

Chapter - III

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DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM

Marxian ethics is consistently materialistic and dialectical. When we speak of dialectical materialism the two terms appearing in this conception need precise explanation. Now what does 'dialectical' mean ?

The scientific conception of the term was preceded by a long history of development and it emerged through revising, even overcoming, the original meaning of the term. Originally the term denoted the art of debate by means of questions and answers - the word 'dialectics' was derived from the Greek 'dialego', meaning to discuss or debate. It is a discussion of a question from all sides, from all angles, allowing one-sided points of view to oppose and contradict each other during the debate or discussion with a view to arriving at the truth. Socrates used this dialectical method. But Marxian dialectical method is far richer in content, far wider in its scope. It becomes something qualitatively new - a new revolutionary method. It is combined with materialism and it ceases to be a mere method of argument, becoming a method of investigation of both nature and society, a method of materialistic understanding of the world and becomes a sharpened weapon in the activity of the toiling masses.

In his quest for truth Socrates applied this dialectical method which came to be known as the Socratic method. But Socratic method was not used for communicating any definite view of his own. It was the method of

finding out truth through discussion with others. Pretending and even believing to be less wise than the other participants in the debate Socrates elicited from them their views on important subjects like justice, temperance and gradually exposed their mistakes and even made them contradict themselves. He then became the master of the situation and the pride of his adversaries was humbled until some one among them closed the conversation with a remark like this : "Well, Socrates, I no longer have any confidence in my answers; for the whole theme has turned out to be exactly the contrary of what I previously imagined." Without this negative part of the Socratic method it is possible that he might have been remained unknown like many of his fellow-citizens. It was upon this activity that he established his reputation, arrayed his enemies against him and at the last inspired the charges of the indictment upon which he was tried with the resulting verdict of death.

The Socratic method does not end here. So far we have got only the negative side of his method. Had this been all, the total output of the Socratic method would be to know that we do not know.

He, however, wanted to show that we could know and so applied his dialectical skill to elicit the truth from amongst all conflicting opinions. This is the positive or the constructive side of his method. It was the method of arriving at definite concepts or universal notions which alone stand for truth. To know the truth therefore we have to form the concepts constituting the essence of things. What then is the concept of justice in general ? In arriving at this concept he adopted at first the inductive procedure starting from particular instances of justice and then tried to find out the quality those had in common and by virtue of which all these are classed together.

In this way, the notions or definitions were at first formed. Thus inductive reasoning was applied for arriving at the concepts. Deductive reasoning is again applied in their application to new cases.

When we talk of the dialectical method the name of the philosopher Hegel comes up to our mind but by no means was Hegel or Karl Marx the inventor of this type of thinking. It has had a long history which began with Heraclitus who developed this method or way of thinking. For him everything in the universe has in it its opposite - all things contain their own opposites within them; for him "War is the father of all, the king of all." He thought that strife was natural and the life was a struggle. In the struggle and antagonism between hostile principles consists their life, their being, their very existence. By the term 'war' he did never mean war as a military phenomenon nor did he glorify it in any way. Here he speaks of the struggle of metaphysico — ontological opposites which he considers to be the core of the universe. To Heraclitus all things are composed of 'fire' - the fire is, the fire was and ever shall be, an eternally living fire. Fire is identified with life and reason. The more fire there is, the more life, the more movement. The more dark there is, the more death, cold and not-being. Heraclitus takes fire as his fundamental physical principle and has regarded this as incessantly struggling with the dark and moist-principle which is opposed to bright and dry, i.e., fire. He thinks that even in the life of man this struggle can be found going on. The great aim in moral life is to secure the victory for the bright and dry. "Keep your soul dry" - is with him the fundamental moral law.

In a very different way Zeno of Elea of the anti-Heraclitean Eleatic school developed dialectics. Aristotle believed that dialectical thinking had been invented by Zeno of Elea who analysed the conflicting aspects

in the concepts of motion and plurality. Zeno's contribution to Eleaticism is entirely negative. He supports Parmenides in the doctrine of Being. The essential characteristics of the world of sense are multiplicity and motion. Against multiplicity and motion Zeno, the faithful and brilliant disciple of Parmenides, directed his arguments showing that motion and multiplicity are impossible. The type of argument Zeno puts forward, is called 'antinomy' in modern times. Since two contradictory propositions equally follow from a given assumption, that assumption must be false. The term dialectics as a technical term in philosophy was not as yet used. Zeno is credited for using the term in its technical sense in philosophy for he uses this type of reasoning which seeks to develop the truth by making the false refute and contradict itself. Two propositions which contradict each other cannot both be true. Therefore, the assumptions from which both the propositions follow must be false.

To demonstrate the absurdity of motion Zeno tells us a story. A tortoise challenges Achilles, the track star of antiquity, to run a race, on condition that he (the tortoise) be given a head start. Let us suppose that they are off at the sound of the pistol. When Achilles reaches the point from where the tortoise started, the tortoise is no longer there. Again when Achilles reaches the point at which point the tortoise was, the tortoise is no longer there. The tortoise has gone to a point further on. Achilles must then run to that point and finds that the tortoise has reached the third point. Everytime Achilles arrives at the point at which point the tortoise was, but the tortoise is no longer there. This will go on for ever and at no time does Achilles overtake his rival, tortoise.

Zeno tells us another story. This is the story of the flying arrow which will show that motion is inconceivable. An object cannot be in two places

at the same time. At any particular moment in its flight the arrow is in one place and not in two places. But to be in one place is to be at rest. Therefore, at every instant of its flight, it is at rest. Motion is inconceivable. According to Zeno, he who tries to leave the circle of the static concepts of the Eleatic School must run into contradictions. He clearly points out the contradictions which lie in our ideas of space and time. Zeno's arguments which are based upon the antinomy of infinite divisibility are not propounded for its own sake, but to support the fundamental Eleatic position that Being is one; there is no multiplicity, no motion, no becoming.

These contradictions, according to Kant, are immanent in our conceptions of Space and Time. Since they involve such contradictions they are not real beings but mere appearances, mere phenomena only. Space and time do not belong to things as they are in themselves, but rather to our way of looking at things. Space and time are not objects of perception as ordinarily supposed but they are forms of perception. They have empirical reality as being real only for objects of experience. They have further transcendental ideality, for they are a priori forms of our sensibility. But they have no transcendental reality as they do not exist independently by themselves. It is our minds which impose space and time upon objects and not objects which impose space and time upon our minds. But the subjectivity of space and time is different from the subjectivity of sensations. Sensations are individually different, contingent but space and time are a priori and necessary. Kant attempted to show that whenever we try to think the infinite, we fall into irreconcilable contradictions. Therefore, human faculties are incapable of apprehending the reality.

A true solution is possible only by rising above the level of two antagonistic principles and taking them both up to the level of a higher conception in which both the opposites are reconciled and synthesised. Hegel follows this procedure in his solution of the problem. Hegel did not, however, try to solve the antinomies. They appear as mere incidents in the development of his thought. They are not isolated cases of contradiction, but, on the contrary, he regarded them the essential character of reason. All thought, all reason for Hegel contains immanent contradictions. First we affirm some idea or conception of thing, i.e., a thesis and then finding its imperfection we are led to affirm the opposite idea or conception of it, i.e., its antithesis. But the opposite idea, i.e., antithesis, in its turn, is found to be one-sided as the first. This leads us to affirm a higher or more comprehensive idea which reconciles the two opposites - thesis and antithesis into a higher unity called synthesis. For example, we first think a heap of wheat as one, i.e., it is one whole and secondly we think of it as many having been composed of many parts. But both 'one' and 'many' being one-sided and imperfect, we are finally led to the idea or notion of quantity which contains these two — the one and the many. It is a many in one or a one in many. So the one and the many are reconciled in a higher unity, in the higher notion of quantity. Quantity is the synthesis of the one and the many. The thought of the one involves the thought of the many and the thought of the many involves the thought of the one. If we persist in saying it is simply many and not one, then it is divisible ad-infinitum. The truth is that it is neither simply many nor simply one — it is many in one, it is a quantity.

