



Selected Essays, by Karl Marx

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SELECTED ESSAYS

BY KARL MARX

TRANSLATED BY H.J. STENNING

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PREFACE

The present volume consists of a translation of some of Karl Marx's principal writings during the six years 1844-1850.

In 1843 Marx was twenty-five years old. He had just married, apparently on the strength of the modest salary he was to receive for editing, jointly with Arnold Ruge, a periodical called the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher (Franco-German Annuals)*, the purpose of which was to promote the union of German philosophy with French social science. Only one double-number of this journal appeared in 1844. It contained Marx's criticism of the Hegelian Philosophy of Right and his exposition of the social significance of the Jewish question, in the form of a review of two works by Bruno Bauer.

Translations of both articles are given in this volume.

They possess a special interest for the Marxian student, as they exhibit the grafting of a materialist philosophy upon the idealist philosophy of Hegel, and show the employment of the Hegelian dialectic in the investigation of political and historical questions.

It was not long before Marx and Ruge became intellectually estranged, and the third essay, "The King of Prussia and Social Reform," which appeared in the Paris socialist journal *Vorwärts*, contains a severe polemic against Ruge. In the same organ Marx published an elaborate defence of Engels in particular and communists in general from the strictures of Karl Heinzen, a radical republican politician. In both essays Marx ranges over a wide field, and develops his own views upon economic, political and historical questions.

The essay on Proudhon emphasizes the special merits of that writer as a pioneer of economic criticism, and forms a counterweight to Marx's devastating criticism of Proudhon in the "Poverty of Philosophy." This piece and the sketch of French materialism are extracted from *Die Heilige Familie (The Holy Family)*, a comprehensive work of satirical criticism, in which Marx and Engels (whose share in writing the book was a very small one), settled accounts with their philosophic conscience.

The critique of the views of M. Guizot upon the English and French middle-class revolutions appeared in the *Neue Rheinische Revue (New Rhenish Review)*, a periodical which Marx and Engels edited from London in

1850.

H.J.S.

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SELECTED ESSAYS

A CRITICISM OF THE HEGELIAN PHILOSOPHY OF RIGHT

As far as Germany is concerned the criticism of religion is practically completed, and the criticism of religion is the basis of all criticism.

The profane existence of error is threatened when its heavenly *oratio pro aris et focis*[1] has been refuted.

He who has only found a reflexion of himself in the fantastic reality of heaven where he looked for a superman, will no longer be willing to find only the semblance of himself, only the sub-human, where he seeks and ought to find his own reality.

The foundation of the criticism of religion is: Man makes religion, religion does not make man. Religion indeed is man's self-consciousness and self-estimation while he has not found his feet in the universe. But Man is no abstract being, squatting outside the world. Man is the world of men, the State, society. This State, this society produces religion, which is an inverted world-consciousness, because they are an inverted world. Religion is the general theory of this world, its encyclopædic compendium, its logic in popular form, its spiritualistic *Point d'honneur*, its enthusiasm, its moral sanction, its solemn complement, its general basis of consolation and justification. It is the fantastic realization of the human being, inasmuch as the human being possesses no true reality. The struggle against religion is therefore indirectly the struggle against that world whose spiritual aroma is religion.

Religious misery is in one mouth the expression of real misery, and in another is a protestation against real misery. Religion is the moan of the oppressed creature, the sentiment of a heartless world, as it is the spirit of spiritless conditions. It is the opium of the people.

The abolition of religion, as the illusory happiness of the people, is the demand for their real happiness. The demand to abandon the illusions about their condition is a demand to abandon a condition which requires illusions. The criticism of religion therefore contains potentially the criticism of the Vale of Tears whose