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The last stand of dialectic materialism: A study of Sidney Hook's Marxism

Max Eastman

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Eighty-five years after the Marxian theory was propounded, and fifteen years after Lenin and the Bolsheviks, acting upon its principles, overthrew an empire and laid the foundations of a socialist society, a gifted young philosopher arises to tell us for the first time what Marx meant by what he said. The young man is John Dewey's favorite pupil, Sidney Hook, author of a compact little book, *The Metaphysics Of Pragmatism,* in which Dewey's philosophy is extended with original skill. And what Marx meant by what he said, according to Sidney Hook, is substantially identical with Dewey's philosophy, which he is careful to identify as "scientific pragmatism" in contrast to the "mystical pragmatism" of William James.

I think the significance of this event has been missed both by Hook's friends and by those irate priests of the orthodox faith who have of course denounced him as a "petty bourgeois deviation." He is something far more instructive than that, if you consider the exact nature of his exploit.

"It is Marx's meaning that must first be discovered," he begins, "before we ask whether his teachings are true or false. . . . It is an open question whether Marx's opponents have more violently distorted his doctrines than his orthodox friends. But as to whether both have radically misunderstood him there seems to me to be no question at all."*

And by "orthodox friends" Sidney Hook does not mean only the remoter ones, Lafargue, Liebknecht, Rosa Luxembourg, Lenin, Trotsky, Plekhanov, but also Friedrich Engels, Marx's close bosom companion and the co-creator of his doctrine. Engels not only misconstrued the argument of *Das Kapital,* but "in his exposition of Marx's philosophic position" committed

* *The Meaning Of Marxism, The Modern Quarterly,* Vol. 5, No. 4.

a "definite deviation from Marx's views."* And not only Engels, but Marx himself—if we may add our mite to Hook's exciting discovery—failed to bear his own meaning in mind, for he had Engels' principal deviation read to him for his approval and pronounced it good.

It would be easy to smile away the presumption of this young man who alone knows, and knows better than Marx did, what he meant by what he said. But that would be superficial, and as a personal judgment, erroneous. Sidney Hook is trying valiantly, and with a zealous love for the mind of Karl Marx, to defend his philosophy and make it stick fast in an age and nation that is sceptical of super-scientific philosophies. He is making a last stand in defense of dialectic materialism against the attitude and methods of modern science. He alone of all those defending this philosophy is acutely aware of the gulf between its classic formulations and the modern scientific point-of-view. He alone is bold enough to throw overboard as non-Marxian all these classic formulations—especially those of the Russians who took the philosophic side most seriously—and go back to Marx himself, who did not formulate it, and to whom therefore he can, with a more plausible success, ascribe whatever progressive views he finds essential.

Sidney Hook has two faults of mind, or facilities, which help him in this operation. One is a tendency toward pedantry —that disposition to employ large terms for simple concepts and display learning for its own sake, which makes scholarly controversy so often resemble a dog show—if you can imagine dogs barking largely about their own superior points in a competitive display. In these articles on Marxism, for instance, Hook keeps his opponents under a veritable barrage-fire of erudite terminology, describing Marx's philosophy not only as dialectic materialism, which seemed good enough to Marx, but as "naturalistic activism," "social behaviorism," "revolutionary voluntarism," "voluntaristic humanism," "voluntaristic realism," "activistic atheism," "critical historicism," "realistic evolutionary naturalism," "Aristotelianism saturated with temporalism," and other long-tailed horny epithets very disheartening to a man not accustomed to take his vacations in a library. And he frightens

* *Towards The Understanding Of Karl Marx, The Symposium,* July, 1931.

them out of their wits with such explosions of recondite information as that Marx did not mean by the word *wissenschaft* what we mean by science, and that therefore all our "furious discussion as to whether Marxism is a science or not" is entirely off its base.* Were he not merely deploying erudition for purposes of *schrecklichkeit*, Mr. Hook could hardly fail to note that our discussion is as to whether Marx was what *we mean* by scientific or not, and that therefore the explosion of what *he meant* does not knock us flat.

However, it is not Hook's academic *schrecklichkeit*—alarming as it is to a rather fitful scholar like myself—that is most dangerous in his enterprise of reinterpreting Marxism. It is the infrequency with which he adopts a genuine attitude of inquiry. He seems always to be sold to some idea, and using his nimble faculties in order to win out, not only over opponents, but over documents and facts.

I

A CASUISTRY OF OMISSION

It seems to me, for instance, a kind of casuistry not to point out, when you are convicting Engels of a "definite deviation" from Marx's views, that Marx read over and approved the principal work in which this deviation occurred. Hook wants us to believe that Marx invented a new methodology in the social sciences resting upon a "functional" and not a "copy" theory of knowledge, and that Engels, who worked with him all his life long, was unaware of this, and Marx himself so forgetful of his own "distinctive contribution to the history of thought"* that when Engels presented for his approval a formal exposition of their views containing the old copy theory, he made no demur. The tale is improbable, and Hook holds back its most improbable detail.

"Since the views developed here were in far the greater part originated and developed by Marx," says Engels in a preface to the *Anti-Duhring*, "and only in the smallest part by me,

* *The Modern Quarterly*, Vol. 5, No. 4, p. 431.
* *The Symposium*, July, 1931.

it was self-understood between us that this exposition of mine should not be completed without his cognizance. I read the whole manuscript to him before publication, and the tenth chapter of the section about economics . . . was written by Marx."

In discussing Engels' "deviation" in this book, Hook is careful to remind us that Marx wrote a chapter, but omits to mention that Marx heard and approved the rest.

It seems to me also an evidence of the non-inquiring mind that Hook should forget, in discussing this matter, Marx's own avowal of a copy theory of knowledge in that celebrated passage in his second preface to *Capital,* where for once he speaks in his own voice about his own philosophy.

"My dialectic is not only fundamentally different from that of Hegel, but its direct opposite. For Hegel the thought-process which under the name of Idea he converts into an independent subject, is the demiurgos of the real world, which forms only its outer appearance. With me, the other way round, the ideal is nothing else than the material transformed and translated in the human head."

Marx does not, to be sure, use the word copy or "reflection" here, as his American translator does, but he gives no reason to suppose that he does not mean the same thing that Engels does in his corresponding passage:

"We re-conceived the ideas in our heads materialistically, as copies of real things, instead of real things as copies of this or that stage of the Absolute Idea. . . . Thereupon the dialectic of ideas became itself only a conscious reflection of the dialectic movement of the real world, and thereby the Hegelian dialectic was stood on its head, or rather upon its feet, for it was already standing on its head."*

You see how united the two minds were.

II

A TEXT MISREAD

Hook has only one ground for calling this copy theory a "deviation" from Marx. His whole argument rests on those

* *Ludwig Feuerbach* Cf. also *Anti-Dühring,* p. 8.

Theses On Feuerbach where Marx is commenting, in some notes "hastily scribbled down,"* on Feuerbach's so-called "materialism"—his attempt to cast off the idealist philosophy of Hegel and reconcile his religious emotions with a common sense view of the world. Feuerbach managed this, in the main, by reversing Hegel's opinion about the comparative "reality" of ideas and sense-experience. In order to reach the veritable reality, according to Hegel, it is necessary to depart from sense-experience (generally referred to as *Sinnlichkeit*) in the direction of ideas. Feuerbach simply asserted that, on the contrary, sense-experience is the real thing, and ideas are secondary.

"Truth, reality, sensibility," he cried, "are identical . . . . Only sensibility is truth and reality. Where there is no sense, there is no being, no real object."**

This gave him a feeling that he was on solid ground, that he was back in the real world where straight-talking practical men live. But he further observed that men do not have even sense-experience without some flicker of feeling, some interested attention. And by playing up this fact, he managed to drag in "passion" under the concept of sensibility, and arrive at the conclusion—astonishing enough to one not solely concerned to validate the Christian emotion—that "Only that is which is an object of passion." And with a little more obscuring of distinctions, sufficiently important to a realistic mind, he contrived to make this read: "Not to love and not to be are identical." Which is, for emotional purposes, equivalent to the older saying: "God is love."

In this operation it is quite obvious that Feuerbach had to play fast and loose with the distinction between sensation and the objects of sensation. And that, of course, is what he did. In his principal theoretic work, *Grundsätze der Philosophie der Zukunft,* he used the word "sensibility" indifferently in both meanings. It is equally obvious, however, that his metaphysics of love will hold water, if at all, only so long as he ignores the independent existence of the object and sticks to the identification of "sensibility" with the material reality of the world. "Truth," he must maintain, as he does indeed say, "is only the totality

* Engels in the introduction to *Ludwig Feuerbach.*

** *Grundsätze der Philosophie der Zukunft.*

of human life and experience." And he did in the main dwell in this position—at least until long after Marx was through with him, when in his *Essence of Religion* he took that step which he himself described as "no less than a leap . . . from the Gothic cathedral of man's being to the heathen temple of nature."

Even there he failed in his effort to grant independent reality to nature, as may be seen in his statement: "Sensibility means to me the true, not thought and not created, but existing unity of the material and spiritual, and is therefore with me *the same thing as reality.*" For our purposes, therefore, the drift of Feuerbach's "materialism" is contained in the earlier statement: "Truth, reality, sensibility are identical. . . . Only sensibility is truth and reality. Where there is no sense, there is no . . . real object."

Now let us see what comment Marx "hastily scribbled down" after studying this peculiarly half-hearted materialism. Marx accepted without protest the off-hand identification of sense-experience with objective reality, but remarked that Feuerbach had failed to conceive this "truth, reality, sensibility," this "object" as practical, "human-sensible activity"—had failed, indeed, to conceive it "subjectively." Here is all that Marx said on the subject:

"The chief fault of all materialism heretofore (including Feuerbach's) is that the object, reality, sensibility (*Sinnlichkeit*), is conceived only under the form of object or of contemplation; not as human-sensible activity, Praxis, not subjectively. Hence the active side developed in opposition to materialism abstractly from idealism—abstractly, because idealism naturally did not recognize real sensible activity as such. Feuerbach wants objects of sense really distinguished from objects of thought, but he does not conceive of human activity itself as objective activity."