For Plato dialectics is a necessary method of grasping the ideas through the Socratic method of discussion. To the Eleatics Being is the

absolute, one utterly exclusive of the many. Being, according to Plato, contains contradictions - It is single and plural, eternal and transient, immutable and mutable, at rest and in motion. Being is not excludent of not-Being — Being and not-Being are correlatives which mutually involve each other. A 'one' which is not also a 'many' is unthinkable; the idea of the 'many' is also inconceivable without the idea of the 'one'. The one and the many, the Being and not-Being cannot be separated in the Eleatic manner. When we turn our attention to Plato's theory of Ideas, we find that there are many ideas but ideas are not isolated units but members of a single organized system and in this particular sense Ideas are one. Again each Idea is a unity. It is the unity of the one and the many. The Idea of man is one, but individual men are many. Every Idea is a being which contains not-Being, e.g., the Idea of rest is Being in regard to itself, not-Being in regard to the Idea of motion.

In this way there arises a science of Ideas which is called 'dialectic'. The 'Theaetetus', the 'Sophist', and the 'Parmenides' are dialectical.

These different forms of dialectics have something in common — they are characterized by the central role of the opposites and contradictions for both human thinking as well as for reality. Whether dialectics is understood as something positive (Heraclitus) or negative (Zeno), whether it is considered to be the method of human thinking or not, in any case the confrontation of the opposites is the indispensable vehicle of dialectics. In the 18th Century in France, a wealth of dialectical ideas was produced by Rousseau and Diderot. Rousseau examined contradiction as a condition of historical development and Diderot went a step further and investigated contradictions in the contemporary social consciousness.

The conception of dialectics is especially important in Kant and Hegel. In his Epistemology Kant developed dialectical ideas in his teaching of antinomies. He described dialectics of reason as an illusion which evaporates as soon as thought recedes within itself, bounded by the cognition of phenomena proper. Kant asserted that pure reason, whenever it ventures into a field in which it cannot possibly be checked by experience, is liable to get involved in contradictions or antinomies. Kant used antinomy in an attempt to justify the basic thesis of his philosophy according to which the intellect cannot go beyond the bounds of experience and cannot cognise the thing-in-itself. As we have no direct sense experience of things-in-themselves, we have no knowledge of them. Kant repeatedly tells us that no positive knowledge of the noumenal object is possible for us. We can undoubtedly think or speculate about them but that will never amount to a knowledge about them. Kant says that through the speculative ideas of reason, reason attempts to apply categories to something lying beyond the possible objects of knowledge and as a result reason gets entangled in unavoidable show and deception or gets involved in contradictions. Contradictions take the form of antinomies, i.e., pairs of contradictory propositions equally well-founded, each of which seems to us just as necessary as the other, both the members of which, i.e., contradictory pairs of propositions can be proved or disproved with equal force of logic. Kant says that it is possible to prove both the contradictory propositions - both the assertion (thesis) and its negation (antithesis) in each of the following antinomies of Pure reason :

1. (a) The universe is finite (thesis).
- (b) The universe is infinite (antithesis).

2. (b) Every complex substance consists of simple parts (Thesis).
(b) There is nothing simple in existence (Antithesis).
3. (a) Freedom exists in the world (Thesis).
(b) There is no freedom in the world, only causality (Antithesis).
4. (a) The primary cause of the universe (God) exists. (Thesis).
(b) There is no primary cause of the universe (Antithesis).

The most important Pre-Marxian stage in the development of dialectics was classical German Idealism which, in contrast with metaphysical materialism, considered reality not merely as an object of cognition but also as an object of activity. The founders of classical German Idealism were pre-eminently Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, and George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. Their individual systems, in spite of important differences, exhibited a fundamentally similar philosophical attitude. Kant's critical method leads to agnosticism because it proceeds on the idea that the forms and categories of knowledge have their origin in our mind and are, therefore, subjective. They do not apply to the real or noumenal world lying beyond our mind and experiences. German idealists (Fichte, Schelling and Hegel) though disowned this Kantian position they commonly accepted his contention that the primary concern for philosophy is the nature of human knowledge - e.g., Fichte, in his work *The Science of Knowledge*, defined philosophy as the 'science of knowledge'; Schelling maintained that to know things as they are is to know them as they are in and for reason; Hegel declared: 'Being is thought', 'the real is the rational', 'the rational is the real'. They challenged Kant's doctrine of the limitations of human knowledge, his theory of the impossibility of obtaining metaphysical knowledge that reality is unknown

and unknowable. To them the reality is a complete systematic unity, a 'whole' - it is spiritual, it is intelligible in and for reason. The critical philosophy of Kant fails to provide with this ultimate unity. The idea of philosophy as the knowledge of the reality has led Hegel to employ the method of dialectic as the proper method of philosophy. The systematic whole of thought is identified with the reality as we have in Hegelian phrase : "The real is the rational, the rational is the real". The 'whole' is the Absolute and Hegel says that Absolute is the Idea which knows itself, the reason which knows itself.

Schelling developed a dialectical apprehension of the processes of nature - "God affirms himself in Nature". The Absolute is the unity of the real and the ideal, of the subjective and the objective, of the Spirit and the Nature. Fichte's fundamental concern is with the nature of morality. In the formulation of the 'Categorical Imperative' Kant gives us a formula which may be universalized - "So act that the Maxim of thy will may always hold good as a principle of legislation". Fichte maintains that it is in the 'practical reason' of moral experience that one is acquainted with the ultimate nature of reality. This has led him to the concept of universal moral order on the one hand and the acknowledgement of will as striving for perfect freedom on the other hand. Each stage of morality is the realization of the wider whole than that of the particular individual's own ego. From this point of view morality is essentially and fundamentally an abandonment of selfishness, a transcendence of individuality. To Hegel, however, the welfare of each individual goes together with the welfare of all individuals. He regards the development of personality, the attainment and expression of rational freedom as fundamental. The ethics, for the German Idealists,

is nothing but the realization of spiritual personality, rational freedom in and through the social relationships.

The idealistic dialectic of Hegel was the summit in the development of Pre-Marxian dialectical materialism. "For the first time the whole world, natural, historical, intellectual, is represented as a process, i.e., as in constant motion, change, transormation, development; and the attempt is made to trace out the internal connection that makes a continuous whole of all this movement and development"¹ (F. Engels, AntiDuhring, P. 31-32). Hegel's dialectic contains an element of dynamism and evolutionism. But his point of view is fundamentally idealistic. He regarded the universe as a process of development or evolution - but it is not a biological evolution determined and governed by mechanistic laws, but a spiritual evolution taking place according to dialectical process and the end at which man aims is the fullest realization of his spiritual and rational nature. Our human history has also been interpreted as a gradual process of development upwards towards the realization of the truest and most perfect form of self-consciousness.

Hegel recognizes the presence of his dialectic in the ancient modes of argument : the arguments of Eleatic philosopher Zeno against motion and multiplicity, the Socratic 'irony', the Platonic development of the science of Ideas in the dialogues like in the "Parmenides". In all these Hegel sees the true uncovering of and positive expression of 'Divine Life'. It is, however, in Kantian antinomies that Hegel sees the most explicit modern expression of dialectic. Kant not only shows that our notions of time and space can be developed in contradictory ways but also shows further that such contradictions are essential and necessary. It is Hegel's conviction

that the forms of sensibility and categories of understanding through which our thought develops and seeks to know the nature of the experienced world are not confined to our mind but are realized in the nature and constitution of reality itself. "Dialectic", says Hegel, "is the principle of all movement and of all the activity we find in reality". The dialectic form moves through a triadic form - thesis, antithesis and synthesis. The Principle of development which Fichte had discovered and which Schelling had occasionally employed - the three-fold rhythm of thesis, antithesis and synthesis, Hegel carried out with logical consecutiveness. It is the three-fold movement-a thesis being confronted by a contradictory antithesis and both being combined in a synthesis, which in its turn becomes the starting point for a new triadic movement. It is this dialectic process that governs the development of thought from the lowest or most in-adequate category to the highest or more perfect. Thus we pass from the idea of reality as mere 'Being' to the speculative conception of it as the Absolute Idea or Self-Conscious Spirit. The same dialectical process governs the development of the real, objective world existing in relation to our mind. In his philosophy Hegel tries to show how the facts of Physics, History, Ethics and Religion illustrate the dialectical process. Hence for Hegel the forms and categories of knowledge are also the forms and modes of Being or Reality.

