia. I regret only for the sake of our general goal that this man, along with his excellent intellect, does not have a noble heart. He laughs at fools who devoutly repeat after him his proletarian catechism, as well as at communists à la Willich, and at the bourgeoisie. The only ones he respects with full awareness are the aristocrats, the true aristocrats. In order to remove them from power, he is in need of a force which can be found only in the proletarians, therefore he fits his system to them. In spite of all assurances to the contrary, perhaps even thanks to them, I received the impression that his personal supremacy is the goal of all his activities."

(283-3 footnotes) We do not intend, of course, to accept all of the above literally, but the general tone agrees with everything both Annenkov and Herzen have stated.

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III

MARX AND HUMAN PERSONHOOD

Persons of the dictatorial type have a distinctive peculiarity: they have a straightforward and rather unceremonious attitude toward human individuality. For such persons, people appear as algebraic signs, destined to serve as a means for achieving one or another, even if lofty, goal. On the other hand, they appear as subjects for a more or less energetic—even if extremely benevolent—influence. In theory, this feature is expressed by lack of attention to the concrete, living, human person; in other words, by ignoring the problems of [the] person as [an] individual. This theoretical disregard for the person, the elimination of that which is individual under the pretense of a sociological interpretation of history, is very characteristic for Marx, too. For him the problem of [the] person as [an] individual—the indestructible core of human personality, its integral nature—does not exist. Here, Marx the thinker involuntarily surrendered himself to Marx the man and completely dissolved that which is [person as] individual in sociology, dissolved not only that which is indeed “dissoluble” but that also which is absolutely “indissoluble.” This, incidentally, facilitated his elaboration of bold and general ideas of an
“economic concept of history” in which a funeral dirge is sung for the person and personal creativity. Marx was neither disturbed nor even noticeably impressed by the rebellion of his contemporary, Stirner, who gave such a hard time to Marx’s teacher Feuerbach.¹

Marx also safely ignored, without apparent consequences for himself, the powerful ethical individualism of Kant and Fichte, whose influence had suffused the air of Germany in the 1830’s (how much one can feel this influence, even in Lassalle!). Moreover, Marx would never accept the acid critique of Dostoevsky’s “underground man” who defends, among other rights, the natural right to ... foolishness and caprice, if only “to live according to one’s own foolish will.” Marx, when he was squeezing life and history into a rib-breaking sociological corset, had not the slightest anticipation of Nietzsche’s rebellious individualism. In Marx’s eyes, people form sociological groups which smoothly and naturally meld into regular geometric figures, as if nothing happens in history except the slow and regular movement of sociological elements. The discarding of the problem of the person and of all concern for it, the excessive abstraction—such are the basic fea-

¹ I related this episode of the clash between Feuerbach and Stirner in my work on Feuerbach, L. Feuerbach’s Religion of Anthropotheism, published by Free Conscience, M., 1906.
religion; his relative insensitivity to the sharp focus of the religious problem, for, indeed, this is first of all a problem of the individual as a person. This is a question about the value of my life, my personality, my sufferings, about the attitude of man's individual and human spirit towards God, about the soul's personal—not only sociological—redemptions. This single, irreplaceable, and absolutely unique personality (which, for only a single moment, flashes in history) lays claims upon eternity, on absolute totality, on an insurmountable significance, all of which can be promised only by religion—a vital "God of the living" religion—and not by a "god of the dead" sociology. For, this problem, which is unresolvable and even quite meaningless apart from and outside of religion, lends to religious consciousness, to religious doubt, and to religious experiences in general, a particular sharpness, vitality, and torment. There is here, if you wish, an individualistic egoism, but of the highest degree; not a sinful empirical selfishness, but the highest spiritual thirst; the highest assertion of the "I"; the sacred egoism which commands one to destroy one's own spirit in order to save it—to destroy the empirical, mortal, and tangible in order to save the spiritual, invisible, and immortal. Yes, there is no problem here, merely the suffering of the individual as a person, that
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As we said, Marx remains quite aloof from the religious problem; he is not disturbed by the fate of an individual but is totally obsessed by what appears to be common to all individuals, consequently, by what is non-individual in them. This non-individuality, though not beyond the individual, is generalized by Marx in an abstract formula. At the same time, he rejects with relative ease what is left in a personality after the non-individuality has been deducted from it or, with a light heart, he compares this remainder to zero. In this analysis lies the notorious "objectivism" in Marxism: persons are converted into social categories, just as the personality of a soldier is erased by the regiment and company in which he serves. Vladimir Soloviev once commented that Chicherin had chiefly an "administrative" brain which, in the real sense of the word, means a "doctrinaire" brain. And Marx possessed such an "administrative" brain. Therefore, the real fragrance of religion remains beyond his spiritual sense of smell, and his atheism remains cold, emotionless, and doctrinaire. It does not occur to him that the sociological salvation of mankind, the prospects for a socialistic "Zukunftstaat" [future state, i.e., Utopia] may turn out
to be insufficient for man’s salvation and cannot replace the hope for religious salvation. Thus, Ivan Karamazov’s torments about the hopelessness of the historical tragedy, his searching into the values of historical progress, into the cost of future harmony, into the “tears of a child”—searchings so dangerous for the beliefs in sociological salvation—were incomprehensible and alien to Marx. To solve all problems, Marx recommends one universal remedy: “practice” (*die Praxis*), i.e., to deafen oneself wholly with the hubbub and noise of the street, for here, in this everyday hustle, one finds the solution to all doubts. Such an invitation to cure all philosophical and religious doubts through the “practice” in which there would be no time to breathe and think, as a solution just to these doubts (and not for the sake of the independent value of this “practice” in itself, which I intend neither to deny or underestimate), seems to me very similar to an invitation to get dead drunk and in this way to become insensitive to the pain of one’s own soul. A similar thing sometimes occurred in connection with the feeding of famine-stricken people; there is no more noble deed than the one which is done for the sake of suffering, starving people. There is no bigger cynicism if the attack on hunger is used as a remedy for any kind of illness, and people’s torments are compared to a poultice for drawing a boil. The invitation to drag oneself down to the “dregs of life,” which nowadays has become fashionable in vulgar philosophy as a prescription for the solution to all philosophical problems and doubts, has a prominent place also in Marx’s *ultima ratio* philosophy [the philosophy of “final conclusion”], although not in such a bare and vulgar form. Marx’s guiding principle, both practical and philosophical, is: “The world was sufficiently interpreted by philosophers; now is the time to begin its practical reconstruction.”
Marx was insensitive to religious problems but this does not mean that he was indifferent towards the religious spirit and the existence of religion. On the contrary, it quite often happens that inner alienation does not lead to indifference but creates hatred for this strange and incomprehensible sphere. This was exactly Marx's attitude towards religion, especially towards theism and Christianity, for which he felt fierce hostility. It was an attitude of a fighting and militant atheist, striving to liberate and cure people from religious insanity and spiritual slavery. In Marx's militant atheism, one can see the central nerve of his entire life-work, one of its main stimuli. In what follows, it will turn out that the real, although concealed, practical theme of his most important, purely theoretical works, is in a sense his struggle with religion. Marx fights the God of religion with both his own science and his own socialism which, in his hands, turn into a means for atheism—a weapon for the emancipation of mankind from religion. The yearning of mankind "to establish itself without God and, above all, forever and ultimately," about which Dostoevsky wrote with such prophetic fervor and which was the subject of his constant agonizing
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thoughts, received, among others, one of the most vivid and complete expressions in Marx's doctrine. This inner bond between atheism and socialism in Marx, the genuine spirit of his activity is usually either misunderstood or un-noticed because, in general, very little interest is given to this aspect of Marx. In order to demonstrate this with all possible clarity, it will be necessary to turn to the history of his spiritual development.

