

into direct contact with the socialist labor movement. At that time it was still a secret organization. In his writings he relentlessly attacked all radicalism and socialism that failed to take account of the political struggles of the times or deemed itself superior to them. He opposed that abstract philosophical speculation that plays with concepts and ideas, and the kind of socialist speculation that fixes its aim according to ideas and ideals, instead of by the concrete needs of the working class. But his own theories, in so far as they had not already appeared in his critical works, were published by Marx and Engels on the eve of the revolution of 1848, in the memorable, epochmaking manifesto of the Communist Party.

It is generally known that Marx and Engels each prepared a separate draft for this manifesto, that Engels, after the two had been compared, immediately declared that of Marx to be superior to his own, that the two worked together on this manifesto until it appeared in its final form.

To us it would seem as if the original draft prepared by Marx, which has been published in the "Letters of Marx and Engels," defines the most permanent scientific work of Marx and Engels, the *materialistic conception of history*, more clearly than the final manifesto. There we read:

"The Communists propagate no new theory of private ownership. They merely express the historical fact that capitalist production and, therefore, bourgeois property relations are no longer in harmony with the social forces of production nor with the development of industry itself."

"Do not wrangle with us by judging the intended abolition of bourgeois property by your bourgeois standards of freedom and culture. Your very ideas are but the outgrowth of the conditions of your bourgeois production and bourgeois property, just as your jurisprudence is but the will of your class made into law for all, a will whose essential character and direction are determined by the economic conditions of existence of your class.

"You share with all past ruling classes the prejudiced conception that regards existing production and property relations as

the eternal laws of nature and reason, instead of looking upon them in their true light, as the historic conditions that are the outcome of a temporary stage of development of the forces of production."

"What you are well able to comprehend in the history of feudal ownership, you refuse to understand about capitalist ownership."

"Communists propagate no new theory of ownership. They merely express a fact. You deny their most forcible arguments. You must deny them. You are about-face Utopians."

This gives us, briefly, the materialistic conception of history. According to this theory, all human conceptions of right and morality as well as their philosophical expressions, are the outgrowth of human conditions, or, in other words, the methods of production of the human race, i. e., the character of the productive forces used by man—the forces of nature and the tools—are the ultimately decisive factors.

The conditions under which the human race produces exert a definite influence upon its conceptions of right, morality and world philosophy; and these latter are therefore subject to constant change in the course of human evolution.

The materialistic conception of history was by no means the immediate discovery of Marx and Engels. It had been well developed in its fundamental elements, before their time. The scientific greatness of the authors of the Communist Manifesto lies in the fact that they developed it systematically and with a definite aim in view, that they created out of a mass of undigested ideas and ideals a compact and pregnant formula.

Greatest of all contributions made by Marx to posterity is the determination of the specific role played by political economy in the history of the world. Upon this is based the theory of the class struggle. True, the existence of classes and the inevitable struggle between them had already been proclaimed. It was left to Marx and Engels to give to this struggle a scientific founda-