Ethics, according to Hegel, is a process of development too. In moral evolution there is a process of development from a goodness which is simply an outward obedience to externally imposed rules to a goodness that consists in the inward submission of to the internal faculty of conscience and the two again find their synthesis in social morality, a life that is gradually shared by the developing consciousness of the community in its efforts to

attain the highest perfection of which human nature is capable of. The 'good will' of Kant is with Hegel no longer the will of the individual imposing rules on himself but the universal will which becomes self-conscious in the course of evolution.

According to Hegel Kant was quite right in pointing out the antinomies or contradictions and it was one of the main merits of Kant to have discovered the triplicity and to have used it in drawing up his list of categories. Kant deduced twelve such categories which our understanding employs to constitute the objects of experience and without these categories no knowledge is possible. In his '*Metaphysical Deduction*' of categories Kant shows us that there are twelve such categories. E.g.,

- I) Quantity - Unity, plurality, totality;
- II) Quality - Reality, Negative, Limitation;
- III) Relation - Substantiality, Causality, Reciprocity;
- IV) Modality - Possibility, Actuality, Necessity.

It is to be observed that of the three categories under each head, the third is the combination of the first two. Totality is plurality regarded as Unity; Limitation is Reality combined with Negation; Necessity is the Actuality given by the possibility itself. What is possible becomes actual through necessity. Hegel differs from Kant when Kant advocates that we know the real as it appears, never as it is. Thus knowledge is limited to the realm of appearances only - reality is, therefore unknown and unknowable. But to Hegel reality is fully knowable - reality is thought, reason. The world is a great thought-process. It is God-thinking. It is not weakness of our intellect but it is the very essence of all rationality that it

must work with antinomies. Contradictions. Hegel asserts, exist in all objects, in all conceptions, concepts and ideas. Our reason is not static like Eleatic Being but dynamic. Reason is equal to the Real. The famous catch-word of Absolute Idealism of Hegel was the statement : "the rational is real and real is rational". Everything that is reasonable must be real and everything that is real must be reasonable. The reason here is not human reason and reality is not experiential reality. The ideal of reason must inevitably be a complete system, each and every constituent of which fits rationally with every other. Reason cannot halt at the partial or incomplete, which points beyond itself. The systematic whole of thought is, therefore, identified with reality and the 'whole' is the Absolute or the Absolute Idea, the Absolute Spirit, God. Hegel talks of the Absolute as the Idea which knows itself, the thought which conceives itself, the reason which knows itself. Hegel chose the identity of being and thinking, i.e., the conception of the real world as a manifestation of Idea, concept or Spirit. This identity he regarded as the historically developing process of Absolute Idea's Cognizing Itself. All phenomena in nature and society are based on the Absolute-the spiritual and rational principle, the 'Absolute Idea', the 'World-reason' or 'World-Spirit'. This principle is active, and its activity consists in thinking or more precisely in self-cognition. The Absolute Idea passes three stages : (1) development of the Idea in its own bosom, in the 'element of pure thinking' - Logic, wherein the Idea reveals its content in a system of logical categories which are related and grow out of one another; (2) development of the Idea in the form of the 'Other-Being', i.e., in the form of Nature - Philosophy of Nature; (3) development of the Idea in thought and history (in the spirit), i.e., philosophy of Mind. At this stage the Absolute Idea withdraws within itself and conceives its content in the

different forms of human consciousness and activity. Every real development is a real process and as a real process it must be a rational and reasonable process if we follow his philosophy of identity. As the history is the development of something real it must be rational. In Hegel's dialectic we find fusion of the three forms of dialectical thinking. Following Heraclitus and Plato, Hegel combines dialectics of things with the dialectics of thinking. Since mind is the very essence of reality dialectics must be both a real metaphysical happening and a method of knowledge. He also combines the positive dialectic of Heraclitus with the negative of Zeno arising from analytical and polemic tendencies. Hegel also developed most fully the idealistic interpretation of alienation. The objective world appears as the 'alienated spirit'. The entire finite sphere, composed of both nature and human mind, is considered a self-alienation of God from Himself. Positive dialectics consists in self-reconciliation of the Divine Mind with Himself. The purpose of development according to Hegel is to overcome this alienation in the process of cognition. At the same time Hegel's understanding of alienation contained rational surmises about some distinctive features of labour in an antagonistic society. Analysing the category of alienation Hegel grasped idealistically the essence of labour, i.e., important aspects of man's objective activity and conceived man and his history as the result of his own work.

The Hegelian system is absolute idealism as well as rational pantheism as the 'whole of thought' is called the 'Absolute' or the 'Absolute Idea' and the emphasis on the unity of the whole gives it the general impression of Pantheism (God is all and all is God) and as such there is a fusion of philosophy and theology. As the Absolute is rather of the character of intuitive immediacy — moral for Fichte, aesthetic for Schelling

and rational for Hegel the classical German Idealism culminates in a form of mysticism.

The dialectic method of Hegel stands or falls with its fundamental assumption that thought and reality are identical. If thought were identical with reality, we could say that the forms and categories of thought were also the forms and categories of reality. For to think of anything is not to bring it into existence but to have an idea or concept of it. The progress made by the special sciences shows us how arbitrary and untrustworthy Hegel's enumeration of the categories of reality is. With the advance of the sciences other new concepts and categories may be found necessary for the interpretation of the experienced world. But in the list of categories formulated by Hegel they have no place. The dialectic method can give us at best a consistent, comprehensive conception of reality but not any direct knowledge of reality.

When Hegel declares that 'Reason' is the sovereign of the world, Arthur Schopenhauer differs from Hegel. For him reason has only a formal function. Reason, according to Schopenhauer, is 'feminine in nature' - it can only give after it has received. Of itself it has nothing but the empty forms of its own operation. In opposition to the Hegelian view of history as a progressive dialectical process, Schopenhauer described it as 'a heavy and confused dream', a continuous reiteration of the same experiences, only the names of the places and persons being different.

The idealism of Hegelian philosophy is no doubt a great and grand theory - magnificent and divine. There is no doubt that Hegel's dialectics was a valuable contribution to philosophy. In it he analysed the major laws and categories of dialectics, substantiated the thesis on the unity of the

dialectics, logic, the theory of knowledge and elaborated for the first time in the history of thought a system of dialectical logic. He left a profound imprint of all the branches of philosophy in which he applied dialectics. But the idealism of his philosophy seemed to have gone wild and he injected mysticism into dialectics. He applied the principle of development in the realm of ideas, made a number of categories of logic stereotyped and artificial and presented their system as a closed one. He was unable and reluctant to draw any consistent social conclusions from dialectics and reconciled himself to the status quo, which he justified proclaiming the Prussian Monarchy the crowning of social development. However, Hegel's philosophy played a great and fundamental role in the development of Marxian philosophy or Marxism which preserved its most valuable element dialectics, moulding it into a scientifically strict teaching on the development of nature, society and thought.

Classical German idealism especially Hegelianism, has had a wide spread influence as a general philosophy of life throughout Germany for half a century. But by the middle of the 19th Century its influence begins to wane. Some of the foremost thinkers - Feuerbach, Bauer, Ruge, D. Strauss, Marx, Engels explicitly rejected it. During the material time Hegelianism assumes different forms. His followers are grouped under the description of 'Right-wing' and 'Left-wing'. The latter group stresses the empirical and regards his doctrine of the absolute as logical formalism. But this distinction is not exact. There are some who retain some aspects of Hegel's dialectical method and reject his spiritual metaphysics. They may be said to have broken entirely from Hegelian Idealism either in developing forms of naturalism or dialectical materialism in contrast with Hegelian dialectical idealism or new Kantianism which sprang up in

Germany in the second half of the 19th Century under the slogan : "Back to Kant".

The passage from Hegelian dialectical idealism to the Marxian dialectical materialism, from Hegelian concepts or notions to the Marxian ideas as class struggle consists in the transformation of philosophical mysticism into a new profoundly scientific outlook. The so-called young Hegelians or the Hegelians of the leftwing, a radical wing of Hegel's philosophical school, thinkers, viz., D. Strauss, B. Bauer, Ludwig Feuerbach represented the link between Hegel and the fully developed doctrine of Marxism, especially dialectical materialism which became 'the world outlook of the Marxist - Leninist party', as Stalin called it.