And again:—"Feuerbach, dissatisfied with abstract thought, wants contemplation (sense apprehension); but he does not conceive the sensible as *practical* human-sensible activity."

And still again:—"The highest point reached by contemplative materialism, that is, materialism which does not conceive sensibility as practical activity, is the contemplation of separate individuals and bourgeois society."

On the basis of these statements, Hook asserts that Marx disagreed with Feuerbach's belief that "sensations were knowledge-bearing reports of the objective world." For Marx, he says, sensations were "not knowledge but stimuli to knowledge," enabling men to "react upon and change their conditioning environment." And he asserts that Engels deviated from this wisdom in accepting "the crude formula of Feuerbach according to which sensations are images and copies . . . of the external world."*

I do not know whether to be more astounded, here, at the bad scholarship or the dazzling imagination. The remark about Feurbach shows mere superficial reading, or no reading at all. Any good history of the matter will tell you that Feuerbach never confronted the problem of the relation of mind to the external world (Höffding's *History of Philosophy,* for instance.). But if you read even a few sentences of Feuerbach's own vital writing, you will see that he *could not* confront this problem without sacrificing that anthropological philosophy, or philosophy of human love, to install which in the place of theology was the goal and motive of his whole life's work.

More impressive than this allusion to a non-existent "crude formula of Feuerbach," however, is Sidney Hook's wild flight of imagination in regard to Marx. His love for the idea of Marx's mind seems here to go over into blind infatuation. He seems simply to shut his eyes and will to believe that Marx knew all that man can know. Marx did not say that sensations are not knowledge-bearing reports of the external world, nor did he say that sensations are stimuli to knowledge, nor did he say that they enable us to react on and change the external world. He said, on the contrary, as plainly as words can say it, that sensations and the external world are *the same thing,* and that that thing is to be conceived *subjectively* as *practical human-sensible activity.* A century of culture —a century and a hemisphere—lie between these statements and those that Hook attributes to him. This hastily jotted note of Marx is extremely Hegelian. It reveals a mind not half-way emerged from the idealist philosophy.

Of course, Marx did come farther over into the common

* *The Symposium,* July, 1931.

sense view of the world than these words imply. In their matured reflections, neither Marx nor Engels identified human sensation with the objective reality of things. Neither if you take his word for it, did Feuerbach.

"A human being," said Feuerbach, "is a creature who is distinguished from the sun, moon and stars, from stones, animals and vegetables, in a word, from those beings which he designates by one general name, 'nature'. Consequently, his images or perceptions of the sun, moon and stars and other natural beings, although products of nature, are yet distinct from those objects in nature of which they are the perceptions." And Engels asserts more than once that our "sense-impressions," as well as our "thoughts" and "ideas," are "copies," or "reflections" of an external reality. Indeed, he once expressly contradicts Marx's statement that they should be conceived "subjectively." "Insofar as our sense perceptions are confirmed by experience," he says, "they are not 'subjective' . . . " Lenin is quite right when he asserts that "the doctrine of the independence of the outer world from consciousness is the fundamental proposition of materialism." And he is justified in summing up the mature Marxian view as follows: "Things exist outside of us. Our perceptions and ideas are their images. The verification of these images, the distinction of true and false images, is given by practice."

How shall we reconcile this with Marx's hastily scribbled thesis which identifies "reality" and the "object" with sensibility, or sense perception? In exactly the way Marx would, of course—by understanding the thing in its historic development. Anyone in a state of youthful revolt against Hegel's mystical assertion that the essential reality is idea, and that in order to embrace reality in its purity we must move away from the crude impressions of the senses, from "Sinnlichkeit," is naturally going to shout: "Sinnlichkeit—that is truth, reality. That is the real object. The thought-object is what is unreal." That is what Feuerbach shouted, and that is what Marx repeated after him. That is what the *Theses On Feuerbach* are about. They do not even touch upon the true problem of a materialist philosophy as it appears to one who comes to it from the side of science—the problem of the relation between sense-impressions and our

conceptual knowledge of the external world. To one who comes to it from Hegel, and comes only as far as Marx had in 1845, that problem does not yet exist. He is merely concerned to assert the primary validity of body as against spirit, of sensation as against idea.

In my opinion, the dialectical materialists have never actually confronted the true problem of materialism. The proof that they have not is that they continue to lump "sensations and ideas" together and merely to assert that the mind as a whole, or "consciousness," is a copy or reflection of the external world. If you are going to confront the problem as it arises out of science—as Galileo raised it, in the first place, with his assertion that tastes, odors, sounds, heat, and so forth, are not objectively real—your first step will be to recognize the increasing divergence between sense-impressions and conceptual knowledge. To a scientific mind—a mind really liberated from the idealist philosophy or unscathed by it, and not troubled at all to prove that the world is not a Divine Spirit—that divergence forms the core, or at least the starting-point, of the question what the stuff of the world is. Neither Engels nor Lenin, nor so far as I know, any dialectic materialist, seems adequately aware of this divergence. Engels says that the discovery of a laboratory method of creating "the coloring matter in the roots of madder" proves that our idea (and our sense-perception) of this substance have objective validity. Our idea in the laboratory is that this substance has no color at all, but is a mere collocation of atoms, electrons, and so forth. Our sense-perception, and our idea in poetry and daily life, is that the substance is red. The question is *which* of these mental states has objective validity, and whether they both have, or perhaps, since they differ, neither of them. And that question Engels' experiments could never solve, nor did Engels ever raise the question. Engels expressly says that the whole question between materialism and idealism is as to whether "nature" is first and "spirit" second, or *vice versa*—a question of abandoning religious mythology. A modern sceptic of the concept "matter," like Huxley or Karl Pearson, has no illusions about "spirit" coming first, and is wholly beyond this question of religious mythology.

Lenin is equally unaware of the problem as it stands in

minds untroubled by the fear of religion. He thinks that the whole discussion began with Bishop Berkeley and is exhausted when the Bishop's old God is removed. He too speaks rashly of the color red.

"We ask," he says, "whether or not objective reality is assumed as given us, when we see red. . . . If one holds that it is not given, then he is relapsing . . . into subjectivism and agnosticism. . . . If one holds that it is given, then a certain philosophic doctrine necessarily follows. Such a doctrine has long since been worked out, namely, materialism. Matter is a philosophic category which refers to the objective reality given to man in his sensations, a reality which is copied, photographed, reflected by our sensations, but which exists independently of them."*

On another page—concerned merely to prove the existence of an objective world—he says:—

"If colour is a sensation dependent upon the retina (as natural science compels you to admit) then the light rays falling on the retina produce the sensation of colour. That means that independent of us and our consciousness there exist vibrations of matter, or ether waves of a certain length and certain velocity which, acting upon the retina, produce in us the sensation of one colour or another. That is how natural science regards it. The various sensations of one colour or another are explained by science in terms of various lengths of light waves existing outside of the human retina and independently of man. Such is the view of materialism. . . ."**

Is the color red a "copy," "image," "photograph" of "ether waves of a certain length and a certain velocity"?

Of course it is not. And it is exactly this divergence of conceptual knowledge of the world from sense-perception of it which originally raised the problem Lenin pretends to be attempting to solve, and which continues to raise it long after Bishop Berkeley's God has gone to rest. Lenin is not attempting to solve this problem, nor even to answer the arguments of those who proposed to solve it in the manner of Mach. If he

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* *Materialism And Empirio-Criticism, Collected Works* (English translation) Vol. 13, p. 101-2.

** Ibid., p. 34.

were, he could not possibly make that crude blunder. The simple truth is that Lenin's work, so far as concerns Mach, is no philosophic argument at all, but a tirade against a scientific mind occupied with a genuine problem which Lenin, still lingering in the convalescence from metaphysical idealism, cannot even see. It is fantastic to regard Lenin's book as a contribution to the questions raised by the steadily increasing divergence between science and the life of the senses—unsolved questions all. It is still more fantastic to go back and ascribe to Marx himself in 1845—for the mere reason that he wanted to bring Hegel's emphasis upon action into a world conceived in terms of sense—a complete grasp of the whole problem, and a modern American solution in which the mind is conceived, in a completely post-Darwinian manner, as an instrument of "adjustment" to the "environment." Especially so when, as we have seen, what Marx actually said was that *the environment itself,* the "object," "reality," "the world revealed to the external senses" (I quote Plekhanov's translation of *Sinnlichkeit*) is to be conceived "subjectively" and as "practical human action."

Feuerbach has got far enough, Marx said in effect, to see that sensation or the object of sense is the real thing and the idea or thought-object derived, but he has not yet arrived at the corresponding view that practical action is the real thing and theoretical reasoning derived. Feuerbach has not yet got right down into the real world where those "objects of sense" are in a state of "practical human-sensible action"—and that means action directed toward ends having value—in short, toward the social revolution. Until you put this practical action right out into the real world by calling it the essence of sensation and the sense-object, you will never get beyond the contemplation of separate individuals and bourgeois society, for that is all there is in the *existing* world to contemplate. In other words: If you do not read your purpose to change the world into the world itself, you cannot be at the same time realistic and purposive. You cannot be a "materialist" and strive toward an ideal unless you conceive matter itself as striving toward your ideal.