VI

MARX'S GENERAL PHILOSOPHICAL IDEOLOGY

What, in fact, was Marx's general philosophical ideology; to what extent is it appropriate to call it such? On this account a whole legend was created, according to which Marx started with Hegel, being at first under his decisive influence and, consequently, was in a certain sense Hegelian—a part of the Hegelian "left-wing." Apparently, at a much later time, Marx and Engels themselves were inclined to understand their own philosophical genealogy this way. This is well known, at least from the flattering self-characterization which Engels gave in 1891 to German socialism, i.e., to Marxism (in the mouth of Engels it is, of course, a synonym), and from the inscription on his own portrait: "We, German socialists, are proud of the fact that we descended not only from Saint Simon, Fourier, and Owen, but also from Kant, Fichte, and Hegel." This established the first direct continuity between classical German idealism and Marxism, and the admission of such a link became commonplace in the social-philosophical literature.\footnote{Reference to this bond is due, by the way, to the merit of Professor Masaryk in his well-known book on Marxism, chapter 11.}

\footnote{For example, even a researcher who studied the literature on this problem as attentively and broadly as Professor Masaryk in his book, Die philosophischen und soziologischen Grundlagen des Marxismus (Wien, 1889), confirms that}
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Although biographical materials concerning Marx's young years are lacking, the clarification of Marx's factual philosophical development has now been made easier. Thanks to the works of Mehring, we have a complete edition of the old, not easily accessible writings of Marx. These are especially valuable because they are attributed to his early years and to the time when he was not yet a Marxist. Although he already stood on his own feet, he had not yet elaborated his own doctrines. So, while viewing Marx's literary-scientific activity in its entirety (from the philosophical dissertation about Democritus and Epicurus to the last volume of Das Kapital), we arrive at a conclusion which is at sharp variance with the generally accepted

"Marx's socialism developed predominantly from German philosophy" and that "Marx's philosophical foundations, rather his philosophical skeleton, is Hegel's philosophy, for Hegel molded the spirit of Marx" and, finally, that "Marx made his debut in literature as a Hegelian, an adherent of Feuerbach" (p. 22 et passim). Even if we take into consideration that Feuerbach himself was once an adherent of Hegel, although he later became his irrevocable and fierce antagonist, we realize what sad confusion is contained in the words "a Hegelian, an adherent of Feuerbach." Indeed, this is almost the same as saying that a Marxist is a follower of Tolstoy or the like.


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one: there is no continuous connection between German classical idealism and Marxism. Marxism germinated in the soil of the final dissolution of idealism, as only one of several products of this decay. If some link between socialism and idealism, though a weak one, still existed in Lassalle, then it was finally broken, especially as a result of Marx's influence. The peak of German idealism ended in a sheer ravine. Soon after the death of Hegel, an unprecedented philosophical catastrophe, a complete break of philosophical traditions took place, threatening to return us to the age of the Enlightenment (Aufklärung) and to eighteenth-century French materialism (which Plekhanov dated as the origin of economic materialism). In any case, this is nearer to facts than is the view about Marx's Hegelianism.

We believe that the opinion about the significance of Marxism as a "transition form" or dissolution of classical idealism is refuted, first of all, by the fact that Marx himself remained the whole time alien to its influence. During his student years he made superficial concessions to it, but this was almost inevitable in the spiritual atmosphere of the University of Berlin at the end of the 1830's; he gave them up very soon. There is no basis for labeling Marx a member of Hegel's "school" in the sense in which the representatives of its "left" wing
(Feuerbach, Bruno Bauer, Strauss, and others) belong to it. They all actually grew up in Hegel's spiritual lap and forever preserved traces of this verifiable spiritual affinity. It is impossible to say the same about Marx. His Hegelianism did not go much beyond a wordy imitation of the peculiar style of Hegel, so impressive for many people, or go much beyond a few completely casual quotations from Hegel. What do we find in Marx that would relate him spiritually with Hegel, beyond the limits of this superficial imitation?

First of all, the chapter on the form of value (in Volume I of Das Kapital) was written "à la manière" of Hegel to impress the neophytes. Marx himself later admitted that this imitation of Hegel was merely only "flirting"; and we add to it that he did so completely in vain. With the altogether meager intellectual content of this chapter (which, as a matter of fact, is superfluous for any exposé of Das Kapital's economic system), this premeditated pomposity forces us to doubt more the literary taste of the author than to believe that the author is close to Hegel or even a serious expert on him.

Those wishing to check the accuracy of these words can easily accomplish this with the help of the literary index, an appendix to the translation of volume I of Das Kapital, edited by Struve. Here one can easily see how outwardly and casually Marx quotes Hegel, as if more for the sake of mentioning his name than for the substance of the matter.

It is also said that Marx and Hegel are bound together by the notorious "dialectical method." Marx himself wrote on this subject: "my dialectical method not only differs basically in its foundation from that of Hegel, but is its exact opposite." We maintain that there is no relationship between them, just as the degree on a scale of a thermometer is not "an exact opposite" of the degree on a geographical map, but has nothing in common with it except the name. Hegel's "dialectical method" is, in fact, a dialectical development of a concept; i.e., it is not really a method in the ordinary sense as a means of investigation or proof, but rather a method for the inner self-discovery of a concept. It is the very existence of this concept—existing in motion and moving in contradictions. Marx, too, had no special dialectical method, even in the sense in which he admits to it himself (i.e., in a different sense from Hegel's). Consequently, one may conclude that he had no dialectical method even in the sense of one of the logical methods, i.e., as a kind of investigation or discovery of scientific truths. Such a method does not exist at all in the inductive empirical sciences. That which Marx (and, after him, his school) mistakenly called his method was in reality the style in which he expressed his deductions—a writing style "à la Hegel" in which Marx's predilection for
antithesis was in general a characteristic trait. The contradictory nature of contemporary economic development was a result of factual study and not at all its method.