These thinkers did not give up totally absolutism and monism. But they saw the essence of man as the one and only universal and supreme subject-matter of philosophy - for them man became the absolute centre of the universe and all standards above him were to be reduced to that of human needs and human existence. They favoured humanism and uttered good-bye to theology. D. Strauss' book, 'Das Leben-Jesu', which critically analysed the Gospel dogmas, promoted the formation of the Hegelian left-wing. Strauss considered Jesus as an ordinary historical personality. B. Bauer also regarded the Gospel dogmas as deliberate inventions and the person of Jesus as fiction. Their attention was centred on the question of how false concepts of society appear and acquire the force of compulsion. Feuerbach belonged to the left-wing of young Hegelians. His defence of materialism influenced his contemporaries. He criticized Hegel's dialectic understanding of man's essence and his reducing it to self-consciousness. He also sharply criticized the idealistic nature of Hegelian dialectics. He saw the essence of man as one and only universal

and supreme subject-matter of philosophy and in this respect he facilitated the establishment of Marxism. But he did not pursue a consistently materialistic line on this question because he took man as an abstract individual. He did not overcome the contemplative nature of pre-Marxian materialism because in his understanding of history he remained entirely on idealist positions. Not understanding the real world in which man lives, he deduced the principles of morality from man's intrinsic striving for happiness. The morality on Feuerbach's view is abstract, eternal and the same for all times and peoples.

The bankruptcy of the young Hegelian movement lies in the fact that the role of masses in the history, the ideas of class struggle, of the objective laws of social development, of the role of economic relations in the life of the society are alien to them. The task was fulfilled by Marx and Engels who joined this movement at the beginning of 1840s. But they arrived at a radically new understanding of social development - the theory of dialectical and historical materialism. They proved that materialism can be scientific and consistent if it is dialectical and that dialectics can be genuinely scientific only and only if it is materialistic. The development of scientific outlook on social development and its laws was a most essential element in the formation of dialectical materialism.

The emergence of dialectical materialism was a revolution in the history of human thought. But this revolution included continuity and critical acceptance of all progressive elements already attained by the human thought. The two main streams of philosophical development merged in dialectical materialism — materialistic philosophy on the one hand and dialectics of the idealists on the other hand. The development of

philosophical thought in close relation or association with science led inevitably to the triumph of the empirical and materialistic world-outlook. But the doctrines of old materialists were either metaphysical or mechanistic and combined materialism in their view of nature with idealism in their explanation of social phenomena. The philosophers who developed the dialectical outlook were essentially idealists as is shown by Hegel's system. And it is necessary that Hegel's theological dialectics must be eliminated. Marx and Engels synthesised the two, avoiding the defects of either and combining the advantages of both.

The term materialism here has a polemic meaning — it is directed against the Absolute Idealism of Hegel — in short, it is anti-idealism : its slogans being 'nature against mind', 'experience against speculation', 'science against dream', 'history against theology', 'man against gods'. This materialism teaches us that the world by its very nature is material and that everything arises and develops in accordance with the laws of motion in nature; that matter is objective reality existing outside and independent of the mind; that the world and its laws are fully knowable. It is a way of interpreting events, of conceiving of things and their inter-connections, of explaining every question without any bias and prejudice. In a complete reversal of Hegelianism, the interpretation of history and of all forms of human life moves from below to above, from feet to head, and not from above to below. from head to feet.

Though materialism is as old as philosophy, its 19th Century advocates restored it in the language of contemporary science. Most of them were not philosophers in the truest sense of the term — they were scientists, usually physiologists or biologists and their materialism was a direct deduction from the discoveries of the natural sciences. This is

particularly true of L. Buchner whose *"Force and Matter"* established itself as the 'Bible of the materialists'. According to him matter is not inert; there is no matter without force and vice versa; every agent is material — 'no force without matter, no matter without force'. The most influential of all the varieties of 19th Century materialism is the dialectical materialism of Marx and Engels. Buchner probably seems to do something to prepare the intellectual atmosphere for the development of Marxian materialism and some critics identify Marxian materialism with '*medical materialism*' of Buchner and his associates. But Engels, in his '*Ludwig Feuerbach*' and the '*Outcome of classical German Philosophy*', dismisses this charge and calls the medical materialists as 'vulgarising peddlars' and 'hedge preachers'. Neither Marx nor Engels had any sympathy for these medical materialists but they owe their allegiance only to two masters - Hegel and Feuerbach. The Feuerbach who aroused the enthusiasm of Marx and Engels was not the Feuerbach who did not pursue consistently materialistic line as he took man as a purely biological being but was the Feuerbach who argued, in his '*Critique of the Hegelian Philosophy*', that Hegelian metaphysics is simply an explication of his theology in disguise — 'the last refuge, the last rational support of theology'. And in his '*The Essence of Christianity*' Feuerbach argued that 'theology' itself is a confused, fantastic way of depicting social relationships. He wrote : "The divine being is nothing else than the human being, or rather, the human nature purified, freed from the limits of the individual man, made objective, i.e., contemplated and revered as another, a distinct being"² (Feuerbach — *The Essence of Christianity*, tr. by Marian Evans, London, 1854, (2nd Ed.) 1881, P. 14). In his philosophy man occupies a unique position. Religion has sacrificed man to God and now what we need is to invert the

religious relation, to regard that as an end which religion supposes to be 'means' and this, in turn, leads straight to the recognition that philosophy to fulfil its task must promote the emancipation of all mankind from all obstacles which stand in the way of free development of human faculties. The question whether God exists or not is for him nothing but the existence and non-existence of man is vital. In religion man alienates himself from himself and renders himself uselessly miserable and true philosophy brings back man to himself.

Feuerbach repudiated Hegel's identification of the real and the rational and held that philosophy must take its start not from Hegel's abstract 'Idea' but from concrete nature and historical reality, that philosophy must trace the natural conditions of human freedom and understand man as a being whose relationship to nature is mediated by the senses. Feuerbach's affirmation of man, nature, the life of the senses reminds us of the name of Rousseau with whom he shares a certain sentimentality which is humanistic in character, based on respect for the dignity and rights of man, his value as a personality, concern for his welfare, his all-round development.

In his first thesis on Feuerbach Marx subjected Feuerbach's materialism to a critical examination. The chief defect of all previous materialism including that of Feuerbach is that the object, the reality, the sensibility is only apprehended under the form of the object or of contemplation, but not as human sensible activity or practice, not subjectively. Marx looked upon knowledge as an activity exercised on things. In the third thesis on Feuerbach Marx pointed out the drawbacks of French materialists when he said that the materialist doctrine concerning the change of circumstances and education forgets that

circumstances are changed by men and the educator must himself be educated.

Since his materialism contains in it an essential principle of progressive change, Marx calls his materialism dialectical. It is called materialistic not because it denies mind or regards it as a by-product of matter or as a derivative quality of matter but urges that ideas influence history by acting on things, by changing their shape and power. The material things which are declared to be the main determinants of social change are not the raw materials of nature - they are not merely coal or electricity but our knowledge of the ways in which materials of nature like water or electricity can be used to serve human ends. But the productive forces which determine the social change include not merely the forces of nature like solar heat, electricity but also the power of the human mind. The productive forces of nature have been there on the mother earth from its very beginning. The discovery and use of productive forces is possible only when human mind takes an active, positive role or actively participates in adapting them for the purpose of economic production.

Feuerbach, according to Marxists, has destroyed metaphysics of Hegel and religion in a single blow. Marx asserts against Hegel that mind and nature are positive entities, not unsubstantial reflection of the Absolute Idea. For Hegel change is an illusion of appearance whereas for Marx change is not illusion, it is real, it is the very stuff of reality. The things we see are real and they are changing perpetually and these changes are intrinsic to the nature of things and not imposed from outside. To the question; what is matter? Marx's answer is that it is the stuff of cosmic reality. Dialectical development is its essential and necessary expression. By materialism Marxists usually mean some kind of representationalism

— the view that the 'Concepts in our heads' are 'images of real things'. In his *"Materialism and Empirio-Criticism"* Lenin defines matter as 'that which, acting upon our sense organs produces sensation; matter is the objective reality given us in sensation'. But here, at this point, Berkeley's Criticism has to be answered, that if matter is not itself a sensation but only that which gives rise to sensation, we can have no evidence that there is such a thing, Engels admits that it is difficult to beat Berkeley by mere argumentation. But, Engels goes on, before there was argumentation, there was action. In the beginning was the deed. To Marx : the question whether objective truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a practical question. The test of truth is practical. Since we change the object when we act upon it there is nothing static about the truth. Marx thus adopts the pragmatic criterion of truth.