It was because he had thus succeeded in conceiving the real world and the knowing mind as cooperating in a practical

activity, that Marx could declare the highest wisdom to be " 'the revolutionary', practical-critical action." It is because he had succeeded in fusing the object and the true perception of it into a single act, a process toward a goal, that he was able to identify theoretical and practical knowledge, science of history with program of action toward communism, and find the end of all philosophy, the triumphant swan-song of every supreme effort to understand the world, in the very act of changing it for the better, because *that act of practical change is what the real world is.* That is what Marx meant, and that is what his words say, in the *Theses On Feuerbach.*

For Hegel's metaphysic of Reality or the "absolute being" as Idea, with its conservative political implication, Feuerbach substituted a metaphysic of the absolute being as "passion," with evangelical or "true" socialism as its political implication. And for Feuerbach's metaphysic of passion, Marx substituted a metaphysic of purposive action as the essential Reality, with political implications which led to the Russian revolution. All three systems are metaphysical and literally animistic, each stressing one of the three attributes of mind—thought, feeling and, in the essence of the thing, will—in its account of what is ultimately "real". That is the story told by these *theses.* And they all three, notwithstanding the scientific fruitfulness of Marx's thought, stand wholly aside from the progress of science.

Abandon the improbable assumption that Marx invented fifteen years before the publication of *The Origin Of Species* a view of the mind quite obviously attributable to the "influence of Darwin," and the further improbable assumption that having invented this world-startling idea he never took the trouble to develop it or even to write it down intelligibly, and the further improbable assumption that besides not writing it down, he never explained it to his close intellectual friend, who shared all his labors, and the further improbable assumption that when this friend read over to him an official exposition of their common views containing crass statements to the contrary, he never bothered to offer a correction, and the further improbable assumption that he himself in a preface to his maturest work made a statement to the contrary, and the further improbable assump-

tion that minds of the calibre of Rosa Luxembourg, Franz Mehring, Plekhanov, Lenin, Trotsky, have throughout their lifetimes believed in and developed the Marxian philosophy in total ignorance of what its main point is, and the further improbable assumption that in the year of our Lord, 1929, a pupil of John Dewey suddenly found out that this main point is miraculously identical with the main point in John Dewey's instrumental theory of knowledge—abandon all these fantastic assumptions, and sit down soberly and examine what Marx actually said in his *Theses On Feuerbach,* you find that he said nothing whatever offering the slightest ground for this myth. There is no "deviation" of Engels and there is no supernatural clairvoyance of Marx. There is merely Sidney Hook talking about what people say without paying attention to their actual words.

A trace of the mental process by which Hook built up this myth of the clairvoyance of Karl Marx is to be found in his earliest translation of the first *Thesis on Feuerbach.* Here, by inserting the word *something* and by changing an adverb to an adjective, he made Marx say that reality should be conceived, not "subjectively," but *objectively.* The translation reads as follows:—

"The chief defect of all previous materialism . . . is that the thing—the reality—perceptibility—has been conceived of only under the form of the object or of direct apprehension; not as sensible human activity, Praxis, something not subjective."*

By reading "something not subjective" instead of "not subjectively," Hook made Marx say the exact opposite of what he actually said. A strange way to prove that all other Marxians have "deviated" from the thought of Marx! Hook has now, in his recent book, corrected this error in translation, but he has in no wise altered the inferences which rested upon it. I should like to ask by what process of reasoning Hook managed to attribute to Marx the same philosophy and theory of knowledge, no matter whether he said reality should be conceived "subjectively" or as "something not subjective."

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* *Journal of Philosophy,* Vol. 25, No. 5, p. 119.

III

WHAT MARX BROUGHT FROM HEGEL

Hook's casuistry, of course, has no ignoble motive. A state of Talmudistic infatuation with the mind of Karl Marx is common enough, and also natural enough, in these days when events have given Marx an indubitable place among the biggest men of history. It is nevertheless disastrous to the further progress of revolutionary science—and moreover extremely un-Marxian.

It should be possible, without loss of admiration for Marx's genius, to see the retrograde significance of these *Theses.* After rejecting Hegel with extreme scorn in favor of Feuerbach, who "placed philosophy in the negation of philosophy,"* and then after rejecting Feuerbach, too, and emphatically announcing that he did not want even that much philosophy, but was going straight down into the real world of multiple material facts and write empirical science, Marx felt lost.** He felt lost because of his passionate revolutionary idealism, and because, being a German philosopher, he did not know what to do with it. He did not know where it should find a place to exist, after those Britishers and Frenchmen—and even Feuerbach with certain sentimental compensations—had excluded it from their conception of the objective world. He felt lost, and he went back to Hegel—not in order to get the "active side," the "dynamic principle,"*** not in order to convince himself that the world is moving and changing. Everybody knew that; the French rationalists were literally drunk with the idea of progress; Comte had already founded sociology as an evolutionary science. He went back to Hegel to get some method of reading the change *he* wanted, and *his own* action—practical action in a revolutionary direction—into the very stuff of this

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* *The Essence Of Christianity.*

** I should perhaps say, "If he *had* succeeded in rejecting them, he *would have* felt lost," for I am not pretending to guess the inner history of his mind.

*** Phrase used by Franz Mehring in his life of Marx.

new material world that he found so real and so exciting.

And of course the method was strictly Hegelian. I do not know how Sidney Hook, who appears to be on terms of intimate understanding with Hegel, can fail to realize how natural it was, and how inevitable, that Marx—a fervent Hegelian up to the age of twenty-five—should, in jotting down some thoughts upon Feuerbach, follow him in his casual identification of "sensibility" or the act of sense-perception with the reality of the material world. For in Hegel's view—if I may push my more stubborn understanding this far—that identification was of the essence of the tale. The world was not material, but mental, and the very process of the arising of sense-perception was to be explained as a gradual coming back to itself of this mentalness after its "alienation" in matter. Hegel says in so many words, speaking of the "process of perceiving" and the "object perceived":—"The object is in its essential nature the same as the process."* And he shows how sophistical and inadequate this process is when it is relied on to give us knowledge of the pure and essential entities, which are the "objects of thought." Upon this very ground he derides the pretensions of "sound common sense," which he identifies with perceptual understanding. What could be more natural and absolutely inevitable than that Marx and Feuerbach, returning to "sound common sense" after their alienation in the philosophy of Hegel, should, off-hand, identify the real material objects in a common-sense world with "sensibility," or the process by which minds come in touch with them?

Let us quote once more that revealing conversation:—

"Truth, reality, sensibility," said Feuerbach, "are identical. . . . Only sensibility is truth and reality. Where there is no sense, there is no being, no real object."

Quite true, replied Marx, but this "object, reality, sensibility" must be "conceived subjectively." It must be conceived, just as Hegel used to conceive the ideal object, as "practical activity," as action toward something higher. Else what is to become of the revolution?

Is anything in mental history more clear?

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* *Phänomenologie des Geistes, B. II.*

"A being without passion is a being without being," said Feuerbach.

On the contrary, said Marx, "reality" must be "conceived as . . . action."

Hook tells us that Marx, "as a close student of Hegel's *Phänomenologie des Geistes* . . . considered the chief contribution of German classical philosophy as opposed to metaphysical materialism to be its emphasis on the activity of mind."* He forgets that this so active mind was not only mind, but also the substance of the world, and its activity on a world scale was congenial to the philosopher. In that *congenial activity of the world conceived as mind* lay the essence of Hegel's philosophy, approached from the standpoint of his own interest, and of our interest, in it—approached from the standpoint of a scientific or merely sensible understanding of what such philosophies are. And it was that congenial activity of the world—not our modern sense of the activity of mind *in* and *upon* the world—that Marx brought from Hegel and embedded in those celebrated *Theses On Feuerbach,* where mind and the world together are nothing but practical action in a revolutionary direction. The *Theses* are justly celebrated. They ought to be singled out by all historians of the nineteenth century and marked with a great signpost reading:

DETOUR!

At this point the science of social revolution, given a fair start by the French enlightenment, makes a one hundred year detour through German philosophy. It will be back in 1945, enriched by a vast knowledge and a true method of procedure and successful experiments on a large scale, at a more developed scientific point-of-view.

IV

AN OMISSION, A SUBSTITUTION AND A FAIRY TALE

That a man of Marx's hard and penetrating mind should rest content with such a poor stab at a philosophy as this—a

* *The Symposium,* July, 1931.

realism in which the real object is conceived subjectively, a materialism in which matter fulfills the essential function of spirit—can be understood only when you remember that Marx never dwelt on or developed his philosophy at all. And that can be understood only when you realize that his central wish and purpose at the moment of writing those fragments which contain it, was to get rid of "philosophy" altogether. This identification—"hastily scribbled down"—of sensation with material reality, and the two of them with practical human action, enabled him to combine his revolutionary will with his conception of the world, and that once accomplished, he fled from the scene where he had "planted the genial seed of the new philosophy," and never took a stroll in that direction again throughout his life.*

These facts also, however, are forgotten, or unconsciously veiled over, by Sidney Hook. He tells us that *Die Deutsche Ideologie,* a manuscript completed in the same year in which Marx scribbled down those theses, is "the most important single source of the study of Marx's philosophy."** And yet he leaves his readers ignorant of the fact that this untranslated and rather inaccessible manuscript contains a wholesale repudiation of philosophy, a repudiation of the very idea that there can be such a thing as philosophy, repeated time and again. I could quote a solid page of such statements as the following:

> "We recognize only one single science, the science of history. You can view it from two sides, and divide it into the history of nature and the history of people . . . "
>
> " . . . When you begin to describe reality, then an independent philosophy loses its existence-medium. In its place may be found, at the most, a summary of the general results abstracted from an investigation of the historical development of man . . . . "
>
> "We fully realize that Feuerbach . . . went as far as a theoriser could go without simply ceasing to be a theoriser and a philosopher. . . . "
>
> "Feuerbach's mistake lies in the fact that he could not approach the world of sensation without the eyes—which is to say, the eyeglasses—of the philosopher. . . . "
>
> "And by the way, with this view of things, which takes them

* Engels states this in *Ludwig Feuerbach.*

** *Journal of Philosophy,* Vol. 25, No. 5, p. 117.

as they are in reality, all deep-thinking philosophical problems reduce themselves to some simple question of empirical fact. . . . "

"For a practical materialist, that is for a communist, the thing is to revolutionise the existing world—that is, practically turn against things as he finds them, and change them."