In any case, the special “dialectical method” is a sheer misunderstanding, regardless of whether the logic is understood in Mill’s sense (i.e., as a methodology of the empirical sciences) or in Hegel’s sense (i.e., as a metaphysical ontology). Here is why the following tirade from the Preface to the second edition, volume I of Das Kapital, rings so strangely in Marx’s mouth:

I openly declared myself to be a disciple of this great thinker and, having recourse to the peculiar Hegelian manner of expression, I even flirted in some parts of the chapter with the theory of value. In Hegel’s hands, dialectics undergo a mystification which does not at all eliminate the fact that Hegel was the first to reveal thoroughly and consciously the general forms of its motion. His dialectics are upside down and have to be turned over in order to find the rational grain within the mystical sheath.

As the reader can see, Marx proclaims himself a disciple of Hegel. In this claim, one must see either a continuation of that same “flirtation” (as in the chapter on value), or even a direct mockery of Hegel, or simply, an utter philosophical irresponsibility. Of course, there is least of all a piety towards the “great thinker.” After declaring everything that Hegel came to represent as “mystification” and planning “to turn his system upside down,” Marx, at the same time, proclaims himself as Hegel’s student and claims to be a defender of his memory and honor against abusers. Trusting only one’s immediate impression or, so to speak, one’s purely artistic intuition, one may say that the quoted tirade is by itself such strong proof of Marx’s complete alienation from Hegel that, after it, any additional proof becomes superfluous.

Finally, traces of Hegel’s influence on Marx are seen in his evolutionism. However, the idea of evolution in its positivistic understanding is deeply different from Hegel’s dialectics of the concept; just as the external succession of events and situations, even when it obeys an inner law, differs in its “factuality” from self-discovery of the internal, implicit, and given content—a sequence of successive stages of the idea’s self-revelation. In spite of their external similarity, Hegel’s dialectics, on the one hand, and positivism and evolution (in the sense of the natural sciences), on the other hand, re-
present an utter contradiction. Of course, the concepts of historical and, in particular, of economic evolution could have occurred in Marx under Hegel’s superficial influence as well. However, it could have also developed completely independently, especially because it was in the air and appeared almost simultaneously in Kant, Darwin, and Ludwig Stein (albeit under Hegel’s influence) and amongst various socialists, both French and German (Lassalle, Rodbertus). Therefore, on the basis of Marx’s evolution, a relation of origin with Hegel cannot be established with any sufficient evidence.

In general, it is possible to say that a student of the University of Berlin in the 1830’s, while inwardly alien to Hegelianism, could adopt even more of its external features than we find in Marx. The total absence of intrinsic and other more important indications of affinity not only to Hegel but, in general, to classical idealism, to Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and, in general, to any philosophical school, are absolutely striking. It is hard to believe that one could remain uninfluenced by the problems and teachings of classical idealism after coming into contact with them. This can be explained only by an intrinsic rejection or abhorrence of these problems. It remains only to wonder why there was a need to establish a nonexistent historical link between Marxism and classical idealism.

Particularly striking is the fact that Marx remained utterly alien to any kind of gnoseological doubts and critical stance; and that he remained untouched by Kant’s gnoseological skepticism and critique of practical reason. It turned out that he was a precritical dogmatist and, being a most primitive materialist, was able to display such a thesis as his own fundamental position (in the Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy): “The forms of being are not determined by the consciousness of people but, on the contrary, the social being determines the forms of their consciousness”; or, another thesis (in the Preface to the second edition of Volume I of Das Kapital): “To me, the ideal principle is only the material principle having passed through the brain (sic!).” It is clear that these obscure and inarticulate propositions, full of highly polysemantic, unclear, unexplained terms as being, consciousness, ideal, material could not emerge from the pen of one influenced by Kant, whose critique is the sole entry into the edifice of classical idealism. How can one talk here about some kind of continuity!

On the initial course of his scientific studies, Marx comments: “I specialized in jurisprudence, however, the study of it had been subordinated and went alongside the study of philosophy and history” (Preface to A Con-
tribution to the Critique of Political Economy). In later years, in accordance with his own statements and the content of his published works, his studies concentrated solely upon political economy. (It is true that Engels, piously believing in the universality of Marx's genius, mentioned Marx's intentions to write both the logic and history of philosophy and, at the same time, that he had plans for natural-scientific, mathematical and economic works.) However, this statement of a devoted friend (which has not been corroborated but, on the contrary, is refuted by the facts) does not seem to be based on anything more weighty than a casual conversation or remote dream. Realizing that the time of Marx's most intensive studies of philosophy can be attributed only to his early years, we must search here for the key to understanding Marx's real philosophical cast of mind. Unfortunately, we know very little about Marx's student years but, even in those years one cannot ascertain any significant closeness between him and Hegel. Marx spent one year at the University of Bonn (without great effect on his own studies, judging by his father's letters) and from October 1836 to 1841, he was a student in Berlin. A list of courses attended by him there during nine semesters (Mehring lists them in his commentaries on the edition of Marx's early works) indicates that even at that time, his studies of philosophy and history did not play a paramount role. Out of twelve courses, more than half are related to jurisprudence; only one to philosophy; two, to theology (!); one, to literature; and not a single one to history. *Mehring wanted to weaken the testimony of this list, which contradicts Marx's later statement about his course of studies, by referring to the fact that after the invention of the printing press attendance at lectures lost its significance altogether.