In reacting against Hegel, Marx argued, Feuerbach had failed to appreciate Hegel's great contribution to philosophy-his dialectic method. In spite of it, Feuerbach left an indelible impression on Marx, because for Feuerbach man was the true subject and God the predicate. According to Marx, man makes religion; man is no abstract being squatting outside the world; man is the world of man, the state, the society. It is categorical imperative to overthrow all circumstances in which man is humiliated, enslaved, abandoned and despised. In the eleventh thesis on Feuerbach Marx contends that hitherto philosophers have variously interpreted the world, the real task is to change it. Marx is fully aware that Christianity, like other religions, utilises the hope of the poor and the oppressed for a better life. Has life any meaning if it is full of injustice and incredible suffering ? The exploitation of poorer classes, labourers, especially the exploitation of women and children labourers is limitless even in 1863. Marx portrays

a vivid picture in his *Capital*, vol. I, under the head 'The Working Day' of the inhuman conditions of the toiling classes. — "William Wood, 9 years old, when 7 years and 10 months when he began to work...He came to work every day in the week at 6 a.m. and left off about 9 p.m." "Fifteen hours of labour for a child 7 years old!" exclaims an official report of the children's Employment Commission of 1863³. Such inhuman conditions were then tolerated and sometimes even defended by churchmen who formulated the conception of the kingdom of God which the poor and the oppressed will enter after their death more easily than the exploiters who are rich and comfortable. So Marx remarks : "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the feeling of a heartless world and the soul of soulless circumstances. It is the opium of the people"⁴ (K.M.S.W. - P. 63f). Engels observes that the first word of religion is a lie. Religion, wrote Lenin, is one of the aspects of spiritual oppression. Religion comforts the helpless, the oppressed with a better life beyond the grave and rouses hope in them of heavenly reward. Why should poorer classes look beyond this mundane existence for a life of material happiness and comfort and why not in this world ? Marx is right, he is absolutely right when he condemns religion which utilises men, the poor men with the hope of a better life beyond this existence. Why should the exploited people not revolt against it ? Certainly they will revolt against the exploiters who are so in sensible and irresponsible for the well-being of their fellow-men whom they use at the minimum cost and lead them to disease and decay and throw them on the scrapheap when done away with. It is difficult to find language strong enough to criticize these exploiters.

Dialectical materialism is the revolutionary weapon of the working people — it is a method for understanding the world so as to change it - it

is the philosophy of practice. It is a determined irreconcilable enemy of all conceptions of supernatural essences shrouded in mystery, no matter what garb they are clothed in by religion or idealist philosophy. It is the philosophical basis of the programme, strategy and tactics and all activities of the communist party.

Marx stated that Hegel was the first thinker on the dialectic to present its general form of working in a comprehensive and conscious manner. Hegel certainly understood history as a process of dialectical development, but whereas labour in Hegel was always intellectual, in Marx it was material—designed to satisfy the material needs of men. Marx wrote, "My dialectical method is not only different from the Hegelian but is its direct opposite. To Hegel, the life-process of the human brain, i.e., the process of thinking, which, under the name of "the Idea", he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurgos of the real world, and the real world is only the external, phenomenal form of "the Idea". With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought.

The mystifying side of Hegelian dialectic I criticised nearly thirty years ago, at a time when it was still the fashion. But just as I was working at the first volume of "*Das Kapital*", it was the good pleasure of the peevish, arrogant, mediocre epigoni who now talk large in cultured Germany, to treat Hegel in same way as the brave Moses Mendelssohn in Lessing's time treated Spinoza, i.e., as a "dead dog". I therefore openly avowed myself the pupil of that mighty thinker, and even here and there, in the chapter on the theory of value, coquetted with the modes of expression peculiar to him. The mystification which dialectic suffers in Hegel's hands, by no means prevents him from being the first to present its general form

of working in a comprehensive and conscious manner. With him it is standing on its head. It must be turned right side up again, if you would discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell.

....In its rational form it is a scandal and abomination to bourgeoisdom and its doctrinaire professors, because it includes in its comprehension and affirmative recognition of the existing state of things, at the same time also, the recognition of the negation of that state, of its inevitable breaking up; because it regards every historically developed social form as in fluid movement, and therefore takes into account its transient nature not less than its momentary existence; because it lets nothing impose upon it, and is in its essence critical and revolutionary.

The contradictions inherent in the movement of capitalist society impress themselves upon the practical bourgeois most strikingly in the changes of the periodic cycle, through which modern industry runs, and whose crowning point is the universal crisis. That crisis is once again approaching, although as yet but in its preliminary stage; and by the universality of its theatre and the intensity of its action it will drum dialectics even into the heads of the mushroom-upstarts of the new, holy Prusso-German empire"⁵. (Marx-Capital vol. I - Afterword To the Second German Edition - P. 29)

Engels summarises three main laws of this dialectic in his '*Dialectics of Nature*'. These are :

- i) *the law of the transformation of quantity into quality;*
- ii) *the law of the interpenetration of opposites;*
- iii) *the law of the negation of negation.*

The first law can be illustrated by the fact that when we lower the temperature of water, there is a change in quantity; but when it turns into ice, it changes in quality. The second law is illustrated by the presence of contradictions in nature and the third law by the way these contradictions are resolved into a higher unity.

E. Duhring in his *'Course of Philosophy'* subjected the second law to a severe criticism. According to him, there are no contradictions in things. To this Engels replies in his *'Anti Duhring'* that this is true only when we consider things as static. Motion itself, he goes on arguing, is a contradiction — even simple material change can come about only being in one place and also not in it. The third law, Duhring argued, the law of the negation of negation, is nothing but jugglery of words. To this Engels replies that negations of negations are very familiar both in science and in everyday life. "Consider the algebraic magnitude 'a' : Negated, this becomes '-a'; negate that negation, and the result is 'a²', the original positive magnitude 'a' raised to a higher power. Again, he argues, a barley-plant negates the seed from which it arises; this negation produces, a crop of seed, which is thus the negation of a negation — seed at a higher level.

It will be sufficiently obvious that 'negation', like 'contradiction', has to be understood in a peculiar and undefined sense, in which to multiply by '-1', to multiply by '-a', and to develop from seed into plant are all 'negations'⁶. (John Passmore, *A Hundred Years of Philosophy - Ch. Materialism, Naturalism and Agnosticism*, P. 44).

Hegel called the antithesis of a thesis sometimes its negation and the synthesis the negation of the negation. There seems little doubt that

Marx also supposed there to be a dialectic of nature. And at the end of the first volume of *Capital* (P. 715) Marx stated that "the Capitalist mode of appropriation, the result of the capitalist mode of production, produces capitalist private property. This in the first negation of individual private property, as founded on the labour of the proprietor. But capitalist production begets, with the inexorability of a law of Nature, its own negation. It is the negation of negation"⁷.

Now what do we mean by 'negation' ? Does it mean simply the end to something ? Does it mean simply 'no' ? Does it mean loss or retreat? To the liberals 'negation' is merely the end to something — far from meaning 'advance' it means 'retreat', far from meaning 'gain', it means 'loss'. But dialectics teaches us to understand how it becomes a condition of progress, a means of positive advance. "Negation", says Engels, "in dialectics does not mean simply saying 'no' ". Negation is the necessary condition of positive advance in which the old dies giving birth to the new. It produces conditions for the transition to the new, from quantitative to the qualitative changes in which all the positive efforts and achievements of humanity belonging to the old are carried forward into the new. The old is negated no doubt, but the progress which takes place in it is not negated but carried forward into the new stage of development. E.g., when capitalism is replaced by socialism, socialism negates capitalism. But the conditions for the emergence of socialism are inherent in capitalism; capitalism does no longer exist and in its place socialism emerges along with all the achievements of the previous stage. Thus negation is not a loss or retreat but a positive advance towards the cherished goal.