This book was delivered to the publisher in 1845-1846, and in 1845 Marx penned those famous *Theses On Feuerbach,* concluding with this aphorism:

"Philosophers have interpreted the world in various ways; the thing is to change it."

It is clear when the two texts are juxtaposed that Marx's essential wish at that time, an essential part of his meaning, therefore, in the apothegm, was: *Quit philosophizing and use your brains in a scientific effort to change the world.* But because he had not really made the escape from Hegelian animism —because he did not "mean what we do" by the word *scientific* —the apothegm remains equivocal. It is a good symbol of his equivocal position, the position of a man who plants the seed of a new philosophy on the very day he sets out to root up all philosophy.

Instead of presenting this puzzling state of affairs as it was, Hook keeps under the table Marx's explicit but untranslated repudiation of philosophy, and blandly reports that Marx, in a perfectly Dewey-like manner, declared that philosophy was henceforth to be "an instrument in changing the world,"* "an instrument of social liberation."**

Besides thus shuffling away Marx's actual feelings about philosophy at the time when he wrote this thesis and throughout his life thereafter, Hook keeps shuffling into view, *without a date,* previous statements in praise of philosophy—youthful statements going way back to the period when Marx was still a Hegelian. "Of philosophy in general," Hook admonishes us, who are merely trying to carry out Marx's wish to make the revolutionary movement scientific, "it is well to remember Marx's own caution that 'the fact that several individuals cannot stomach modern philosophy and die of philosophical indigestion proves no more against philosophy than the fact that here and

* *Journal of Philosophy,* Vol. 25, No. 5, p. 123.

** *From Hegel To Marx, The Modern Quarterly,* Vol. 6, No. 1, p. 53.

there a boiler explodes and blows several passengers into space proves against mechanics'." It is needless to say that we are not overwhelmed by this quotation when we remember that it was published in the summer of 1842—four years before Marx's recovery from Hegel had born its fruit in that wholesale denunciation of philosophy which lies at the basis of, and can alone explain, his intellectual life.*

Besides keeping out of sight this unqualified denunciation of philosophy—characteristic not only of Marx, but of the whole age in which he developed, the age of Comte, Feuerbach, Hamilton and Mill, Sidney Hook invents a veritable fairy-tale to account for a well known later statement of Engels to the same effect.

"As soon," said Engels, "as each special science clarifies its position in relation to the totality of things and our knowledge, then any special science of this totality becomes superfluous. The only discipline that survives of the whole of traditional philosophy is the science of thinking and its laws—formal logic and dialectic. Everything else is absorbed in the positive sciences of nature and history."

To get this out of his way, Hook invents the story that Engels is here speaking of a "future day" when social liberation shall have been accomplished, and in a classless society "all philosophy is transformed into science." "Speaking of that future day, Engels writes . . . " he says, and then quotes the above passage. A sheer act of fancy! It is clear in Engels' own words that he is not talking about any future day. He is simply repeating the old opinion expressed *eight times* in *Die Deutsche Ideologie*—"most important source for the study of Marx's philosophy"—that from the standpoint adopted by Marx and Engels philosophy is superfluous. Repeating the same thing in his *Ludwig Feuerbach,* Engels says explicitly that "the Marxian understanding of history . . . makes an end of philosophy in the realm of history, just as the dialect understanding

* Even Riazanov, the Russian who exhumed and deciphered *Die Deutsche Ideologie,* a sufficiently orthodox exponent of the Soviet state philosophy, is constrained to remark that this early repudiation of philosophy is the one important revelation contained in it.

of nature renders every philosophy of nature useless or impossible."

It is obvious, however, from Hook's own definition of philosophy, as he puts it in the mouth of Marx, that no "future day," no "social liberation" would ever make it superfluous. Philosophy according to Marx, he tells us, is "a sociology of values, investigating the social roots and conditions of what human beings desire . . . a criticism of standpoints and methods in the light of conditions under which they emerge and the purposes which they serve. . . . It is . . . passion or will *conscious* of itself."*

Are we to have no sociology in the classless society—or no values? Is will never again to be conscious of itself?

Hook contradicts himself continually because he is trying to be a child of two fathers. Philosophy here is "an instrument of social liberation" because it is particularized thought, thought brought specifically to bear on social and moral problems—and that is straight from Dewey. Elsewhere—remembering Marx—it is "philosophy as generalized thought" that "becomes an instrument in changing the world."**

V

MATERIALISM THROWN OVERBOARD

After throwing out of dialectic materialism the copy theory of knowledge and the belief that philosophy is superfluous, Hook proceeds to heave over practically everything else except the name—and that, as we saw, he has forty ways of amending. Indeed, the next thing to go by the board carries a good half of the name with it—namely, materialism. The word has meant throughout history a doctrine of the fundamental stuff the world is made of. To this doctrine Marx adhered without reservation before he went back to Hegel for the dialectic. In going back, he criticised materialism for neglecting the "active side," and

* *The Modern Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 1, p. 53.

** *Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 25, No. 5, p. 123.

said that this was what he went back to the idealists to get. He never criticised materialism in any other particular. If Hook thinks Marx did not believe that matter is the essential stuff the world is made of, surely the burden is on him to show why Marx called his doctrine materialism. He simply announces, however, that "dialectic materialism—at least in its founders—does not believe in a monism of stuff, but emphasizes a monism of law."* A stammer here in the shift from *believe* to *emphasize!* But nevertheless Hook is bold enough to throw the materialism out of dialectic materialism by mere arbitrary fiat—and he has thrown out Lenin and Plekhanov, to mention only two of the most distinguished passengers, with it. There was no other way to save the ship. "It follows from this," he adds, "that in no sense whatever can the progress of science invalidate the metaphysical position of materialism."

The fact is that Marx believed, as Lenin did, that "the world is an ordered movement of matter," but he read into this matter the essential thing that Hegel found in the world as an ordered movement of mind—namely, dialectic procedure in a progressive direction. And all the intricate problems that such a peculiar philosophy gives rise to, he solved by not writing the philosophy. Engels solved them in the same way; he did not write the philosophy, but merely replied to Herr Dühring's attack on it. Plekhanov solved them in the same way; he merely replied to Mikhailovsky and the Narodniks. Lenin solved them in the same way; he merely replied to Bogdanov and Bazarov. Hook is solving them in the same way; he is merely replying to Engels and Plekhanov and Lenin. Why will somebody not write this philosophy of dialectic materialism and tell us in systematic language what it is? Because if that happened, the element of naive animism— the attribution of human valuation and logical purposive procedure to a "material" world—would come clear. It would come clear in the mind of the person writing it, and he would realize that he is abandoning empirical science, which is the thing that Marx desired and that all loyal revolutionary Marxists desire, to cling to and keep up with.

Other animistic philosophies have devoutly wished to escape from scientific effort and get consolation, and have brought forth

* Ibid, p. 121.

their tricky *a priori* conception as a quite candid lure to the "will to believe." Dialectic materialism, wishing to be unconsoled and practical-scientific *but not knowing how,* hides instinctively its animistic element, and the best way to hide it in a scientific world is not to write it clearly down.

Nevertheless, it was clearly and naively written down twice. Once when Engels said that, "The celestial bodies, like the formations of the organisms by which they are under favorable conditions inhabited, arise and perish and the courses that they run . . . take on eternally *more magnificent* dimensions"; and once when Marx spoke of "the *higher* life-form toward which the existing society *strives irresistibly* by its own economic development" and declared on that basis that the working class "has no ideal to realize, it has only to set free the elements of the new society."*

VI

HISTORIC DETERMINISM ABANDONED

The next thing to go by the board in Sidney Hook's effort to keep dialectic materialism afloat in the waters of science is *historic determinism.* Again we may ask why Marx and Engels, if they did not believe in a thing, adopted the name by which it is universally known. We ask in vain. The thing must go overboard because it belongs to Hegel's anthropomorphic metaphysics and will not square with the modern concrete study of historic events or the modern science of mind. Hook himself concedes in one of his rare moments of candid inquiry that the Marxian conception of "all history" contains an anthropomorphic element, and that Marx confuses *condition with cause.*** He refuses to see the reason for this—namely, that Marx has read his purpose into "all history" just as Hegel did, and if he is to cling to his purpose, then he *must* declare its fulfillment

* Engels: *Herrn Eugen Dührings Umwälzung der Wissenschaft, (Anti-Dühring)* Leipzig, 1878, Einleitung p. 9. Marx: *The Civil War In France,* III.

** *Journal of Philosophy,* Vol. 25, No. 6, p. 150.

"historically necessary." There is no other way to be firm. Determinism in this philosophy is nothing but determination in the scientific effort Marx desired to make. The confusion of *condition* with *cause* is a mere corollary to the confusion of *possible* with *necessary,* which is the essence of the anthropomorphic view. All the argument about whether Marx believed in free-will or necessity, fatalism or determinism, rationalism or voluntarism, efficacy of thought or that thought is an epiphenomenon—all is mere chatter in the dark, never to cease until the simple fact is recognized that Marx was a man of purpose, and having read his purpose into history, he had to make history carry it through.