Of course, Carlyle's statement that books are the best university holds true. Even if this is not quite so now, in the 1830's, given the quality of the departments at the University of Berlin which attracted students from all over the world, it was not so at all. In any case, the choice of lecture subjects with full academic freedom testifies to the prevailing intellectual trends. What was Marx occupied with besides lectures? About this we have only one, and even then a very early, piece of evidence, namely, a letter Marx wrote to his father at the end of his first student year (November 1837). In

*Marx attended the following lectures: pandects under Savigny; criminal law and Prussian local law under Gans; church law under Geffeter; the criminal process with the common German process of law under Rudolph Erbrecht. Besides this, lectures on philosophy, theology, philology, and logic under Gabler; on the prophet Isaiah under Bruno Bauer; about Euripides under Gennert; about general geography under Ritter; and finally, anthropology under Steffens.
this letter, Marx attempts to justify himself before his father who has reproached him for idleness. It contains a long, even colossal, enumeration of everything he read, studied, and wrote during that year. The general impression from this most intimate letter (which illustrates a remarkable inquisitiveness, diligence, and efficiency of this nineteen-year-old student) is that it is written in a certain mood and thus should not be taken too literally, which would be even impossible. The letter tells of papers on two systems of legal philosophy (one of them is 300 pages long!) which the young author wrote during that year, only to become instantly disappointed in them. In addition, he writes of an entire philosophical dialogue, two dramas, and verses for his fiancée (which Marx sent more than once), etc. Besides that, the letter contains an unusually long list of books supposedly read and studied by him, for which, even with good abilities, a year would not be enough. The letter clearly reflects youthful ardor, together with youthful self-admiration and great diligence and the lack of the necessary self-discipline leading to flightiness. All this forces us to treat this letter with caution. By the way, it did not set Marx’s father at ease but alarmed him even more.  

11 Even Mehring, who tries to take each word of this letter literally, had doubts about the existence of a 300-page manuscript and he assumes this to be a slip of the pen or an error.

In any case, this letter reveals Marx as having great interests but with no settled taste during the Sturm-und-Drangperiode [Stormand-Stress period]. We know nothing of Marx’s later student years, other than an enumeration of lectures. In 1841, Marx received his doctorate for a dissertation on a philosophical subject: The Difference Between the Natural Philosophies of Democritus and Epicurus, published by Mehring. It differs little from the usual type of doctoral dissertation and, in general, provides little material to judge the author’s philosophical individuality and philosophical world outlook. (The evaluation of such special studies we leave to the specialists in the history of Greek philosophy.) Judging from its Dedication (to his future father-in-law), Marx appears here to be an adherent of “idealism,” although it is not clear of what particular kind. Even here, one does not see any Hegelianism (with possibly one exception—in the Preface where Marx mentions, with respect, Hegel’s Lectures on the History of Philosophy). In any case, it is possible to say that those exaggerated expectations, which could arise on the basis of this youthful letter, did not come true. Marx was dreaming, even at this time, about a chair in philosophy but soon gave up these chairs when his friend Bruno Bauer was removed from
the university for his freethinking. However, in view of the ease with which Marx abandoned the idea, we think that Bauer's removal was probably a pretext and that the real cause was his obvious incompatibility toward this kind of activity.

The philosophical uncertainty of Marx's cast of mind, together with his vague student "idealism," quickly disappeared. In two or three years, Marx himself appears as a materialistic positivist and student of Feuerbach, under whose general influence he remained all his life. Marx is a Feuerbachian who only later somewhat changed and completed his teacher's doctrine. In order to understand Marx, we must keep in mind this basic fact. Marx did not call himself a disciple of Feuerbach, which he truly was; for some reason, he preferred to call himself a disciple of Hegel, which he was not. After the 1840's, Marx does not mention Feuerbach's name anymore, and Engels refers to him in his works as a passion from his youth which he now sharply opposes. However, using Feuerbach's favorite expression, it may be said that Feuerbach is Marx's untold secret, his real clue.

It is easy to understand that after Marx adopted Feuerbach's world outlook he would lose completely and forever a taste for Hegel, even if he once enjoyed it. It is well known how important for Feuerbach was his struggle with Hegel. However, this struggle is by no means symptomatic of a further development of a system by a student, even though he abandons the teacher but still continues his work. This struggle is a real revolt, a final negation of speculative philosophy in general, personified at that time by Hegel. It is a defection into the coarsest materialism in metaphysics, into sensualistic positivism in the theory of knowledge, into hedonism in ethics. Marx, too, adopted all these features by means of which he severed his previous philosophical past. Feuerbach took his place between classical idealism and Marxism and divided them forever with an impenetrable wall. Therefore, Marx's sudden announcement in 1873, of being one of Hegel's disciples, is nothing more than a kind of caprice, perhaps flirtation or historical reminiscence.
VII

MARX, FEUERBACH AND THE RELIGIOUS QUESTION

As is well known, the religious question occupies the central place in Feuerbach's philosophy. Its main theme is the rejection of the religion of theanthropism in the name of the religion of anthroptoism; it is a themachistic, militant atheism. Especially this theme generated in Marx's soul the most profound resonance. Out of all the abundance and variation of philosophical schools during the time of the fragmenting of Hegelianism into all possible directions, Marx's ear singled out the religious theme, namely, the themachistical one. Feuerbach's book, *Das Wesen des Christenthums* [The Essence of Christianity], published in 1841, made such an impression upon Marx and Engels (according to the latter's account) that they both immediately became Feuerbachers. In 1844, Marx, together with Ruge, published in Paris the journal *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* [German-French Yearbooks], of which, however, only one double issue ever came out. Marx contributed two articles to it,

"For a clear understanding of everything further, I ask you to become acquainted with my work about Feuerbach: *The Religion of Anthroptoism of L. Feuerbach* ("Questions of Life," IX-XII, 1905). It was published as a separate brochure by Free Conscience, Moscow, 1906.
Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie and Zur Judenfrage (Toward the Critique of the Hegelian Philosophy of Right; and, On the Jewish Question), which had paramount importance for the nature of his ideology. In both articles and also in his work Die Heilige Familie (The Holy Family), published at the same time, Marx is an orthodox Feuerbachian. One may mention only a single possible exception: a particular nuance in his perception of Feuerbach's teachings about religion which have, so to say, two fronts. Feuerbach not only criticizes Christianity and all kinds of theism but, at the same time, he preaches the atheistic religion of mankind. He wants to be the prophet of this new religion and even displays a peculiar "piety" in that role, so mercilessly ridiculed by Stirner. It is Feuerbach's "piety," this pathetic yearning to worship a holy thing (even if it is the coarsest, logical idol) which is so utterly alien to the haughty, self-assured spirit of Marx. He only takes one side of Feuerbach's teachings—the critical one, and turns the blade of his criticism against any religion without exempting the religion of his teacher. He aims toward a complete and final eradication of religion, toward a pure atheism in which no sun shines anymore, neither in the sky nor on the earth. However, we had better allow Marx himself to speak on the subject. The article, Toward the Critique of the Hegelian Philosophy of Right, begins with the following decisive proclamation:

For Germany, the critique of religion is essentially finished (!), but critique of religion is the presupposition for any other critique. The basis of non-religious critique is as follows: it is man who makes religion and not religion which makes man. In particular, religion is the self-consciousness and self-feeling of a man who either did not find himself or who once again lost himself. Man is not an abstract being, existing outside the world. Man is a world of people, a state, a society, which produces religion—a perverted consciousness of the world because these entities themselves reflect a perverted world. Religion is the general theory of this world, its encyclopedic compendium, its logic in popular form, its spiritualistic point d'honneur [point of honor], its enthusiasm, its moral sanction, its solemn compensation, its universal basis for consolation and justification ... It is a fantastic fulfillment of human nature ("Wesen"—Feuerbach's common term), for human nature does

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This was also published in Russian translation.
not possess true reality. The struggle against religion is, consequently, also a struggle against a world in which the spiritual imprint is its religion. With some people, religious impoverishment (Elend) is an expression of real impoverishment; with others, it is a protest against real impoverishment. Religion is the breath of a suppressed creature, the sentiment of a heartless (herzlosen) world and, consequently, the spirit of a callous epoch—it is the opium of the people.