Again the question crops up : what do we mean by negation of

negation ? To the liberals, if the negation is negated then we come to the original position, i.e., original position is restored once more without any change whatsoever. It takes us back to the original starting point. It is a return to the old, to the original position from where it takes its start. According to the principle of formal logic, negation of negation is a fruitless proceeding - this is exemplified in the formula : " 'Not not-A' equals 'A' ". Negation of negation does not take us back to the former original position, rather it takes us forward to a new starting point which is the original one raised to a higher level.

Society has been developed from primitive communism of group life to the slave-holding society, from slave-holding system to feudalism and from feudalism to capitalism. Each stage of development is a negation of the former or previous one constituting a higher stage of development. After capitalism what ? Communism. Here there is a return to the beginning - but it is no longer the primitive communism of the group-life, it is a development on the foundations of all the achievements of the whole previous development. Hence the higher stage is reached only as a result of the double negation, i.e., negation of negation. As Hegel puts it, the higher end of development is reached only through 'the suffering, the patience and the labour of the negative'.

In dialectical materialism, wrote Engels, "the materialist world outlook was taken really seriously for the first time and was carried through consistently.... For, "it was resolved to comprehend the real world - nature and history-just as it presents itself to everyone who approaches it free from preconceived idealist fancies. It was decided relentlessly to sacrifice every idealist fancy which could not be brought into harmony with the facts conceived in their own and not in a fantastic connection. And materialism

means nothing more than this"⁸. (Engels -Ludwig Feuerbach, Chapter- IV).

Before the emergence of dialectical materialism, materialism was predominantly mechanistic. The materialists, before Marx, looked for, behind all the changing appearances, something which never changes and they found it in the ultimate material particle - the eternal and indestructible atom. All changes were produced by the movement and interaction of unchanging atoms. The theory of mechanistic materialism regards the whole world as nothing but a complex piece of machinery, a mechanism. So it cannot account for development for the emergence of new qualities, new types of processes in nature. It can not account for the laws of social development and leads to an abstract conception of human nature. Marx wrote : "The materialist doctrine that men are the products of circumstances and education and that changed men are therefore the products of other circumstances and a changed education forgets that circumstances are changed by men, and that the educator must himself be educated."⁹ (Eleven Theses on Feuerbach, 3rd thesis, Marx).

Though this doctrine was progressive and revolutionary in its time, it cannot serve to guide the struggle of the working class in striving to change society.

Dialectical materialism overcomes the weaknesses, narrow and dogmatic assumptions of mechanistic materialism. It understands the whole world as a complex process in which all things go through an uninterrupted change of coming into being and passing away. The matter is always in motion and motion is the mode of existence in matter. To dialectical materialism the universe is not static, motionless, idle, 'as idle as a painted ship upon a painted ocean' as portrayed in Coleridge's

'*Ancient Mariner*', but it is in continual process of development. This development is not smooth, an unbroken process—there may be abrupt breaks in continuity, the leap from one stage to another. By taking up the revolutionary side of Hegelian philosophy and at the same time freeing it from the idealistic trammels Marx and Engels developed the dialectic materialist conception of development. The key to understanding development in nature and society lies in the recognition of the inner contradictions and opposite conflicting tendencies which are inherent in all processes of development. This discovery by Marx and Engels has revolutionised philosophy as it signals the triumph of materialism over idealism and becomes a revolutionary weapon for the working community, a method for understanding the world so as to change it.

In his "*Philosophical Notebooks*" Lenin wrote, the essential idea of dialectical materialism is "the recognition of the contradictory, mutually exclusive, opposite tendencies in all phenomena and processes of nature This alone furnishes the key to the self-movement of everything in existence. It alone furnishes the key to the leaps, to the break in continuity, to the transformation into the opposite, to the destruction of the old and emergence of the new....."

"In its proper meaning, dialectics is the study of the contradiction within the very essence of things.

"Development is the struggle of opposites."¹⁰

To deny contradiction is to deny development - 'no contradiction, no development' — when contradiction is at work, there is the force of development. This profound conception was first put forward by Hegel. According to him, the Absolute Idea develops through a series of

contradictions and it is this ideal development which manifests itself in the material world. In his "*Ludwig Feuerbach*" Engels is critical of the dialectic development as propounded by Hegel and he wrote : "According to Hegel.... the dialectical development.....is only a miserable copy of the self movement of the concept going on from eternity, no one knows where, but at all events independently of any thinking human brain"¹¹ (Engels - L. Feuerbach, chapter IV). But in the materialistic understanding of dialectics "thereby the dialectic of the concept itself became merely the conscious reflection of the dialectical notion of the real world and the dialectic of Hegel was placed upon its head; or rather, turned off its head, on which it was standing before, and placed on its feet again....."¹² (Engels, Ludwig Feuerbach, chapter IV).

The forces of development are now within the material world itself and not outside of it. Dialectic development consists in "the recognition (discovery) of the contradictory, mutually exclusive, opposite tendencies in all phenomena and processes of nature, including mind and society."¹³ (Lenin - Philosophical Notebooks - 'On Dialectics'.)

Marx also wrote that "dialectic.....in its rational form is a scandal and abomination to bourgeoisdom and its doctrinaire professors, because it includes in its comprehension and affirmative recognition of the existing state of things, at the same time also, the recognition of the negation of that state, of its inevitable breaking up; because it regards every historically developed social form as in fluid movement, and therefore takes into account its transient nature not less than its momentary existence; because it lets nothing impose upon it, and is in its essence critical and revolutionary."¹⁴ (Marx, Capital vol. I, preface to 2nd edn.) P. 29.

In his *"Dialectical and Historical Materialism"* Stalin enumerated four principal features of the Marxist dialectical method.

i) Dialectics considers things as 'connected with, dependent on and determined by each other', and not in isolation, but in their interconnection with other things in relation to the actual conditions and circumstances of each case.

ii) It considers everything as in "a state of continuous movement and change, of renewal and development, where something is always arising and developing and something always disintegrating and dying away'. It considers things in their movement, their change, their coming into being and going out of being.

iii) The dialectic development must be understood not as a simple process of growth but as a process of development which passes from quantitative changes to fundamental qualitative changes which may occur abruptly, taking the form of a leap from one state to another.

iv) Dialectic holds that the process of development from the old to the new, from the lower to the higher takes place as a disclosure of the contradictions inherent in things.

Dialectical materialism holds the view that within every process there is a unity and struggle of opposed tendencies. The struggle is not accidental or external to things but internal and necessary - it is inherent in things themselves, in the process as a whole. It is an universal phenomenon and follows from the very nature of the process as a whole. When a qualitative change takes place it is brought about by dint of the labour of the opposites. In each case when the opposite tendencies are

at work, their work, their labour, their struggle eventuates in some fundamental transformation bringing about a qualitative change in the existing state of things.

For example, the class contradiction between the capitalists and the workers, the exploiters and the exploited in a capitalist society is a unity of opposites, because in such a society neither the capitalists (the exploiters) can exist without the workers (the exploited) nor the workers can exist without the capitalists. The capitalists exploit the workers and workers are exploited by the capitalists. Though contradiction is an universal feature of every process, each particular process has its peculiar contradictions. This point was brought to our attention by Mao Tse-tung in his essay *'On Contradiction'*; where he made a thorough analysis of this concept and called it the distinction between 'the universality' and 'the particularity' of contradiction. Each kind of process has its own dialectic. Physical, social and ethical processes are similar because each of these processes contains contradiction but dissimilar in the contradiction each contains.

What would be the future development of society after the coming of socialism or communism ? Are we to suppose that the same dialectical laws will continue to operate ?

Our answer is : Development will not cease. It will, through contradictions, continue to be the rule in the future development of communist society. With the ending of all exploitation of man by man the development will no longer take place through violent conflicts and social upheavals but through the rational method of criticism and self-criticism. This is a new form of development, a new type of movement, a new dialectical law. As Stalin said : "There is dogmatic Marxism and creative

Marxism. I stand by the latter.¹⁵ (History of the C.P.S.U.(B) Ch. VII, Sec.4). Stalin also admitted : "He (Lenin) developed the doctrines of Marx and Engels still further in application to the new condition of development."¹⁶ (Stalin-Interview with the First American Labour Delegation).