Marx believed in the efficacy of human action, but he also believed in enough determinism to bring his plan for the organization of the working class revolution, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the resulting communist society, into his account of the necessary course of the historic process. Trotsky believes in it to the same extent and for the same reason, as is shown in his recent assertion that "The victory of the Left Opposition is historically guaranteed." Lenin believed in it to the same extent and for the same reason, as may be seen in this earliest declaration of his belief:

"The idea of historic necessity does not in the least undermine the role of personalities in history; history is all composed of the activities of persons, who are indubitable agents. The real question arising in an appraisal of the social activities of persons is: In what conditions are these actions guaranteed success? Where is the guarantee that this action will not remain a solitary deed drowned in a sea of contrary activities?"*

All Lenin needed to believe in order that his own personality should function as it did, was that success is *possible.* He did not need to believe that it is *guaranteed.* Such guarantees belong to religion and not experimental science. But Lenin, like Marx, had an immature conception of what it is to be scientific, and for that reason only—for he was the last man in the world to embark on a "quest for certainty"—he formulated his attitude at reflective moments in this language of the historic or dialectic *necessity* of the communist regime.

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* *What Are The Friends Of The People?* (1895).

That Marx formulated his attitude in the same way is notorious. It is needless to pile up quotations. *The Communist Manifesto* asserts that the fall of the bourgeoisie and the victory of the proletariat are "equally inevitable." In 1882, introducing the first Russian Edition, Marx and Engels described the Manifesto itself as "a proclamation wherein the inevitable disappearance of present-day bourgeois property relations was heralded." Marx declared in his celebrated letter to Weidemeyer that his whole original contribution had been to prove that the class struggle "leads necessarily to the dictatorship of the proletariat" and that to the society of the free and equal.

In the face of these and many other explicit statements, and with the startling fact that Marx believed in the "iron necessity of socialism"* re-echoing throughout all revolutionary literature since *The Communist Manifesto,* Hook puts on a scholarly face and calmly informs us that, although "Marx soft-pedals on some occasions the voluntaristic aspect of his nascent instrumentalism" and "despite some unhappy phrases of Engels," neither he nor Marx believed in a "univocal causal determination of matter or things in history"** (which is indeed true), and that his followers have translated his "reliance on 'processes at work in the order of things' " into the "mythical language of the 'inevitability' of the development from capitalism to socialism."***

"Assuming a definite direction and rate in the productive relations of the social order and the relative constancy of certain human behavior patterns, Marx predicted that the social revolution would take place. Not inevitably, of course. . . . "****

To one acquainted with Marx the statement is so bold and bare-faced as to evoke a kind of stupified admiration, and when one reads in an article by the same author, published only twelve months before: "Against this it might be urged that Marx believed socialism to be inevitable in the nature of *things,* and that it would realize itself by some sort of dialectic neces-

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* A chapter title from a Marxist anthology popular in Soviet Russia.

** *Journal of Philosophy,* Vol. 25, No. 5, pp. 123-124.

*** *The Symposium,* July, 1931.

**** *The Modern Quarterly,* Vol. 5, No. 4, p. 432.

sity"*—one is appalled by the rapidity of the man's invention.

It might indeed be so urged! And it might be further urged that when a man deems inevitable the success of the effort to which he is devoting every moment of his working life on this planet from young manhood to the grave, this belief is not accidental or episodic, not a matter of *unhappy phrasing* or the *soft-pedalling* of a more honest belief to the contrary. What a man believes about a thing like that is the substance and the structure of his mind.

"When Marx speaks of the natural laws of capitalist production," Hook informs us, "he is speaking of *tendencies* . . . which 'work with iron necessity toward inevitable results'. But anyone who has read carefully sees that this is qualified by an *if* or *unless*: *if* left to themselves; *unless* acted on by other forces."** What a pitiable Karl Marx, what a poor fitful hysteric he was after all—a "queer German"*** indeed—bursting out about *inevitable result* and *the iron necessity of a natural law* when he had no law in mind at all, but was just indicating some tendencies that might or might not arrive at the result he so passionately desired!

"Anyone who has read carefully . . . " says Sidney Hook. But Marx himself found one careful reader of his book, *Capital,* so careful that he selected him for a tribute in the second edition, and here is what Marx's own careful reader says in the new preface where Marx immortalized him:

"Marx only troubles himself about one thing: to show, by rigid scientific investigation, the necessity of successive determinate orders of social conditions, and to establish, as impartially as possible, the facts that serve him for fundamental starting-points. For this it is quite enough, if he proves, at the same time, both the necessity of the present order of things, and the necessity of another order into which the first must inevitably pass over; and this all the same, whether men believe or do not believe it, whether they are conscious or unconscious of it. Marx treats the social movement as a process of natural history, governed by laws not only independent of human will, conscious-

* *The Modern Quarterly,* Vol. 4, No. 4, p. 391.

** *The Modern Quarterly,* Vol. 4, No. 4, p. 392.

*** Ibid, p. 388.

ness and intelligence, but rather, on the contrary, determining that will, consciousness and intelligence."

Upon this and further statements from a reader chosen by himself for commendation, Marx merely remarks: "What else is he describing but the dialectic method?"

Does it not begin to be clear that Hook is not inquiring into and expounding Marx's philosophy, but trying to *hold it up* among modern scientific ideas and assumptions? Marx did not have the instrumental conception of knowledge invented by Dewey, nor did anybody, nor could anybody, have had it before Darwin. What service is performed, and toward what end, by loading all this additional cant and confusion into a philosophy that Marx never gave any steady thought to, and never wanted to produce in the first place? One can pardon a great man-of-action like Trotsky, whose own iron determination has been so long projected into the laws of history that he mistakenly fears to displace it lest it be lost, whose knowledge and passion are so fused together as to be perhaps at his age inseparable. But we see none of this iron determination or passion in Sidney Hook. He wants two spiritual fathers where one is too many. He wants above all things to be a philosopher. For philosophy's sake—not for the revolution, not for the truth—he is bent on reinterpreting dialectic materialism at any cost, to prevent Marx's thought from becoming scientific.

VII

DAS KAPITAL BECOMES AN "ILLUSTRATION"

That Hook has no deeper aim than to preserve the philosophic attitude as such, is shown by his next major operation, which is to throw out all of Marx's scientific conclusions as mere "illustrations of a method." He concedes to those who have attacked Marx's doctrines as contradictory that "if they are considered in independence of the method they illustrate and the historical context in which they arose, they do appear con-

tradictory."* And he indicts Engels for another "deviation" in completing the second and third volumes of *Capital* after Marx's death as though the book were a scientific theory like any other, "a hypothetical-deductive system of the type exemplified by scientific theories in general, instead of being an illustration of a method of revolutionary criticism."

"The method, to be sure," he adds, "is to be checked up in the light of his conclusions but the latter are derivative, not central. . . . They are tentative and contingent."

In justice to Mr. Hook it must be explained here that the doctrine of class struggle is not, according to him, an "illustration," like Marx's other conclusions, but is bound up in the method itself. Indeed, it is the essential meaning and purpose of this exaltation of method over results to protect the class attitude in economics and declare it right. The method is critical, and as Hook says: "Criticism demands a standpoint, a position. Marx's standpoint was the standpoint of the class-conscious proletariat of Western Europe. His position implied that a system of economics at basis always is a class economics. An implicit value judgment becomes one of the abscissæ in terms of which its analytic equations are written."

A common sense mind cannot but ask here: If both kinds of economics are class economics, how do you know which one is right? And that is just where the dialectic philosophy steps in and saves you. Marx's economics is right because it is class-struggle-towards-communism economics and Marx has already read into the dialectic motion of the universe and of "all history" this very plan of procedure. As Sidney Hook says in his *Metaphysics Of Pragmatism,* "A 'pure' method which does not involve reference to a theory of existence is devoid of meaning." Marx's method is not a pure method but a dialectic method, and it is valid only in so far as existence itself, or at least social existence, is dialectic—is engaged, that is, in a procedure by struggle and its resolution, "from the lower to the higher," or in other words, in the direction in which the Marxian wishes to go. In throwing out Marx's conclusions, therefore, in the name of his method—although he rashly betrays himself with that

* The quotations in this section are all from the article in *The Symposium,* July, 1931.

word "illustration"—Sidney Hook is only insisting that Marxism abandon the competition with science and rest its case absolutely upon its essence as a philosophy, a class-biased theory of existence.

His loading off upon poor Engels the sin of "deviating" from this position is, however, entirely fantastic. Nobody engaged either in scientific research or in practical effort ever remained loyal to an animistic philosophy, or ever could. It is not class economics, for example, to say that goods are exchanged; it is a fact. It is a fact that money passes from hand to hand. Both these facts are inherent parts of the theory of *Das Kapital.* If these parts are objective truth verifiable by all, where do the parts begin which are merely revolutionary criticism, valid only for "the proletariat of Western Europe"? The mere fact that this question can be asked and an answer imagined, shows the folly of pretending that serious research can be engaged in without the assumption of a truth which, whether interesting or not, is at least *valid* for everybody.

That practical effort requires such an assumption, and requires such truth, is still more obvious. "The purpose of Marx's intellectual activity," says Sidney Hook, "was the overthrow of the existing order." Well, you couldn't overthrow a fence-post, could you?—could you turn over a fried egg neatly and properly?—without knowing something, and something not "tentative and contingent," either, but central and sure and reliable, something verified in the manner of the "hypothetical-deductive system," something without value judgments implicit in its abscissæ, if I may pretend to understand what that means, —something, in short, that the man who was trying to stop you would want to know too? It is the need to eliminate the alternative, to make sure of the victory of your effort—a need dictated, remember, by the nature of animistic thinking, not by the nature of revolutionary men—that gives rise to this whole prodigious effort to keep up the bluff that Marxian economics in so far as it is any good is not straight science.