The annihilation of religion, as the illusive happiness of the people, is the demand for their real happiness. The demand for the elimination of illusions concerning one's existence is the demand for the elimination of the condition which requires illusions. Thus, the critique of illusions is essentially criticism of the vale of sorrow in which religion is the illusion of sanctity. Criticism tore imaginary flowers from the chains, not that man could bear his deprived fantasies or comforts of a goal, but that he could throw down the chains and start to tear off the living flowers. The critique of religion disappoints man. It asks of him to think, to function and to define his surrounding reality as a disappointed man who is brought to his senses. It ask of him to move around himself and, consequently, around his own real soul as the center.

All this is an account of Feuerbach's fundamental tenets, stated nearly in his very own words. Marx's application of this "critique of religion" is much more vividly practical and revolutionary:

The critique of heaven changes into a critique of the earth; the critique of religion, into a critique of the law; the critique of theology, into a critique of politics... The weapon of critique, of course, cannot replace the critique of weapons. The material power must be overthrown by material power, but the theory also becomes a material power once it seizes the masses. The theory is capable of reaching the masses if it can demonstrate ad hominem [to the man], and the theory can demonstrate ad hominem if it is radical. To be radical means to take the matter by the roots. Root for man is man himself. The evident proof of radicalism for German theory and, consequently, for its practic-
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al energy is its emergence (Ausgang) from the decisive, affirmative elimination of religion. As a result, critique of religion teaches that man is the highest creature for man; thus, to overthrow all conditions in which man is a humble, fettered, deserted, despised creature is a categorical imperative.

One can sense in conclusion of this article “the music of the future,” the basic theme of Marx's sociological doctrine:

The only practically possible liberation for Germany is liberation according to the theory proclaiming man as the highest being for man (i.e., Feuerbach's teachings! Author). The emancipation of the German is the emancipation of man. The head of this emancipation is philosophy, its core—the proletariat. Philosophy cannot be translated into reality without the removal (Aufhebung) of the proletariat; the proletariat cannot be removed without the elimination of philosophy.

Philosophy, i.e., Feuerbach's teachings (namely, the theoretical liberation of mankind from religion) and the cause of proletariat are united here into one whole. The proletariat is entrusted with the mission of the historical realization of atheism, i.e., of man's practical liberation from religion. And this reveals the real Marx, the true “secret” of Marxism, its genuine nature!

The text quoted above is usually used in order to confirm an imaginary connection between Marxism and classical philosophy, which Engels had also wanted to establish. The reader can see, however, that it is impossible to find anything of the sort in it. On the contrary, any such connection is rather rejected here, since idealistic philosophy is inseparably connected with one or another religious doctrine, and furthermore, because Feuerbach's teaching (meant in fact here) basically denies idealistic

"In the same journal, in the article “Die Lage Englands” (written apropos of Carlyle's Past and Present), Engels also reveals his Feuerbachianism. Here we read:

"Until now there has always been the question, What is God? And German philosophy (i.e., once again, only Feuerbach, Author) resolved the question in this sense: God is man. Man has only to know himself; to measure according to his own self all the circumstances of his life; to judge them in conformity with his own merits; to organize his world in a really human way, according to the needs of his own nature; and then he will have solved the problem of time. Not in the supernatural, nonexistent spheres; not outside space and time; not in a "god" who lives in the world or in its opposite, one must seek truth, but much nearer—inside man himself. Man's real essence is more noble and more regal than the essence of all kinds of "gods," who only are more or less confused and distorted essences of man."
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philosophy. In compliance with such an outlook, "man's emancipation" in the language of Marx meant at that time precisely a liberation from religion. This point of view is particularly well clarified in the controversy with Bauer on the Jewish question where Marx points out the insufficiency of a purely political emancipation since, even with it, religion still remains:

The question is how a complete political emancipation relates to religion. If we find a religion not only existing but thriving in a country with total political emancipation, this proves that the existence of religion does not contradict the totality of the state. Since the existence of religion is connected with the existence of some deficiency (Mängel), we must seek the cause of this deficiency within the very essence of the state. For us, religion is not anymore the cause but only a display of a secular (weltlichen) limitation. Therefore, we explain the religious limitations of the citizens of a free state by their worldly (weltlichen) limitations.

We do not assert that they have to be liberated from religious limitations in order to be emancipated from their worldly (weltlichen) limitations. We assert that they free themselves from their own religious limitations only after liberating themselves from their worldly limitations. We do not transform earthly problems into theological ones. We transform human problems into worldly ones. History has been sufficiently dissolved in superstitions, but we are dissolving superstitions in history. The question of the relationship between political emancipation and religion becomes for us a question of a relationship between political emancipation and mankind's emancipation... The limits of political emancipation especially become apparent when a state can liberate itself from a certain limitation without man becoming, in this respect, free; when the state can become a free government without man becoming free.

The members of a political state are religious as a result of the dualism between the individual and tribal life, between the life of a civic society and the political life. They are religious since man regards civic life, which is unnatural to his real individuality, as his own real life. They are religious to the extent that religion is the spirit of a bourgeois
society, an expression of a separation and removal of man from man. Political democracy is Christian since, in it, a man—not man in general, but every man—is considered a sovereign, a supreme being. Moreover, man in his own uncultivated, unsocial manifestation (Erscheinung), in his accidental (!) form of existence; man as he is in life; man, spoiled by the whole organization of our society, is lost, alienated from his own self, devoted to the supremacy of superhuman elements. In short, man is not yet really a generic being (Gattungswesen). Fantastic images, visions, postulates of Christianity, the sovereignty of a man who is alien and different from real man existing in a democracy—these form sensual reality.

It is not difficult to recognize here Feuerbach's idea about "Gattungswesen," about mankind as the last highest instance of man. Marx's "love for that which is remote" and still nonexistent is transformed into a contempt for his "fellow man" who exists as one, spoiled and lost. Christianity is to be blamed for preaching the equality of all individuals and for teaching respect for the man in every man.

