in the relation between laity and priest, or, since it is here a question of the spiritual world, between the laity and a mediator. In the real world of practice this self-alienation can only be expressed in the real, practical relation of man to his fellow men. The medium through which alienation occurs is itself a practical one. Through alienated labour, therefore, man not only produces his relation to the object and to the process of production as to alien and hostile men, but he also produces the relation of other men to his production and his product, and the relation between himself and other men. Just as he creates his own production as a vitiating, a punishment, and his own product as a loss, as a product which does not belong to him, so he creates the domination of the non-producer over production and its product. As he alienates his own activity, so he bestows upon the stranger an activity which is not his own.

We have so far considered this relation only from the side of the worker, and later on we shall consider it also from the side of the non-worker.

Thus, through alienated labour the worker creates the relation of another man, who does not work and is outside the work process, to this labour. The relation of the worker to work also produces the relation of the capitalist (or whatever one likes to call the lord of labour) to work. Private property is, therefore, the product, the necessary result, of alienated labour, of the external relation of the worker to nature and to himself.

Private property is thus derived from the analysis of the concept of alienated labour; that is, alienated man, alienated labour, alienated life, and estranged man.

Theses on Feuerbach*

I

The chief defect of all previous materialism (including that of Feuerbach) is that things (Gegenstand), reality, the sensible world, are conceived only in the form of objects (Objekt) of observation, but not as human sense activity, not as practical activity, not subjectively. Hence, in opposition to materialism, the active side was developed abstractly by idealism, which of course does not know real sense activity as such. Feuerbach wants sensible objects really distinguished from the objects of thought, but he does not understand human activity itself as objective (gegenständlich) activity. Consequently, in The Essence of Christianity, he regards the theoretical attitude as the only genuine human attitude, while practical activity is apprehended only in its dirty Jewish manifestation. He therefore does not grasp the significance of "revolutionary," "practical-critical" activity.

II

The question whether human thinking can pretend to objective (gegenständlich) truth is not a theoretical but a practical question. Man must prove the truth, i.e., the reality and power, the "this-sidedness" of his thinking in practice. The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking that is isolated from practice is a purely scholastic question.

III

The materialist doctrine concerning the changing of circumstances and education forgets that circumstances are changed by men and that the educator must himself be educated. This doctrine has therefore to divide society into two parts, one of which is superior to society.

The coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity or self-changing can only be grasped and rationally understood as revolutionary practice.

IV

Feuerbach sets out from the fact of religious self-alienation, the duplication of the world into a religious and a secular one. His work consists in resolving the religious world into its secular basis. But the fact that the secular basis deserts its own sphere and establishes an independent realm in the clouds, can only be explained by the cleavage and self-contradictions within this secular basis. The latter therefore, must itself be both understood in its contradictions and revolutionized in practice. Thus, for instance, once the earthly family is discovered to be the secret of the heavenly family the former must itself be destroyed in theory and in practice.

V

Feuerbach, not satisfied with abstract thought, wants empirical observation, but he does not conceive the sensible world as practical, human sense activity.

VI

Feuerbach resolves the essence of religion into the essence of man. But the essence of man is not an abstraction inherent in each particular individual. The real nature of man is the totality of social relations. Feuerbach, who does not enter upon a criticism of this real nature, is therefore obliged:

1. to abstract from the historical process, to hypostatize the religious sentiment, and to postulate an abstract—isolated—human individual;
2. to conceive the nature of man only in terms of a "genus," as an inner and mute universal quality which unites the many individuals in a purely natural (biological) way.

VII

Feuerbach therefore does not see that the "religious sentiment" is itself a social product, and that the abstract individual whom he analyses belongs to a particular form of society.

VIII

All social life is essentially practical. All the mysteries which lead
that the Young Hegelians have to fight only against these illusions of the consciousness. Since, according to their fantasy, the relationships of men, all their doings, their chains and their limitations are products of their consciousness, the Young Hegelians logically put to men the moral postulate of exchanging their present consciousness for human, critical or egotistic consciousness, and thus of removing their limitations.