In such a long arduous journey mistakes or errors are inevitable. But by checking up and recognising mistakes in time, by examining critically the ground of such mistakes, by learning from such mistakes the communist society will advance to new successes. It is by drawing lessons from mistakes done or inadvertently committed, by making honest and revolutionary self criticism social development will take a new turn towards progress. And without it there is not progress, there is no development. And Marx also wrote: "Every opinion based on scientific criticism I welcome."¹⁷ (Marx, Capital, vol. I. P. 21-Preface to the first German edition).

Dialectical materialism is a truly scientific world-outlook-it does not seek to establish any philosophy above science, but bases its world-conception on the discoveries of the sciences. "Modern materialism... no longer needs any philosophy standing above the sciences", wrote Engels.¹⁸ (Engels-Anti-Duhring, Introduction,I).

The philosophy of Marxism, viz. Dialectical Materialism, when applied to the study of society is called "Historical Materialism." It is a philosophical science about society which solves the fundamental question of philosophy in a materialist way, historically, and studies on this basis the general sociological laws of historical development and the forms of their application in the activity of people. It is the methodological basis of sociology and other social sciences. The driving force of historical change

is not spiritual but material in character. All the pre-Marxist philosophers were idealists in their understanding of social life as they miserably overlooked the fact that whereas in nature blind forces are in operation, in society people's actions are guided by ideal motives. The development of historical materialism caused a fundamental revolution in social thought. The first guiding principle of historical materialism is that change and development in society, as in nature, take place in accordance with objective laws. The materialist conception of history was arrived at by applying the materialist world outlook to the solution of social problems. It is closely related to the task of the revolutionary class-struggle of the proletariat, to the requirements of socialist and communist construction and the development of social science. It helped to formulate a consistently materialistic view of the society in general and revealed the material basis of social life and the laws governing its development. In elaborating his main idea of the natural historical process of social development Marx singled out the economic sphere from the different spheres of social life and the relations of production from all social relations as the main ones which determine all the others. The discovery of historical materialism removes two fundamental short-comings of all pre-Marxist sociological theories - (i) these sociological theories are idealistic in nature, because their main concern is limited to the examination of ideological motives of the human activity and they ignore material causes engendering these motives. (ii) Secondly, these theories study the role of outstanding personalities in history and do not consider the importance of the role or activity of the masses, the real makers of history.

Historical materialism shows the great role of the subjective factor — the actions of people, classes, the consciousness and organization of

the masses. It is the staunch enemy of all kinds of fatalism and voluntarism. According to it, people, masses are the makers of their history but they cannot do it of their own will or voluntarily as each new generation acts in definite objective conditions which had been formed before it. "Men make their own history", wrote Marx, "but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past."¹⁹ (Marx - 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, ch. I). Historical materialism tells the working people that by their own endeavours and by their own efforts alone they can attain power and find their way to happiness. "The emancipation", Marx wrote, "of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves"²⁰. (Marx-Rules of the International Working Men's Association). The real course of history depends on the people, on their activity and initiative, on the organisation and unity of the progressive forces. The main features of historical materialism are worked out at greatest length in the first part of the German Ideology and the best summary of the theory is to be found in the preface to the *'Critique of Political Economy'*. For Hegel, history is the development and conflict of abstract principles — cultures, religions and philosophies. In this development he speaks of the power of the negative : every state of affairs contains within itself the seeds of its own destruction and transformation to a higher stage. This process Hegel calls dialectic. But according to Marx, instead of abstract principles, the changing economic basis of society and the social classes it gives rise is the key to grasping the unfolding of human history. The ultimately determining element in history, Marx stated, is the sum-total of the relations of production which "constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which

risers a legal and political super-structure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness."²¹ (K.M.S.W. P. 389). The determining factor is often narrowed down to the actual instruments of production as Marx stated that "the handmill will give you a society with the feudal lord, the steam Mill a society with the industrial capitalist."²² (K.M.S.W. P. 202). Marx sometimes includes the workers themselves among the instruments of production and even calls the revolutionary class 'the greatest productive power of all the instruments of production'. Marx emphatically says that the instruments of production can never be isolated from their social context. The core of the Marxian dialectic is the unity of the subjective and objective factors. Marx wrote : "History does nothing; it does not possess immense riches, it does not fight battles. It is men, real, living men, who do all this, who possess things and fight battles. It is not 'history' which uses men as a means of achieving - as if it were an individual person-its own ends. History is nothing but the activity of men in pursuit of their ends."²³ (The Holy Family, P. 25).

It is, therefore, understandable, why this philosophy is called materialism. The principal lessons of historical materialism may be summed up in the words of Marx : - "No credit is due to me for discovering the existence of classes in modern society, nor yet the struggle between them. Long before the bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this struggle of the classes. What I did new was to prove:

- (1) that the existence of classes is only bound up with particular historical phases in the development of production;
- (2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat;

- (3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society.²⁴ (Marx, Letter to J. Weydemeyer, March 5, 1852).

The opening words in '*The Communist Manifesto*' also characterise the approach of Marx and Engels to history : "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles."

When the Marxists say that their ethics is consistently materialistic this means that it de-mystifies morality — the ideals, standards and virtues prevailing in the society are interpreted as a reflection of actually existing interpersonal relations, an expression of interests and requirements of social groups and classes. Morality is not simply an ethical ideology that has isolated itself from the world and lays claim to absolute value but, on the contrary, it is a property of man's behaviour conditioned by his social and historical existence, Marx and Engels wrote :

"The communists do not preach morality at all ... They do not put to people the moral demand : love one another, do not be egoists, etc.; on the contrary, they are very well aware that egoism, just as much as selflessness, is in definite circumstances a necessary form of the self-assertion of individuals."²⁵ (Karl Marx and F. Engels, *The German Ideology*, Collected Works, vol. 5, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, P. 247).

Marxist ethics is also dialectical as it maintains that, like morality as a whole, each of its manifestations, each standard and virtue, is in perpetual motion, emerging, developing, dis-appearing, passing from one qualitative stage to another. There is a continuity in the process of the evolution of morality. Thus the different types of morality — whether it is morality of the slave holding society or feudal morality or capitalist

morality or Communist morality — are nothing but the links of one chain, different stages of one integral process of historical development of the past, present and future. Moral development or the evolution of morality can be viewed as a moral progress, each successive stage being historically higher than the previous one reveals a greater degree of maturity in dealing with problems of man-kind in general. Dialectical and materialist ethics maintains that ethics is a discipline which deals not only with 'what ought to be', but, and not in any less detail, 'what actually is'.

Morality, Marxists hold, is not an expression of some eternal moral law decreed by God, nor is it absolute and unchangeable, nor is it an expression of the will of the God, nor is it deduced from natural principle, nor is it, as Kant imagined, the expression of a 'categorical imperative' inherent in the human will; but it is socially conditioned - it is conditioned by man's social and historical existence. This assumes that morality is a regulator of social intercourse, it is the social regulator of conduct. As the whole of social intercourse is conditioned and governed fundamentally by the production relations of the society, morality as a regulator of social intercourse, is the product of definite production relations in every society — each class evolves its moral ideas corresponding to its peculiar class position. In a class society morality is always a class-morality. As Engels puts it :

"Men consciously or unconsciously derive their moral ideas in the last resort from the practical relations on which their class position is based", wrote Engels, "from the economic relations in which they carry on production and exchange All former moral theories are the product, in the last analysis, of the economic stage which society had reached at the particular epoch."²⁶ (Engels, *Anti-Duhring*, part I, ch.9).

In a class-divided society morality is always and necessarily a class morality. When the class does not exist, its morality goes down with it, giving way to a different morality. That morality is higher which serves to advance society a step further towards the goal of free and active life and this constitutes the objective criterion for judging what morality is higher.

“Our morality”, wrote Lenin, “is entirely subordinated to the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat. Our morality is derived from the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat Morality is what serves to destroy the old, exploiting society and to unite all the toilers around the proletariat, which is building up a new, communist society.”²⁷ (Lenin - The tasks of the Youth Leagues.)

But when with the coming of socialism or communism class antagonisms will be abolished, then morality will become human and not class morality.

“A really human morality”, Engels wrote, “which transcends class antagonisms and their legacies in thought becomes possible only at a stage of society which has not only overcome class contradictions but has even forgotten them in practical life”²⁸ (Engels, loc. cit.)