Here again, Marx's typical disdain for personality emerges. The real man appears only under the following conditions:

Only when the real individual man withdraws into himself (in sich zurücknimmt), the abstract official citizen and, as an individual man in his individual situation, in his individual work and empirical life, becomes a generic being—only when man recognizes and organizes his propre forces [own strength or power] as social forces and therefore needs no longer isolate them from himself as political forces—only then will man's emancipation be accomplished.

Thus, when man does away with his individuality and human society is transformed either into a Sparta or an anthill or a beehive, only then, man's emancipation will be accomplished. With the same ease with which Marx steps over the problem of individuality, here too he is ready in the name of man's emancipation, i.e., in the name of the destruction of religion, to dissolve this emancipating personality in a dark and dense fog from which the "generic being" is woven, mocking the imagination of Feuerbach and dwindling into the air whenever there is any attempt to sense it.
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In this judgment one feels the effect of the characteristic weakness of atheistic humanism which is unable to maintain simultaneously both personality and the whole and, therefore, constantly runs from one extreme to another: now personality revolts to destroy the whole and denies the form in the name of the rights of the individual (Stirner and Nietzsche); now personality is replaced by the whole, by something like a socialist Sparta, as in Marx. Religious grounds are the only base where the highest manifestation of an individual as a person brings together and unites all people in a super-individual love and common life. Only the union of people through Christ in God (i.e., the Church), a personal and superpersonal union, is capable of overcoming this difficulty and, while affirming individuality, is able to preserve the whole. But the idea of a church or religious community is so far away from the contemporary consciousness.

VIII

MARX AND THE JEWISH QUESTION

We cannot pass in silence Marx's judgments of the Jewish question, in which his harsh straightforwardness and peculiar spiritual blindness are manifested with particular sharpness. With that same ease with which he drowns personal individuality in the "generic being" for the glory of "man's emancipation," he also does away with national self-consciousness and with the people's collective national personality. At the same time, he annihilates the strongest and most insoluble identity in the waves and hurricanes of history—this axis of all world history, his own people.

The Jewish question is for Marx a question of usurer—"yid"; a question which will resolve itself after the abolition of monetary interest. What Marx wrote on the Jewish question makes a most repulsive impression upon me. Nowhere is such an icy, heartless, and therefore blind, one-sided reasoning displayed as nakedly as here. But we had better quote Marx's original opinions:"

"Bulgakov used the word "ZHID" (Anglicized: Yid) [Trans.]

"Marx's article "On the Jewish Question," from Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher, and also the chapter on the Jewish problem from Die Heilige Familie, regretfully is not very satisfactorily translated into Russian: Karl Marx, "K evre-
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The question of the capability of the Jews to emancipate is transformed into the question: What kind of special social element must one overcome in order to eliminate Jewry? For the ability of modern Jews to emancipate rests on the relationship of Jewry to the emancipation of the modern world. This relationship is necessarily determined by the special status of Jews in the modern oppressed world. Let's have a look at the real, secular (weltlichen), non-Sabbath, but everyday Jew.

What is the secular basis of Jewry? Practical demand, self-interest. What is the secular cult of the Jews? Profiteering (Schacher). What is his secular god? Money. Thus, emancipation from profiteering and money (consequently, from the practical, realistic Jewry) would be the self-emancipation of the modern time.

The organization of society, which would destroy the precondition for profiteering, would also make Jewry impossible. Its religious consciousness would disperse as a thin mist in the real,

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vital air of the society... The emancipation of Jewry, in this sense, is an emancipation of mankind from Jewry.

What was the basis of the Jewish religion in itself? Practical need, egoism...

Money is the jealous god of Israel, side-by-side with whom no other god can exist... The god of the Jews desecrated himself; he became a secular god. The real god of the Jew is a promissory note. His god is an illusory promissory note.

That which in the abstract lies in the Judaic religion—contempt for theory, art, history, for man, as an end in himself—all this is the really conscious point of view, the virtue of a money man (Geldmensch).... The chimerical nationality of a Jew is that of a merchant—of a money man, in general.


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IX

MARX, ANTI-SEMITISM AND ATHEISM

What caused this son to lift his hand against his mother, to turn coldly away from her age-old sufferings, to renounce himself spiritually from his own people? The answer is perfectly clear: this was the result of a total hostility towards religion in the name of a consistent atheism. Bruno Bauer made an assertion (with which Marx polemicizes in his article) that the Jewish question is, first of all, a religious one—a question about the relation between Judaism and Christianity. I completely share this opinion because, from the point of view of Christian beliefs, any other concept of the fate of Judaism is impossible. The historical and religious fate of Judaism is connected with the relationship of Judaism to Christianity. We do not intend to go deeper into this question here; but for us, there is no doubt that the religious assertions and denials, in particular, as well as the attraction and repulsion, determine in principle the historical fate of Jewry.

In spite of all the atheism of a considerable part of modern Jewry, in spite of all its materialism (both practical and theoretical), underneath all these historical stratifications, nevertheless, there lies a religious substratum which the religious genius of Vladimir Soloviev was
able to sense and ultimately reveal. But Marx, of course, could not reconcile himself with a religious comprehension of the Jewish question. In order to maintain a consistent anti-religious standpoint, he had to sacrifice his own nationality, to put a curse on it and fall not only into a peculiar, practical, but also a religious anti-semitism.

Thus, we can see that already from the beginning of the 1840's, the fundamental neutrality towards religion which found its own official expression in the programmatic policy of the Social Democratic Party of Germany and of Austria, that “religion is a personal matter” (Privatsache) was totally alien to Marx. Of course, from the standpoint of the party, this is a conventional hypocrisy necessitated by tactical reasons, chiefly by conditions for propaganda in the village. It is sufficient to become superficially acquainted with the literature and general mood of the party of Feuerbach’s and Marx’s disciples to be convinced of the insincerity of this proclamation since, of course, this is a party not only of socialism but also of a militant atheism. Marx never made this a secret. In his famous critical commentary on the draft of the Gotha program, Marx protests against the demand for “freedom of conscience,” calling it bourgeois and liberal, since what was meant here was the freedom of re-

ligious conscience while the labor party, on the contrary, had to emancipate conscience from religious phantoms.