Engels could no more keep up the bluff than Marx could, and Engels had to finish the book—that is the extent of his deviation. And Sidney Hook can no more keep it up than Engels could. In the very article in which he informs us that all Marx's

doctrines are mere illustrations of a method, and not to be taken as hypothetical-deductive conclusions like science in general, he gets warmed up to Marx's hypothetical-deductive conclusion that "the fundamental character of the culture complex is determined by the mode of economic production prevalent at any time," and exclaims: "All of Marx's work was in the nature of evidence for this hypothesis. . . . "

What shall we say of a man who informs us at the beginning of an essay that all of Marx's doctrines are illustrative and not hypothetical-deductive, and not valid except for the "historic context" in which they arose—and in the conclusion of the same essay informs us that "all of Marx's work was in the nature of evidence" for a *hypothesis* as to what is the determining factor *in all historic contexts?* Can we say a milder thing than that he is not interested in clarifying the revolutionary theory or getting forward with the work, but is trying to preserve the mere emptied attitude of the philosopher at any cost?

Had he a more practical purpose, he would never have chosen that word "illustration." For while it is true, from the strict standpoint of the dialectic philosophy, that all Marx's conclusions are but *temporary applications* of his method, which alone is central and *a priori* compelling, it comes near to being a travesty of his mind to call them "illustrations."

VIII

MATERIAL CEASES TO BE DIALECTIC

You might think that having dumped everything else out of dialectic materialism but the method, Hook's operation would be complete. Surely the method will be left standing as the great Marxians expounded it. But no! Here too there has been a crass deviation. Engels thought the dialectic movement was to be found in material things, and that the method was therefore applicable in physics and chemistry and biology. He spent the better part of eight years, in fact, applying it to the natural sciences, or rather translating their findings into the terms of the dialectic. Lenin insisted that this world's "ordered

movement of matter in motion" is dialectic through and through, and held this to be the unconscious assumption of the "immense majority of natural scientists." And all Russian men of science desirous to stand in with the government have acceded to this proposition, and gone through some sort of verbal exercises in evidence of their political loyalty and orthodox faith. Hook, however, is not so naive in these matters as Engels and Lenin, and he is not constrained by the Soviet government, and therefore he is perfectly aware that if you bothered a modern hard-working chemist or biologist or physicist with intrusions of this so-called "method of thinking," he would kick you out of his laboratory as a nuisance.

Hook is also reckless enough to remember that Hegel originally invented this idea of dialectic logic to explain certain proceedings in which mind is involved—to explain, in fact, a world fundamentally composed of mind and behaving as a mind behaves. He sees how crudely anthropomorphic it really was to call a material world dialectic. Hegel's language, he recklessly reminds us, "reveals a continual implicit reference to consciousness and the activity of consciousness."* Moreover, it is of the essence of the dialectic philosophy—and this even Hook will not forego—that it belongs to the working class, and is in fact a method of criticism from the standpoint of the "class conscious proletariat of Western Europe." And Western Europe is too sophisticated to believe there is a bourgeois and a proletarian method in physics or chemistry. "To read the class struggle back into nature," says Hook, "is to imply that all nature is conscious—a proposition which only an Hegelian idealist can accept."**

For these good and sufficient reasons, having for similar reasons thrown out of dialectic materialism practically everything there was in it but the method, Hook proceeds to throw out the method *in so far as it applies to the material world.* What we have to do, he tells us, is to dissociate this dialectic method from "illegitimate attempts to extend it to natural phenomena in which human consciousness does not enter,"***

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* *The Modern Quarterly,* Vol. 6, No. 3, p. 63.

** Ibid, p. 67.

*** *The Symposium,* July, 1931.

to see, in short, that its "proper fields" are psychology and sociology. And moreover, "since the social is primary to the individual psyche, the dialectic relation is primarily a social relation."* The "active totality" dealt with by the Marxian dialectic differs from Hegel's "absolute whole perpetually renewing itself" in that "the Marxian totality is social"** "Marx himself never spoke of the dialectics of physical nature . . . "*** He was, on the other hand, "the first to maintain the autonomy of social laws, holding that they were not reducible to laws of physics or biology."****

Poor Engels, then, deviated again and quite monstrously when he defined the dialectic in his *Anti-Dühring* as "nothing more than the science of the universal laws of motion and evolution in nature, human society and thought,"***** and illustrated it with the growth of barley seeds. And Marx too must have deviated, or at least dropped off to sleep, when Engels read this passage over to him, and must have waked up just in time to say: "Oh, yes, that's quite all right! Great stuff! Go ahead!" And moreover they must have both been asleep or drunkenly joking when they named their philosophy dialectic materialism, for dialectic materialism is now, according to Sidney Hook, a philosophy which asserts that the world is not uniformly material, and wherever it is material it is not dialectic!

And here too, as everywhere, Hook gets into contradiction not only with historic possibilities, but with himself. He has roundly declared that dialectic materialism does not believe in a "monism of stuff" but a "monism of law," and has accused Engels of "deviating" in presenting it as "a monistic system instead of a unified method." He forgets all about that now, and roundly declares that Marx believes in a pluralism of law, and he accuses Engels of "deviating" because he presented Marxism as a "unified method"—making its dialectic apply, that is, throughout nature as well as society and the mind of man.

He threw over the monism of stuff in favor of the monism

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* *The Modern Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 3, p. 64.

** Ibid, p. 59.

*** Ibid, p. 66.

**** *The Modern Quarterly*, Vol. 5, No. 4, p. 431.

***** *Anti-Dühring*, p. 144.

of law, as we noted, in order to make dialectic materialism safe against science. He now throws over the monism of law for the same reason—because the "distinctive character of the dialectic in Marx's theory of history lies in *class-consciousness and action* which breaks through polar oppositions . . . "* and proceeds by sudden leaps and jumps. Natural scientists do not find such a mode of action dominant in the physical world; therefore the dialectic must be withdrawn from that world. "There is no need to show that there are sudden leaps and jumps in *nature* to justify revolution in *society,*" he says—conceding, by the way, that the real use of the dialectic in social science is to "justify revolution," not to achieve it—but at least still heroically trying to save the face of this "method of thinking" when confronted by the facts and methods of modern science.

NOTE

Since I wrote the above passage, Sidney Hook has been attacked by the official communists for his assertion that the dialectic does not apply to physical nature, and has denied that he ever made such an assertion.**

"If, by dialectic," he says, "we mean the laws of motion, polarity and the transformation of quantity into quality—then dialectic is universal, applies to nature as well as to man—and I have never denied it. But the distinctively *Marxian* conception of dialectic is historical and social."

The communists accuse him here of "a sudden lapse of memory, to put the matter mildly," and they call attention to his demand in the article in *The Symposium* that the dialectic be "disassociated from the illegitimate attempts to extend it to natural phenomena in which human consciousness does not enter."

They might also have quoted his article, *From Hegel to Marx*:***

"In Hegel the dialectical process is expressed not only in

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* *The Modern Quarterly,* Vol. 6, No. 3, p. 67.

** *The Communist,* Vol. 12, Nos. 1, 2 & 3.

*** *The Modern Quarterly,* Vol. 6, No. 3, p. 63ff.

the realm of objective spirit but in the realm of nature as well. . . . Now there can be no question but that Hegel was justified in terms of his own system in extending the dialectic to nature. Does he not tell us that 'self-consciousness and existence' are absolutely one and the same? . . . Only in virtue of the activity of consciousness can Hegel write a *Natur-philosophie* in which every aspect of the physical world is represented as seeking dialectically to transcend and fulfill itself in the continuous whole whose systematic interconnection is both objective meaning and mind. Hegel's own language reveals a continual implicit reference to consciousness and the activity of consciousness."

They might also quote from his review of my book, *Marx And Lenin*:*

"Certain instances of cumulative development and growth fall readily into the dialectic pattern, but it certainly cannot be universally applied."

When one has made these definite statements and been attacked for them, it is certainly not adequate to reply: "If, by dialectic, we mean the laws of motion, etc., then dialectic applies to nature and I have never denied it." That is an equivocal answer. Nevertheless, I find, upon investigation, that it is a true answer. The equivocation has been in Hook's statements about dialectic and nature all along. Here is what he says about it in that article, *From Hegel To Marx*:

"There are two senses in which one may speak of a natural dialectic. The first is quite commonplace. Change is observable in all fields of thought and activity, and sudden qualitative change is bound up with gradual quantitative change: The second sense calls attention to the fact of the essential polarity and opposition of all principles—a polarity and opposition which is as pervasive of the world of physics as of society. . . . But the distinctive character of the dialectic in Marx's theory of history lies in *class-consciousness and action* which breaks through polar social oppositions and succeeds in giving direction to movement."**

It is not, then, "a lapse of memory, to put it mildly," but *a sustained attempt to straddle the issue,* which makes Hook so

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* *The Modern Quarterly,* Vol. 4, No. 4, p. 393-4.

** *The Modern Quarterly,* Vol. 6, No. 3, p.66-67.

elusive an opponent upon this question. His position might be summed up by saying: "There is something rather dialectic about nature, but after all nature is not very dialectic and the real thing is only to be found where consciousness plays a role." And this queer and vague and totally un-Marxian way of talking, is an even better proof of what I am trying to prove, than his bare statements that the dialectic does not apply to physical nature. It is a proof that Hook is not trying to discover and expound the nature of the dialectic philosophy as Marx believed in it, but is trying to amend that philosophy to the extent necessary to make it stand up in the face of modern views of science. He is constrained when confronted by the documents to admit that Marx believed physical nature to be dialectic, but he is constrained by the facts of modern science to deny that this notion has any place in the laboratory. His straddling or his "lapse of memory," whichever you decide to call it, is one more evidence of the nature of the task on which he is engaged and of its hopelessness.

