

Sun. Sept. 28/80

Hi!

I have read the three photostats sent by Kevin.

"A" is just a fragment from Vol. II of Capital plus footnote with no comments on it. It must have been sent by mistake, Lord knows. On the other hand, maybe even the Lord doesn't know.

"B" is the introduction and table of contents from a ~~his~~ recent book by Pierre Lantz, a big-shot at the Univ. of Besançon, called Valeur et Richesse ("Value and Wealth"). I'm not quite sure what he's talking about in his introduction, but it sounds like he might be another truncator of Marx, and that this was sent just to be aware of his name - maybe a possible future theoretical nuisance. (by the way, his book was published in 1977 by the Editions Anthropos) ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

"C" is the first French translation of an article by Mehring ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ (who you had just mentioned at the last meeting), published in La Nouvelle Critique no. 61 of Jan. 1955. The original dates from 1901 from a collection called The Literary Heritage of Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, and Ferdinand Lasalle (published by Mehring).

The article is called "Karl Marx's Thesis on Democritus and Epicurus". Translator Josi Lefebvre, introduced, and one part of it edited out by Jean Freville. It is about Marx's doctoral thesis presented at the Univ. of Jena in 1841.

(I thought it was interesting reading.)

I jotted down a few notes on it:

✓ Mehring says that the German bourgeoisie, except for a few philosophers, had a poor sense of class-consciousness back then, and that Marx of that time was part of the developing bourgeoisie. Mehring calls them the "Montagnards of philosophy".

(Then Freville edits out a part devoted to the history of Greek philosophy.)

✓ -- Mehring says that Hegel's treatment of Epicurianism ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ stoicism, and scepticism was like a "personal rancor". Then he says "But any philosophy of ideas carries an element of reactionary decay, which was strongly developed in Hegel's system."

✓ Mehring weighs heavily on the question of national consciousness, contrasting the Germans of his day to the ancient Greeks.

-- There is some discussion of Descartes, Newton, and Boyle in relation to Epicurianism.

-- I will translate the last paragraph in full just for good measure:

"It is precisely this combative spirit which prevented Marx from writing the work which he ~~planned~~ planned whole range of Epicurean, Stoic, and Sceptic philosophies. The more the possibilities for practical struggle, the more he threw himself into it without reserve in order to, in this victorious march forward, throw light on the self-consciousness of the class for whom only its' victory can realise make real the philosophy of consciousness-of-self and create a condition of human society where the free development of each will be the condition of the free development of all. It is in that decisive thought of the Communist Manifesto that the intellectual work begun by Marx in his doctoral thesis reaches its' culminating point."

MEHRING TEXT

(Oct. 27, 1980)⁺²⁸

Paragraph "A" to be translated (4th paragraph of the text).

But the bourgeois class developed more and more, and its' consciousness-of-self made its' presence known more and more noisily. It found its' warmest spokesmen in Bauer, Köppen ~~Koepen?~~ ^(If this article is better English spelling), and Marx; concerning them, in a letter to Prutz, Ruge declares that their distinctive sign is their attachment to the bourgeois Aufklärung; and that, Montagnards of philosophy, they were inscribing the MANE, THECEL, PHARES into the stormy skies of Germany. It is no less true, though, that these Montagnards of philosophy were still only philosophers; caught up in practical struggles, they saw themselves as constrained to submit their philosophy to critical examination and to seek the point from which it would be possible to continue (or to remain in continuity with) with their ~~great~~ ^(or "grand") master while at the same time going beyond him. This point they found in the Philosophy of History of Hegel, in the chapter containing a description of the Greek philosophy of consciousness-of-self.

THIS OR A VARIATION OF THIS MIGHT BE A BETTER EXPRESSION OF IT?

to be known
philosophy
their works

*I have tried to translate this passage as
well as I can, but I am sure it is
not perfect. I have tried to make
it as clear as possible, but I am
sure it is still not perfect.*

W.C.

14489

Mehring text

(Oct. 28/80)

Paragraph "B" to be translated (6th paragraph of the text). PAGE 1

For the young generation which came out (grew out?) of the Hegelian school, who wished to get out of this system, surrounded as if by a cage, the temptation was all the greater to break the bars which were especially (particularly) thin at this point. ^{→ BOTTOM OF NEXT PAGE} Without a doubt it could appear contradictory that the ideological vanguard of the bourgeois class, which sought to create for the German people the national existence which they had never known, strengthened its' consciousness-of-self by its' contact with that of Antiquity, which was born out of the decomposition of a national existence. But this contradiction was no more than appearance. Bruno Bauer's ruin was not knowing how to recognize the moment from which the philosophical (robes) ("vêtement", clothing) garments of the class struggle led by the bourgeoisie ceased to favor that undertaking ("enterprise") and became a brake to it. Nonetheless, the philosophy of Stoicism, of Epicureanism and of Skepticism had had, in the past, a great historical existence, it had opened new perspectives to the human mind, broken the social barrier of slavery, of which Plato and Aristotle were still totally prisoners; it had fertilized primitive Christianity in a decisive manner, that religion of people who suffer and of the oppressed, which did not convert itself to Plato and Aristotle until it had become the Church of the rulers ("masters", literally), (an) ^{← NOT IN THE TEXT, BUT GRAMMATICALLY} instrument of exploitation and of oppression. Hegel himself couldn't keep from pointing out the meaning

*of some circled parts in pencil
when other words might fit, and underline
my first translation.*

GRAMMATICALLY SEEMS TO BELONG THERE.

14490

ML

Mehring text

(Oct. 28/80)

Paragraph "B" translated, PAGE 2.

which the interior freedom of the Subject had had in the total ruin
(unhappiness, misery) of the Roman Empire, where everything which was
beautiful and noble in spiritual individuality (the individuality of the
spirit) had been heavy-handedly and brutally destroyed. So the Bourgeois
^{"brute-handedly" IS SUCH A WORD EXISTED}
Aufklärung of the 18th century, had it not already put into action (mobilized/
(called up) the Greek philosophies of consciousness-of-self, the doubt of
the Sceptics, the hatred of the Epicureans toward religion, the republican
sentiments of the Stoics?

ACTED?
UPON?

I think that this is a reference to the point
in the previous paragraph about Hegel also
attempting to grasp the totality of the
knowledge of his time from a precisely
representative point of view.

Mehring was the philosopher here, the
3 attributes are all philosophy.

14491

700

Mehring text.

(Oct. 28/80)

Last paragraph of the text, & to be translated:

*do it
to it
Stoic or Stoical
philosophy
I really don't
know.*

It is precisely this combative spirit which prevented Marx from writing the work which he was contemplating on the cycle of Epicurean, Stoical, and Skeptical philosophies. The greater the possibilities of practical struggles became, the more he threw himself into them wholeheartedly "without reserve" is the literal French version in order to, in this victorious march forward, throw light upon the newly-born consciousness-of-self of that class alone whose victory can make real "realize", the literal the philosophy of consciousness-of-self and create a state of human society where the free development of each shall be the condition for the free development of all. It is in this decisive thinking of the Communist Manifesto that the intellectual labor which Marx began in his doctoral thesis reached its' culminating point.

sometimes
I have used the American
spelling of "Skeptic" since I
couldn't decide which to use.

M.

14492