Someone may, however, object that we have become acquainted with the philosophical religious world outlook of Marx in statu nascendi [in the beginning phase], in an epoch when Marx himself was still not a Marxist, since he had not worked out that particular doctrine usually connected with his name in political economics and sociology. Although we do not deny this last fact, we are of the opinion that in the Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher of 1844 Marx appears before us, in a religious-philosophical respect, as definitely formed and crystallized. He did not make any fundamental changes in his philosophical beliefs at some later time. In this sense, the general spiritual theme of his life was already given; its fundamental religious-philosophical theme was fully recognized. The question could have been only about the how, not about the what, for this how was Marxism which, in our eyes, is only a particular case of Feuerbachianism—namely, its special sociological formula.
X

MARX’S FEUERBACHIANISM

The peculiarity of Marxism concerns a completely different area than the philosophical area which we are interested in. Marxism is an elaboration or, if you wish, an enrichment, a further development of Feuerbachianism, but it certainly has not overcome its religious-philosophical side. In Engels’s booklet about Feuerbach, as I have mentioned before in special articles about the latter, he exaggerates this distinction in an extreme way, turning it into a matter of principle. Apparently, Engels wanted to defend Marx’s originality, even in an area in which he was not original at all (i.e., in philosophy), and therefore he displays “economic materialism” as something superior to Feuerbachianism. However, this doctrine points only to the well-known sociological substratum of that historical process which has as its final result the implementation of the Feuerbach-Marxist postulate: “human emancipation,” i.e., the emancipation of humanity from religion by its practical socialization, by its transformation into “Gattungswesen” on the basis of a socialist economy.

In all of Marx’s future works, there is nothing which would abolish or limit the religious-philosophical program developed in the
Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher articles. One must consider these articles, being for Marx, a philosophical zenith—the ultimate stress point of his purely philosophical thought. Later on, while preserving his loyalty to all that he had accepted and adopted in his youth, Marx moves farther and farther away from philosophical problems. He never returns to them, presumably because of his full inner satisfaction which came with an awareness of his own correctness and with the absence of doubts in accepted dogmas. We are left with the paradoxical conclusion that in order to know Marx better and to be able to judge him from the aspect in which we are interested and which is the most essential one, the most resourceful materials can be found just in that period when Marx still was not a Marxist—when his original spiritual cast of mind was not yet hidden behind the details of the special investigations for which he became well known.

Thus, in Marx's consciousness there arose the world-wide historical problem of human self-emancipation. It was necessary to find a suitable means for its solution and such a means was “scientific socialism,” the system of which Marx began to work out in his scientific activity. From this time, the range of his theoretical interests and studies, as much as we can determine from his works and from his own testi-

mony about himself, narrows and concentrates mostly—if not to say, exceptionally—on political economy and current politics. However, the most interesting fact of all is that at this time, Marx's theoretical claims were by no means limited to political economy but were expanded to the universal sphere of the philosophy of history. At this time, he formed the “materialistic interpretation of history” which claims to give a key for understanding all historical events.

No matter what we think about this famous “discovery” of Marx, we are interested here in the way it came about in reality. What was its psychology, its inner motive? We know that during this time Marx was not involved (at least, not to such an extent that would leave perceptible traces) in either history or philosophy." This means that the “discovery” was not a consequence of a new theoretical deepening but a new formula, dogmatically advanced and unquestionably accepted as a kind of artistic intuition. It was not the fruit of scientific research, through which, incidentally, many genuine scientific discoveries are made. It is easy to recognize the combination of elements which formed the materialistic conception of history. On the one hand, there is still the same

"It merits attention that even in his controversial writing against Dühring, which does not represent, of course, a first-class philosophical work, only the economic chapter was written by Marx; all the other, philosophical, chapters belong to Engels.
Feuerbachian doctrine of militant atheism we already know; and, on the other hand, there is the strong impression which Marx obtained from the facts of economic reality due to his studies of political economy and current politics. Consequently, the new doctrine does not grow beyond the limits of the old world outlook, although it does complicate it. In particular, as regards religion, its philosophical treatment becomes even more vulgar, although in essence it does not change. Religion was declared, together with other "forms of consciousness," to be a "superstructure" above the economic "base." In the first volume of *Das Kapital*, we meet the following judgment about religion which, in essence, does not at all take us beyond the articles about Hegel and other works from the 1840's:

For a society of commodity producers, in which the producers in general enter into social relations with one another by treating their products as commodities and values, whereby they reduce their individual private labor to the standard of homogeneous human labor—for such a society, Christianity with its cultus of abstract man (more especially, in its bourgeois developments

as Protestantism, Deism, etc.) is the most fitting form of religion."

This is Feuerbach translated only into the language of political economy and, in particular, that of Marx's economic system. A further general opinion of religion also sounds like an echo of Feuerbach:

The religious reflections of the real world can, in general, disappear only when the conditions of the people's practical everyday lives will offer them completely clear and reasonable attitudes of man towards man and nature. The social process of life, i.e., the materialistic process of production, will throw off the mystic view only when, as the product of freely united people, it comes under their conscious and systematic control."


*Ibid.*, In the first volume of *Das Kapital*, Marx even allows not only the possibility of explaining existing religious presentations taken from life but also their deductive, *a priori* construction from the facts of reality. Here is the quotation:

"Technology exposes the active attitude of man towards nature, the immediate process of production in his life, and at the same time, also his social life attitudes and spiritual ideas emerging from them. In fact, any history of religion which does not take into consideration this materialistic basis lacks a critical foundation. Of course, it is much easier by means of analysis to find the earthly essence of religious ideas
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Taking these judgments as an example, we can see (and that is about all one can find in the Marx of this period) that Marx's religious-philosophical thought did not at all become more developed and enriched by the acceptance of the dogma of economic materialism. As before, it repeats positions adopted from Feuerbach. This serves as an unnecessary confirmation of the fact that economic "materialism" should not be considered a scientific "discovery," born as the result of the objective data of research and remaining beyond the author's will and his general opinions, but only as a new dogma of an old belief. This dogma does not force one to refute or to reexamine anything, leaving everything as it was before. It gives a special formula which, at the same time, adds the highest evaluation to a special subject of new scientific studies and makes political economy the science of all sciences. It is very easy and flattering for the scientific vanity of a political economist to adopt a doctrine which converts his special discipline into such a universal science and which places it higher than phi-

losophy and all other sciences, making it a key to all kinds of "ideologies," i.e., to the whole spiritual life of mankind.

It would have been better had Marx shown this "materialistic" (but from our point of view, plainly fantastic) method in action, instead of only talking about it in a footnote—the most suitable place for such scientific "discoveries"!

