3. HISTORY: THEODICY OR ODYSSEY?

Remarks on the problem of a pluralistic theory of history

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Thus far an attempt has been made to trace the development of the philosophy of history from Hegel to Toynbee. The theories propounded by Hegel, Marx, and Toynbee have been criticized as essentially organistic, optimistic and metaphysical. They have been called religious[1] ideologies or theodicies since they tend to justify all past and present shortcomings in the light of a final "divine" harmony. On the other hand, the scientific, sceptical, and tentative hypotheses of the brothers Max and Alfred Weber have been found significant steps towards a fully developed "socio-cultural history".

Hegel, who was the builder of a closed philosophcal system, despite his profound historical interest and understanding, considered history as an integrated element of the world of the Mind, the historical process consisting of no more than one particular kind of wave occurring in the broad eternal stream of Dialectics. The explanation for this position lies in two directions: As for Hegel's historico-social situation, it must be remembered that he had been deeply disappointed by the outcome of the Great French Revolution in which he saw proof that "Absolute Free-

1) After reconsideration I prefer to use the term religious in quotation-marks only in order to make clear that Marx - and somehow even Hegel - did not postulate any personal anthropomorphic Godhead totally independet of and superior to the universe. In theological terms, his basic philosophy comes closer to "pantheism" than to theism. In much the same way I have made use of the term "religious", Max Eastman uses it to characterize Marxism. For Eastman "religion means... belief that the external world, or some power in it, is interested in the interests of men. The religious believer persuades himself that the world is softer than it is, and that we know more about it than we do". (Marxism: Is It Science?, 1940, p. 162). I am taking this occasion to refer the reader to this brilliant book with which I became acquainted only after completing the previous articles. The reader will notice the conformity of views in respect to the main thesis, disagreements in other questions not withstanding. - As holds true for so many social and philosophical ideologies, Marxism as ideology strikingly resembles a religious ideology coming closest to that part of a religion called its "Theology". "All theology is intellectual rationalization of the possession of religious salvation (Heilsbesitz)... For every theology... the assumption is valid that the universe must make sense - and its question is: How has one to interpret it in order to make it intelligible?" (Max Weber, Wissenschaft als Beruf, 1919, p.34). Marxism as a revolutionary movement, however, differs considerably from a purely religious movement which "aims not to change the outside existence, but to change the inner life" and "to inculcate a new conception of the universe instead of merely seeking to remake institutions or the objective structure of a social order" (H. Blumer, "Collective Behavior", An Outline of the Principles of Sociology, ed.Robert E.Park, 1939, p.274).