II

Yet prior to and parallel with the rise of the natural sciences another school of social thought established itself, some of whose spokesmen were erroneously taken for adherents of naturalism. This school represented by Hegel and his followers was in fact far removed from any form of positivism or naturalism. Rather it developed a theory of history peculiarly its own. Though the Hegelians had split into various camps, we can still discern substantial basic agreement among them. True, Karl Marx, one of the leaders of its left wing, never fully accepted Hegel's idealistic system, or, if he did as a student, he turned "materialistic" as early as 1843[3]. After the lapse of a century we are struck more than ever by the affinity of the Hegelian idealistic and the Marxian materialistic approaches - both represent thoroughly structured philosophies in the grand tradition of the first half of the last century.

Some fifty years after Hegel's death nearly everyone agreed that his philosophy was dead as well. In the words of Marx, "the peevish and arrogant mediocrities" who had "the ear of the educated public in Germany, were fond of treating Hegel much as in Lessing's day the world of Moses Mendelssohn used to treat Spinoza, namely as a 'dead dog'"[4]. Meanwhile we have witnessed a true Hegel renaissance sweeping country after country. With Spinoza and Hegel Marx shares the honor of having been proclaimed a "dead dog" at a time when he was still alive in the flesh. The Marxist movement, as we know, suffered innumerable crushing defeats. Nevertheless, Korsch was right when he maintained that "there is today a struggle about Marx carried on in practically all countries of the civilized world"[5]. This fact alone would justify and demand renewed critical examination of both thinkers, and especially of their interpretation of the past and the future of mankind.

For the purposes of this brief study we have to concentrate upon the common basis of Hegel's and Marx's Weltanschauung. Both proceed from dialectical, organistic, and harmonistic premises on which their theories rest and which link their systems. Both are driven by the same vital feeling, by the same irrational faith: one invests it in practical experience, the other wields it into a final theory of the whole of the universe. As for the content of their systems, logics and metaphysics, dialectics and ethics, politics and economics, society and history, mind and nature are all part and parcel not only of Hegel's dialectical idealism, but also of Marx's historical dialectics.

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3) Cf. Karl Marx's letter to his father November 10, 1837, translation in Otto Ruehle, Karl Marx, His Life and Work, New York 1929, pp.15-24, esp. p.20 f. and his "Introduction to a Critique of the Hegelian Philosophy of Right", excerpts Ibd. pp.56-61.

4) K. Marx, Capital, Preface to Second German Edition, ed. E. and C. Paul, New York 1929, Vol I, p.873.

5) Karl Korsch, Karl Marx, New York 1938, p.11.