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In conclusion, let us touch upon the peculiar imprint which socialism received from Marx. Here we must state that the most profound, formative impact Marx made on the socialist movement in Germany and later in other countries was manifested not so much in his political and economic program as, in general, in the religious-philosophical area. The Social Democratic Party, the political form of the workers’ movement in Germany in general, was not created by Marx (to whom, as a matter of fact, belongs the unsuccessful attempt to deflect the Workers’ Party to the false path of an international organization, which was also urged in the Communist Manifesto), but was created by Lassalle, who founded and finally set a workers’ party in motion. Its subsequent development and destiny were formed by specific conditions of the Prussian-German regime and by subsequent historical events, but by no means under the influence of Marx. It is true that in his own economic works, he defined the ideology of the social-democratic theorists and, through them, the official party credo. However, this theoretical credo is by no means inseparably connected with the actual party
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program, which was not theoretical Marxism but the so-called program-minimum, more or less common to all democratic parties regardless of their attitude towards Marx. The perceptible influence of Marxism reveals itself here only in the agrarian question, where its dogma still binds the feet of the party. Even here, the pressing demands of real life force one ultimately to ignore this dogma, as the Russian Social Democrats had already done. Furthermore, for any economist it must be evident how much Marx's purely economic dogma fails to keep pace with developing life and social sciences. Betraying more and more new flaws and simply growing obsolete, the entire party dogma becomes gradually a purely historical matter. It is put back on the shelf, together with the idols of history and political economy, where Marx's name joins the ranks of such honorable men as Quesnay, Smith, Ricardo, List, Robertus, Lassalle, Owen, and other creators of political economy.

Consequently, no matter how risky such an assertion is, or how much it contradicts the prevailing opinion, we nevertheless believe that there is a high probability that even without Marx, the workers' movement would have molded itself into its present political form. A Social Democratic Workers' Party with approximately the same program and tactics as

MARX'S PECULIAR IMPRINT ON SOCIALISM

the existing one would have been formed. Marx imprinted upon it the ineffaceable mark of his own spirit (and, consequently, of that spirit of which he himself was a tool) in philosophical-religious matters and, of course, through Marx, that of Feuerbach. The general concept of socialism worked out by Marx was, of course, permeated by this spirit and answered the requirements of militant atheism; he merely added to it that note which, as the saying goes, makes the tune, thus converting socialism into a means for battling religion. No matter how clearly the general tasks of socialism were presented, we know that the concrete forms of a socialist movement can differ greatly in their spiritual content and their ethical value. The movement may reflect an inspiringly high, purely religious enthusiasm, since socialism seeks to implement truth, justice, and love in social relations. It can also be overwhelmed by other, less lofty, sentiments such as class hatred, envy, egoism—by the very same bourgeois qualities turned upside down; in short, by feelings which, in the guise of class interests and the class point of view, have such a dominant role in the propagation of Marxism. Indignation towards evil is a lofty, even sacred sentiment, without which no human being or public figure can exist. However, there is a subtle, almost imperceptible, yet at the same
time a very real line which, when crossed, turns this sacred sentiment into a totally profane one. We understand all the ease, naturalness, even inconspicuousness of such a transformation. We admit that the prevalence of either kind of sentiment determines the spiritual physiognomy of both men and movements, despite the fact that our practical age is not accustomed to show interest in the inward side of the soul unless it has direct practical importance. Marx's entire doctrine resulted from his basic religious motive; from his militant atheism; from his economic materialism; from the propagation of class hatred à outrance [to the utmost]; from his negation of universal values and norms compulsory for all, beyond class interest; and finally, from the deep, unbridgeable gulf separating two worlds (i.e., one, the proletariat, invested with a universal mission; and two, the "general reactionary masses" of its oppressors)—all these preachings were able to function in only one direction: i.e., to vulgarize, to degrade the socialist movement, to add to it a prosaic and purely economic character, to extinguish its spirit and to make the sounds of class hatred in the movement more audible than the sounds of love for all mankind. By no means do we attribute the inclusion of this subtlety in the movement solely to Marx's influence. On the contrary, this spiritual temptation was too great for the socialist movement and, of course, it found and continues to find now, as before, many paths (it is the same in Russia, too). Marx was the powerful tool of this temptation and his personal impact affected the socialist movement most of all through his aggravation of the anti-religious theomachistic element which raged within him, as well as in our whole culture, and which does not reveal its final word until it has attained a completely adequate and personal, yet ultimate, embodiment.

With great wisdom and deep understanding of the true character of the anti-religious element, which strives for domination of the socialist movement and for its seizure, Vladimir Soloviev depicts the Antichrist in his tale as a social reformer and a socialist. In socialism, too, as in the whole course of our culture, the struggle between Christ and Antichrist continues...

"Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done!"

Such is our prayer. Such also is the ultimate aim of the universal historical process. This ought to be the highest and the sole criterion for the evaluation of human actions—a criterion which determines them as plus or minus in the universe, which gives them the perfect and final (i.e., religious) factor. Did we use the strengths granted us by God for the creation of the Kingdom of God which we not
KARL MARX AS A RELIGIOUS TYPE

only anticipated but also prepared for as far as possible, even in the capacity of the lowest and most insignificant stonemasons (in this craft, there is nothing insignificant), or did we squander these powers in vain, in shameful emptiness and indolence? Finally, did we use them for work “for our own sakes,” so alien and hostile to the Kingdom of God? In the lives and activities of each of us, there are elements of all three categories in different combinations and nobody dares draw up a common balance and say about his fellow man: He is an enemy of the work of God! The impossibility of a final evaluation, which belongs only to God’s righteous justice, by no means frees us from the responsibility of casting a searching eye at life where evil, as we know, struggles uncompromisingly with the good and, even more perilously, sometimes crops up in the guise of good and differs from it not by any outward signs, but only by inward ones. True to this requirement, though not daring to sum it all up, we have to distinguish in Marx, alongside of God’s work, an entirely different kind of energy, sinister and dangerous. Marx contradicts himself so mysteriously and frightfully that we wish to overcome this duplicity, to soothe ourselves, although this is beyond our power. The socialist activities of Marx (one of the leaders of a movement whose activities were directed

towards the defense of the deprived in a capitalist society and towards reform of the social system on the basis of justice, equality, and freedom) could be accepted as a work, in terms of their objective goals, for the creation of God’s Kingdom. But the fact that Marx wanted to use this movement as a means for destroying that which is sacred in man and as a means for replacing the sacred with his own self (the goal which guided him in all his activities), turns us from a positive religious point of view to a negative evaluation, for we are dealing here with this perilous temptation where good and evil differ not from the outside but from within. Whether plus or minus will predominate, we will know only when our own accounts are balanced. The question must remain open. However, we consider it our moral duty and a matter of conscience to express what we have seen (and which many others still have not seen), after many years of scrutinizing Marx’s spiritual cast of mind. We had to say it, no matter how this will be accepted by those who have an affinity to this dark and obscure side of Marx’s spirit.