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Eric v. d. Luft

ENGELS, FRIEDRICH (1820–1895). Friedrich Engels was born in the Rhineland (Barmen) in 1820. He withdrew from high school to serve an apprenticeship in Barmen and Bremen (1838–1841) and performed military service in Berlin, although he exhibited more interest in philosophical studies than all other pursuits. He completed a commercial apprenticeship and training in Manchester, England (1842–1844). Engels collaborated and was cofounder with Karl Marx of the movement eventually called *Marxism*. Engels translated Marx's critiques into a more popular idiom, thereby increasing the influence of their movement, and contributed substantially to the concept of historical materialism within social and political thought. Engels devoted himself completely to the practical and theoretical task of promoting Marx's legacy after Marx's death in 1883.

In his youth, Engels became a critic of religion and his family's tendency to associate Protestantism with capitalism. In 1839, he pseudonymously published a short criticism of his family's worldview entitled "Letters from the Wuppertal" (*Works*, Vol. 1). As an advocate of radicalism in many forms, Engels was early influenced by Friedrich Schleiermacher, David Strauss, Bruno Bauer, and Ludwig Feuerbach. While in Berlin, Engels became attracted to the works of Hegel, especially Hegel's emphasis on the superiority of reason to faith. In Hegel, Engels found inspiration for his rejection of religion and his understanding of human action, institutional change, and the dialectical process of history.

For Engels, Hegel provided a philosophical system based upon the elevation of human reason that provided a "dialectic," or process, for explaining the evolution of human development. Borrowing from Hegel, Engels posited the law of the interpenetration of opposites, which suggested the possibility that objective contradictions were present in reality. Engels suggested this dialectic formed a "labor of the negative," as reality was ascertained only by the successive testing of concepts and premises. Conflicts between ideas are remedied by a dialectical union, which results in a more comprehensive understanding of reality when each concept's fallacies are negated by other theories. Engels also criticized thinkers who (he perceived) had rejected or diminished Hegel's important advancement of reason. In his *Schelling und die Offenbarung* (1842), Engels attacked Friedrich Schelling's failure to assimilate the progression of human reason, accusing Schelling of succumbing to irrationalism. As a Young Hegelian, Engels also encountered the works of early socialist theorists, includ-

ing Wilhelm Weitling and Arnold Ruge. Engels's first major work, *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1845), a cogent essay on the situation of the proletariat in an industrial society, evinces the influence of early socialist philosophers. Engels suggested the proletariat was a new social force that would transform the world.

The primary literary and philosophical influence upon Engels was Karl Marx. The two men first met and began their long friendship in 1844. Engels would spend the remainder of his life defending Marx's theory of communism, as well as coauthoring many of the primary works of Marx's philosophy, notably *The Holy Family* (1845), *The German Ideology* (1845-1846), and the *Communist Manifesto* (1848). While Engels claimed Marx was a more original and prescient thinker than himself, Engels not only influenced Marx, but he also supplied a more lucid and accessible rearticulation of Marx's own philosophical work. His popular works on political economy, the relationship between historical materialism and the natural sciences, and the Marxist view of history were of great importance. Engels's theory of dialectical materialism received further elaboration in his later works, *Anti-Dühring* (1878) and the posthumous *Dialectics of Nature* (1925). After Marx's death, Engels spent the last 12 years of his life editing Marx's unfinished manuscripts, including volumes two and three of *Das Kapital*. While the compatibility between the work of Engels and Marx remains an issue of great concern to scholars, Engels was nevertheless central to the founding of Marxism and the rise of modern revolutionary movements.

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H. Lee Cheek, Jr.

EVANS, MARY ANN. See Eliot, George.