IX

THE DIALECTIC REDEFINED

No man seeking the truth about Marxism or about the world, or seeking to clarify minds for the good of the revolution, could tangle himself up in these self-contradictions. His motive would keep his mind clear. Sidney Hook is trying to win a case. He is defending the Marxian Talmud at the bar of modern science.

For this purpose he has not only to withdraw the dialectic from the physical world, but he has to withdraw from the dialectic a good deal of what made it interesting. The division of a developing totality into "triadic phases," he tells us, "is not logically essential to the method." In fact, this whole business of thesis, antithesis and resolution in a higher unity—always of more use to Christian priests than pagan scientists—may now go by the board. All we need is two "phases" and a "spe-

cific relation of opposition between those phases which generates a succession of other phases."

To be more exact: "The sufficient condition of a dialectical situation is given when these two phases present a relation of *opposition* and *interaction* such that the result (1) exhibits something qualitatively new, (2) preserves some of the structural elements of the interacting phases, and (3) eliminates others."*

It is obvious that these conditions are met whenever anything whatever grows or develops—all except one, and that is that there must be an "opposition" between two "phases," and this opposition must "generate" other phases. In other words—since we have now limited the application of this method to social history, and since "all history is a history of class-struggles"—this is merely a grandiose, abstract, non-empirical, and therefore fruitlessly philosophic, way of making the simple remark that society progresses by the method of class-struggle. A few minor "totalities" can be singled out within society, to be sure, and shown to follow the same "law"—the growth of personality, for instance. But that is not really relevant or necessary. "The Marxian totality is social," and the relations within this totality as at present constituted "take the form of opposition between proletariat and capitalist, the necessities of production and the need of consumption, and so forth. All of these oppositions constitute a whole. . . . They cannot be solved without changing the whole. At a certain point . . . the equilibrium is destroyed and reconstituted by human *action* . . . the dialectic principle appears as class activity."

And that is about all there is left of the dialectic principle.

For Marx and Engels, who really compelled themselves to believe that all nature advances by a process of contradiction and resolution, and that their program of class struggle toward communism was but one instance of this universal law, there was some reason to dress up the program—at least on holidays and solemn occasions—in this remote, grandiose and abstract language. But when you have thrown the dialectic out of all the rest of the world except human society, and practically restricted its application to the class struggle, what is the use of

* *The Modern Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 3, p. 58ff.

clinging to this highly general language any longer? Why say "totality" when you mean *"society"?* Why say "phases" when you mean *classes?* Why say that "the driving force in the development of a dialectical situation is derived from the conflict and opposition of the elements within it," when you mean that *the capitalists can only be expropriated by an organized class struggle?* What is, in all honesty, the actual gain made, when you have frankly limited your meaning to particular things, in continuing to use the language of universal knowledge? If, in order to save the dialectic philosophy, Mr. Hook has been compelled to throw out, not only everything in it besides the dialectic, but also to throw out the *universality* of the dialectic, what is the whole operation for? Is it not the essence of philosophy to describe the universal characters of being? And if his laws of dialectic apply genuinely only in human society, is it not sociology rather than philosophy that he is regaling us with?

To anyone who really believes that philosophy is, at large, an attempt to describe the universal characters of being, the question is cogent, and it seems almost impossible to guess what Mr. Hook is about. But if we hold fast to the derogatory conception of philosophy—not, of course, denying the possibility of an attempt to describe the universal characters of being—as an attempt to preserve the animistic attitude, the sense of cooperation between man and the objective world, by reading into the universal ideas and abstractions employed by science, a little of his own interest and his own wish, then the answer becomes very simple indeed. Science has accomplished so much, and gained such a power over our minds, with its sovereign method of suspending the wish or interest during the definition of fact, that it is no longer possible, *except* in the sphere of sociology where it has accomplished little or nothing, to keep up the pretense that wish and definition can wisely be confused. Only in this sphere can one still with any plausibility read the subjective purpose into the objective facts. Sidney Hook has ceased to impute the class-struggle-towards-communism procedure to universal being, because he senses all around him in this age of science the impossibility of making it stick. But he retains the language of universal knowledge, because that will still help him in the sufficiently forlorn effort to make it stick—otherwise than as a

plan of procedure toward a specific end—in the sphere of being contemplated by the social sciences.

In 1928 Mr. Hook was still, it seems, in the classic position of the philosopher. At least he was defining philosophy as "generalized thought," and was not yet consciously restricting the application of the "dialectic" to the social and psychological fields. "The 'dialectic' for Marx," he was saying, "is not something working *exclusively* in things . . . but it is primarily in things as a condition precedent to human action."* It was only in 1932 that he proclaimed the "deviation" involved in imagining that the dialectic works in things, and it was only then that he declared philosophy to be, for Marx, not generalized thought at all but highly particularized criticism—criticism confined to the field of ethics, politics and sociology, and therein frankly anchored to its own "presuppositions and bias." Philosophy he now defines as a consciously class-biased "sociology of values investigating the social roots and conditions of what human beings desire."**

This shows a state of growth, even if not of "dialectics," in Mr. Hook himself, and suggests quite irresistibly that a few more years will bring him out on the road of common sense and science. For when philosophy abandons the pretense to be a disinterested account of reality at large, and frankly acknowledges its particular field and its particular bias, retaining only the name of philosophy and the language of the universal categories, it has but a short life left. Science will not neglect to study in its cooler way the "social roots and conditions of what men desire." And however difficult in this field its effort to be disinterested, however often its name may become a screen for mere class propaganda, in the long run nevertheless men who wish to know facts—for whatever purpose—will seek them from those who aspire to be disinterested, not from those who justify a "frankly avowed . . . bias" by calling it philosophy and using general terms for particular things.

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* *Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 25, No. 5, p. 123.

** *The Modern Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 1, p. 53.

X

A PECULIARITY OF APPLIED SOCIOLOGY

There are two real obstacles, however, on Mr. Hook's road home to common sense. One is the indubitable fact that social science, in so far as it looks into the future, does differ radically from the so-called natural sciences. It differs in that the scientist himself is a part of the process he is studying, and his own judgment, his very prediction, may affect the result.

Where other sciences strive by every artifice to "eliminate the personal equation," a study of social evolution—even though striving to be "pure" science and leaving others to apply its knowledge— nevertheless cannot eliminate the personal factor without falsifying the facts. And though this may seem a slight matter when the personality of any one scientist is concerned, it becomes a mighty factor when you realize that authorized science as such is concerned. Nobody will deny the important position occupied by science among the "social roots and conditions of what men desire," nor the momentous effect which systematic verified knowledge is going to have upon the future of mankind. What the social scientist thinks, therefore, during the progress of a large scale experiment may decide the result of the experiment. This makes the philosophic attitude, and most particularly the "dialectic method of thinking" peculiarly plausible here. For that so-called "method of thinking," as we have seen, is not a "method of thinking"—except merely as it emphasizes that all things are in a process of fluid change and warns against the danger of fixed concepts—it is a method of justifying a class bias in thinking about social problems. It is an ingenious scheme for reading a successful revolutionary result into the objective facts; and thus getting a chance to throw the weight of science—or something even higher than science—on the side of the proletariat. This weight might itself conceivably tip the scales in favor of the proletariat—just as a belief that he is going to get well may help to cure a patient, no matter what sort of hocus-pocus it is founded on. In my opinion,

this very limited utility of the belief in the dialectic hocus-pocus is not worth a snap of the fingers compared to the advantages of a clear and undeluded scientific confrontation of facts. Read the correspondence between Hook and Trotsky in *The Nation,* Vol. 137, No. 3548, if you want to see what a murky swamp of unfruitful lucubrations you get into when you try to adjust the relations between objective science and a frankly class-biased sociology. Hook himself has been compelled to admit in the long run (and this is one further sign of hope for him) that the class-bias in the Marxian economics lies only in a *selection* among objectively verifiable facts of those relevant to the proletarian revolutionary purpose.* And, of course, the deliberate selection of facts, or aspects of fact, relevant to a specific purpose is not bias at all—much less dialectic philosophy—but merely *applied* science.

That the evils of Talmudism, and all the other evils that I have shown to flow from this metaphysical justification of prejudiced thinking,** would be offset by the slight conceivable gain to the revolution involved in getting it established in the seats of authentic science, seems to me a preposterous idea. However, the question does not have to be settled, for the issue does not arise. You cannot get a class-biased system of philosophical ideas into the seats of science. Science has grown too great and is too well aware of its own nature. All you will accomplish by insisting on this metaphysical apotheosis of prejudice is to repel scientific minds in increasing numbers from the ranks of the revolution. And that, in the effort to change the ownership of a gigantic and complex technical apparatus like the American machine of production and distribution without stopping or destroying it, is a strategic error so colossal as to push all other considerations into the background. When Hook says frankly, as he does, that this thing, once so well advertised to us as scientific socialism, is not science, he gives the revolutionists a fair warning that they have got to drop it or lose their fight.

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* See his book, *Towards The Understanding of Karl Marx,* pp. 108-9-10.

** In the concluding chapters of my book, *Marx And Lenin.*

XI

MARXISM AND PRAGMATISM

The second obstacle on Sidney Hook's road home to common sense is the philosophy of pragmatism, or "instrumentalism," in which as a disciple of John Dewey he believes. It is not only in order to defend dialectic materialism against science, but in order to identify it with "scientific" pragmatism that Mr. Hook has thrown all the insides out of it, leaving only the so-called "method of thinking." It is for the same purpose that he has cut down the application of that method to the social and moral sciences, and thrown out of it, moreover, every feature sharply distinguishing it from a mature scientific procedure except one—the right of the thinker to a class bias. By these heroic operations he has arrived where he can say:

"Marxism therefore appears in the main as a huge judgment of practice, in Dewey's sense of the phrase, and its truth or falsity (instrumental adequacy) is an experimental matter. Believing it and acting upon it helps to make it true or false."*

That is the very end and goal of Hook's whole operation upon dialectic materialism. Seeing that this philosophy in its crude nineteenth century form will no longer stand up—you can no longer pretend that the world itself is with dialectic necessity achieving the aims of the revolution—he transforms it into a twentieth century philosophy, a more up-to-date method of accomplishing the very same identification of theoretic truth with proletarian program-of-action. "Truth" itself, he cries, is nothing but the successful working of an idea; the process of verification is a *making true*. Or, to put it in Dewey's own language: "The effective working of an idea and its truth are the same thing—this working being neither the cause nor the evidence of truth, but its nature."