The Marxian ethics, in its efforts to realise the humanistic ideals and to rid itself of all kinds of exploitation, is communist in nature. It generalises and systematizes the principles of communist morality formulated by the working people in the process of building a new society and puts them on a scientific foundation. It serves a scientific basis for the moral education of the working class and helps them to adhere to a firm stand on key problems of the society keeping in mind the norms of

communist morality. Communist morality deals with the principles and standards of conduct based on the ideals of the communist society — viz., devotion to the cause of communism, a high sense of public duty, collectivism, humanism, internationalism. Its objective criterion is what contributes to the establishment of communist society and the realisation of the communist ideals. At the initial stage of its historical development, it is the revolutionary morality of the working people formed within the capitalist society. It is opposed to the prevalent morality of the exploiters, but it has its own ethical standards such as class solidarity, internationalism and collectivism. With the victory of socialism it transforms itself from the proletarian class morality into the morality of the society as a whole. The standards of communist morality are not only confined to people's behaviour but they play an active role in transforming society into a classless society. Thus at first morality emerges as a class morality of the proletariat and subsequently becomes the morality of the whole people in a socialist society and in the final analysis, the general human morality in a classless communist society.

Two extreme tendencies — normative and positivist-scientific-exist as far as understanding the purposes of ethics is concerned. This is particularly typical of contemporary western theories of morality. Their chief flaw is that each attaches absolute significance to one of the aspects of ethical knowledge. Normative ethics gives a theoretical substantiation of moral principles, ideals and norms. It considers theoretically the problems which spontaneously arise and are solved in the moral consciousness of this or that society or class. It is the theoretical study as it is concerned with an end or ideal or standard of rightness and wrongness

involved in conduct of man's life living in a society and this study is called normative as it deals with the norm or ideal.

The neo-positivists, in their attempt to make ethics scientific, eliminate from it the normative questions. They regard 'meta-ethics' to be a specific philosophical discipline which, in contradiction to normative ethics, studies only the ethical language and which claims to be neutral to different moral views. The neo-positivists may deal with problems concerning epistemological and logical nature of ethical language and we see nothing wrong in it but what they do is to reduce meta-ethics to be a purely formal study of ethical judgments regardless of their content. According to them philosophy is possible only as an analysis of language and philosophical analysis does not extend to objective reality — it must be limited only to direct experience or language. The early neo-positivists of vienna circle, by limiting the sphere of philosophy to individual emotions, arrived directly at solipsism. Logical positivists, one of the most influential varieties of neo-positivism, offer a subjectivistic theory in ethics which consistently applies the method of logical positivism. The main exponents are Ayer, Carnap, Reichenbach and C.Stevenson. According to them moral judgments and terms cannot be verified by experience. Moral judgments do not give any information, have no sense and, therefore, are neither true nor false. They advocate 'emotivism' and declare that ethical utterances are purely emotive in nature — they are only used to express speaker's moral emotions with a view to stirring similar emotions in listeners inducing them to act accordingly. The moralist may believe that his experiences are cognitive experiences but unless he can formulate his knowledge in propositions that are empirically verifiable he is deceiving himself. The emotivists draw the conclusion that everybody is free to choose

any point of view in morality, that contrary moral views do not logically contradict each other. Therefore, any view cannot be proved or refuted rationally but only psychologically.

The two approaches consider themselves to be mutually exclusive. Marxist ethics has overcome the one-sidedness of both normatism and scienticism. It is normative but it promotes objective scientific analysis. It is scientific but it allows to define the most sublime moral ideal of communist humanism. Marxism believes that it is possible to give a scientific theoretical substantiation of moral ideas only through the cognition of the laws of human history and these ideas reflect the objective logic of the development of society. The communist morality is the basis for the formation of general human morality in a classless society. Marxist ethics is a qualitatively new ethical theory not only by virtue of new scientific philosophical groundwork but also due to its social class orientation. It represents consistently the interests of the suffering humanity, i.e., the proletariat and opens up for men unprecedentedly broad and drastically new opportunities of moral advancement and activity.

The transition from capitalism to Communism is marked by a moral turning point in the relations among people. Inheriting the invaluable experience of mankind in general, it fosters human incentives for man's and society's moral improvement—there being no class inequality and no oppression of man by man. Free development of the individuals ceases to be a mere phrase or word for word's sake, rather it becomes a reality. Thus a new morality emerges which declares man the supreme value, promotes the development of each person and the enrichment of human relations within the collective community.

Communist morality asserts truly humane relations among people — it rests on comradely mutual assistance, brotherly feeling, active co-operation, friendliness and honesty—all men are brothers, friends and comrades. The communist humanism demands equal justice, equal right, equal freedom, equal opportunities for all so that all people be treated with respect and love and be given necessary assistance whenever called for, keeping in mind that each and every member of the society has an equal right to happiness. Its high and lofty ideal is to maintain the dignity of man as a free individual and to fight for men for his free and harmonious development of personality.

Marxism believes not in violence but in love, sympathy for fellow beings. Not violence, but love, is the keynote of a communist society. Violence is justified only when it is unavoidable — it is not an end itself.

In "Young India" (29.5.1924) Gandhiji wrote: "My non-violence does not admit of running away from danger, and leaving dear ones unprotected. Between violence and cowardly fight, I can only prefer violence to cowardice Non-violence is the summit of bravery"²⁹. "This faith in force", says Dr. Radhakrishnan, "is a disease that has twisted and tortured the world. It deprives us of our manhood."³⁰

All class rule, according to Marx, is necessarily a dictatorship, i.e. tyranny. A real democracy can therefore be attained only by the establishment of a classless society by over-throwing, if necessary, violently, the capitalist dictatorship. The main point is that if the ruling class did not submit, violence would be unavoidable. The revolutionary change is inevitable because of the laws of historical development. What the individual should do is to join the revolutionary party, and actively help

shorten the birth pangs of the new age. Marxism gives a scientific explanation of the class struggle as the driving force of the development of society into antagonistic classes and shows that the class struggle of the working class inevitably leads to social revolution and the rule of the Proletariat, the purpose of which is to abolish all classes and create a classless communist society. A classless structure of society will take shape mainly within the historical framework of mature socialism. In a classless society the state power would lose its function and the state would wither away. When socialism has abolished the exploitation of one class by another there remains no more need for coercion and therefore no need for any social repressive force, i.e. a state. The victory of socialism radically changes the character of the working class—they can no longer be called proletariat. No exploitation of man by man is there in a socialistic frame of society. Distinctions and divisions do not exist in such a society. The process of socialism to communism is based on the gradual obliteration of essential distinctions among workers, peasants and intelligentsia, between mental and physical labour, between town and country. The socio-political and ideological unity of the society achieved under communism is consolidated and the social homogeneity is extended to all spheres of life. It is free of exploitations of all kinds and together with the entire people owns the means of production and does not sell its labour powers. Private ownership is abolished and is replaced by public ownership. 'It is the ascent of man from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom'³¹ (Engels 'Socialism-Utopian and Scientific'.)

Communist morality advocates labour for the common benefit, work that is done not just for oneself or one's family and friends but for others too, i.e., for society as a whole. Marxist ethics is the general scientific, dialectical-materialist methodology of research into the moral process in

social evolution. Lenin repeatedly insisted that neither socialism nor communism is possible without conscious labour discipline. In this effort it is vital to encourage a conscientious attitude towards work and a genuine sense of duty. Awareness of the moral value of labour, its role in uniting the working people and its ennobling effect on the individual are evolved for the first time in communist morality. E.g.,

- (1) Socialism introduces the obligation of all members of the society to engage in socially useful labour. Socialistic way of life unites people and make them equal, thereby performing a tremendous important moral function.
- (2) Socialism asserts the value and social significance of all kinds of labour, above all, productive labour.
- (3) Socialism views labour as the principal criterion by which society judges a person.
- (4) Before Marx in all socio-economic formations the essence of each human individual preceded his existence. Social and family status at birth predetermines a man's way of life. The bourgeois society which grants personal freedom to its members, the opportunities available to many are very often determined by the wealth, a factor which lies outside the individual. Money is the determining factor almost of everything. In this respect socialism has brought about a revolution by determining a man's social worth and status not on money or wealth but on individual's own activity — the yardstick by which society judges him. Under socialism there is no socially dangerous and morally corruptive instances of nepotism, bribing etc. Conscientious labour is the true ruler of the new system. Communist morality regards free voluntary labour as a major moral principle.

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