There is a difference between Hook's program of action and Dewey's, however. There *was* a difference, at least when Dewey's philosophy took form. Dewey brought over from Hegel

* *Modern Quarterly*, Vol. IV, No. 4, p. 391.

only the ideal of identifying theoretical and practical consciousness. He never studied Marx; he did not accept the class struggle; and he had no use for the dialectic. Sidney Hook not only wants to identify the theoretical and practical consciousness—philosophic knowledge, that is, with program of action—but he wants to identify with his philosophic knowledge the particular program of class struggle. That leads him to try not only to attribute Dewey's instrumental philosophy to Karl Marx, but also to try to graft the Marxian dialectic upon Dewey's instrumental philosophy. I venture to predict that John Dewey—whether pleased or displeased to be told that Karl Marx anticipated his most original thoughts—will at least never agree to father the *dialectic* part of Hook's Marxian pragmatism. Dewey may be forced by the rapidly developing facts to accept the class struggle as a practical program of political action in the given situation. But it is too late for him—and moreover he is too canny and too close to the scientific point-of-view—to try to read that back into the universe as a half-hearted philosophy of being. He will find dialectic materialism, as a "judgment of practice," a little too "huge" to be proven true even by the success of the League For Independent Political Action.

With that sole exception, however, the net result of Hook's heroic operations upon Marxism is to bring it into substantial identity with Dewey's pragmatism. Dewey and his pupil are at one in the belief that a special kind of thinking—whether "dialectic" or not—ought to prevail in the social, moral and political fields, and in giving to this thinking, no matter how "operative and experimental" it may become, the name of philosophy. It is just in these spheres, indeed, that, after denying the philosopher any special knowledge of "reality"—to the horror of all his professorial colleagues—Dewey still finds him a special function over and above what the men of science have to do. It was, moreover, a preoccupation with moral and social problems that led Dewey in the first place to work out his special "scientific" kind of pragmatism. I think it might be said that his central problem—as a philosopher—has been to extend the volitional view of truth which seems natural in these spheres, because the experimenter is a part of the experiment, to the sphere of natural science, where the experimenter seems to hold

his experiment off from him, and try his best to get a decision that will be valid objectively and whether he is there or not.

In my opinion, Dewey has not succeeded in accomplishing this. I think that when you state that "the effective working of an idea and its truth are the same thing," you are stating a thing which you believe true in some other sense than because it is working effectively. And it is this other kind of truth, truth which is an attribute of the relation of an effectively working idea to the facts worked upon, that natural scientists are trying to discover. I think the sense of a fluid union of the thinking mind with the matter thought about which Dewey arrives at through this definition of truth, and through his extraordinary temperament, although a fascinating speculative experience, is illusory. It is but a last desperate attempt to keep up in the face of science—and by inserting it into the very procedure of science—some vestige of that sense of some friendly cooperation between the objective world and the mind of man which has been the main concern of philosophy from the beginning.

Even in the social and moral sciences, it is possible to say that our believing and acting upon an idea helps to make it true only in so far as the definition of the idea is in some way incomplete. If all the terms of the problem an idea proposes to solve can be and are stated, then no such magic-sounding thing will follow. This may be very well illustrated in the statements just preceding Sidney Hook's assertion that Marxism is a huge judgment of practice and that our believing helps to make it true. Let me quote the whole passage:

" . . . The reading of history in terms of class struggle leads to its intensification; the theory of surplus value provided a powerful ethical motivation and rallying cry in industrial distress. Marxism therefore appears in the main as a huge judgment of practice, and its truth or falsity (instrumental adequacy) is an experimental matter. Believing it and acting upon it helps to make it true."

But the truth of the reading of history in terms of class struggle will not be affected by the success of the future experiment, except in so far as you did not make clear just what history you were talking about—whether past or future—and just how large a role you were attributing to the class struggle

in it. Nor will the truth of the surplus value theory be affected by the success of the revolution unless it is abstractly formulated with that end in view. If it reads as I have restated it in my book: There is enough concrete fact underlying the abstract talk about surplus value to warrant our going ahead with the class struggle and trying to win the revolution—then the success of the revolution only *proves* it true, for it was true before.

The thing becomes still more crudely evident in other passages where Hook labors to get rid of that "myth of the inevitability" of communism which he attributes to the deviators from Marx's philosophic views.

"When Marx spoke of communism as being a result of a 'social necessity'," he says, "he was referring to the resultant of a whole social process, one of whose components was the development of economic conditions, the other the assertion of a revolutionary class will."* In other words, when Marx said *necessary,* he meant *possible.* (It would be interesting to know through what peculiar mental or lingual affliction it came about that Marx so often said "necessary" when he meant "possible." Both words are to be found in the German dictionary. It would also be interesting to know why, when his followers said "necessary," they did *not* mean *possible, but* meant *necessary, and* thus translated Marx's simple good sense into the "mythical language of the 'inevitability' of communism.")

However, that is not my point at the moment. My point is that if you express your idea circumspectly—as for instance, to say *possible* when you mean *possible,* and to say "such-and-such a result will follow *if* we do thus-and-so," when that is all you really know, then the idea is not "made true" by your successful action. It was true all the time and you have only proven it so. If, however, you express your idea loosely—as philosophers so often are compelled to do—and say, "Such-and-such a thing is going to happen," and then go and act in such a way that it does happen, why, it may be contended that you have made the idea true.

All this is rather rudimentary, and it is moreover old stuff that has been answered by John Dewey to the satisfaction of his disciples many times. It is just here, indeed, that we were

* *The Symposium,* July, 1931, p. 349.

taught to find the essential difference between the "mystical pragmatism" of James and the "scientific pragmatism" of Dewey —that James permitted the "truth" of an idea that had successfully solved a problem to slop over the edges of its meaning as originally defined by the terms of the specific problem. And yet here is Dewey's chosen disciple, careful repudiator, too, of the "mystical pragmatism" of William James, informing us that *"Marxism"*—no more and no less than that—*"Marxism"* is a "huge judgment of practice" that can be made true by believing and acting upon it. Marxism is indeed huge—probably the hugest "judgment" ever proven true by a specific line of action in a temporary situation since Moses came down the mountain with the words of the Eternal engraven in stone.

For my part, I think it is no accident that one of John Dewey's chosen disciples can effect such a manouver with his definition of truth—and that, too, with no protest from the master. I think—although I have not the space here to prove it—that Dewey's "truth" is less mystical than that of James only because Dewey's interests lie in this world and James had a strong flair for the next. They are both concerned as philosophers—and I distinguish the philosopher in each from the great student of the human mind—to defend a last vestige of animism against the hard dictates of the scientific point-of-view. They are concerned to reconcile man's needs and wishes with the processes of the natural world by theorizing about truth, not merely by finding out what the truth is and changing the world.

It is indeed a very thin remnant of the animistic attitude that Dewey gives us, and in stepping successively from the name "pragmatism" to "scientific pragmatism," and then to "instrumentalism," and finally even abandoning that excellent word for the term "operational logic" invented by a physicist, it has almost an air of apologizing for its thinness and wishing to vanish altogether. If it should vanish—if Dewey should by the grace of nature and experience prove to be not only the first American philosopher, but the last philosopher*—we should have a most precious thing left in the place of his definition of truth. We should have left the sage advice that, since the mind is such a function of the body as it is, we must seek out the specific ele-

* In the sense, I mean, of the closest to a mere "generalizer" of science.

ment of purpose in every idea that lays claim to general truth, and carefully and boldly know and understand and use it, but beware of its false grandiose pretenses. It is upon that advice that I have acted in my analysis and restatement of the Marxian theories, and it is for that reason that I attack so earnestly, as the last stand of the priest-in-disguise, this philosophy of dialectic pragmatism so ingeniously pieced together by Sidney Hook out of two of his most plausible decaying vestments.

Marx's philosophy enabled a substantial relic of animism to ride along upon the post-Newtonian science of the British and French enlightenment. Dewey's enables a more meagre relic to ride along on Darwin and the post-Darwinian science. The two devices are not, and cannot be the same. And that is why Hook contradicts himself as well as the documents and the very possibilities of thought's history, in attempting to identify them, tangling himself up in a very welter of desperately scholarly self-contradictions. But he does this because he *feels,* and feel truly, that one of their intimate motives and emotional outcomes is the same—namely, to combine knowledge-of-fact with program-of-action, or, as he says in one of his own eloquent conclusions, "to fuse the logic of analysis with the poetry of passion."

It is absolutely beyond a doubt that as experimental knowledge develops and becomes more precise and convincing in the fields of psychology and sociology, these last attempts to stay the hand of science will go down, and we shall find its more cool but equally purpose-serving procedure, and its resolute, yet by no means negative, or passive, scepticism about ultimate problems, established in every department of being and all practical effort. Those who wish to preserve the rich contribution of Marxism to science will not be diverted by Hook's heroic effort to defend the husk of the Marxian philosophy. They will go back to the original intention of Karl Marx himself to have done with "philosophy" and try upon the basis of empirical scientific findings to revolutionize the world, and they will carry that intention through.

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