This demand to change consciousness amounts to a demand to interpret reality in another way, i.e. to accept it by means of another interpretation. The Young-Hegelian ideologists, in spite of their allegedly “world-shattering” statements, are the staunchest conservatives. The most recent of them have found the correct expression for their activity when they declare they are only fighting against “phrases.” They forget, however, that to these phrases they themselves are only opposing other phrases, and that they are in no way combating the real existing world when they are merely combating the phrases of this world. The only result which this philosophic criticism could achieve were a few (and at that thoroughly one-sided) elucidations of Christianity from the point of view of religious history; all the rest of their assertions are only further embellishments of their claim to have furnished, in these unimportant elucidations, discoveries of universal importance.

It has not occurred to any one of these philosophers to inquire into the connection of German philosophy with German reality, the relation of their criticism to their own material surroundings....

The premises from which we begin are not arbitrary ones, not dogmas, but real premises from which abstraction can only be made in the imagination. They are the real individuals, their activity and the material conditions under which they live, both those which they find already existing and those produced by their activity. These premises can thus be verified in a purely empirical way.

The first premise of all human history is, of course, the existence of living human individuals. Thus the first fact to be established is the physical organization of these individuals and their consequent relation to the rest of nature. Of course, we cannot here go either into the actual physical nature of man, or into the natural conditions in which man finds himself—geological, orohydrographical, climatic and so on. The writing of history must always set out from these natural bases and their modification in the course of history through the action of man.

Men can be distinguished from animals by consciousness, by religion or anything else you like. They themselves begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to produce their means
of subsistence, a step which is conditioned by their physical organization. By producing their means of subsistence men are indirectly producing their actual material life.

The way in which men produce their means of subsistence depends first of all on the nature of the actual means they find in existence and have to reproduce. This mode of production must not be considered simply as being the reproduction of the physical existence of the individuals. Rather it is a definite form of activity of these individuals, a definite form of expressing their life, a definite mode of life on their part. As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with what they produce and with how they produce. The nature of individuals thus depends on the material conditions determining their production.

This production only makes its appearance with the increase of population. In its turn this presupposes the intercourse of individuals with one another. The form of this intercourse is again determined by production.

The relations of different nations among themselves depend upon the extent to which each has developed its productive forces, the division of labour and internal intercourse. This statement is generally recognized. But not only the relation of one nation to others, but also the whole internal structure of the nation itself depends on the stage of development reached by its production and its internal and external intercourse. How far the productive forces of a nation are developed is shown most manifestly by the degree to which the division of labour has been carried. Each new productive force, in so far as it is not merely a quantitative extension of productive forces already known, (for instance the bringing into cultivation of fresh land), brings about a further development of the division of labour.

The division of labour inside a nation leads at first to the separation of industrial and commercial from agricultural labour, and hence to the separation of town and country and a clash of interests between them. Its further development leads to the separation of commercial from industrial labour. At the same time through the division of labour there develop further, inside these various branches, various divisions among the individuals co-operating in definite kinds of labour. The relative position of these individual groups is determined by the methods employed in agriculture, industry and commerce (patriarchalism, slavery, estates, classes). These same conditions are to be seen (given a more developed intercourse) in the relations of different nations to one another... 

The fact is, therefore, that definite individuals who are produc-
the real living individuals themselves, as they are in actual life, and consciousness is considered solely as their consciousness.

This method of approach is not devoid of premises. It starts out from the real premises and does not abandon them for a moment. Its premises are men, not in any fantastic isolation or abstract definition, but in their actual, empirically perceptible process of development under definite conditions. As soon as this active life-process is described, history ceases to be a collection of dead facts as it is with the empiricists (themselves still abstract), or an imagined activity of imagined subjects, as with the idealists.

Where speculation ends—in real life—there real, positive science begins: the representation of the practical activity, of the practical process of development of men. Empty talk about consciousness ceases, and real knowledge has to take its place. When reality is depicted, philosophy as an independent branch of activity loses its medium of existence. At the best its place can only be taken by a summing-up of the most general results, abstractions which arise from the observation of the historical development of men. Viewed apart from real history, these abstractions have in themselves no value whatsoever. They can only serve to facilitate the arrangement of historical material, to indicate the sequence of its separate strata. But they by no means afford a recipe or schema, as does philosophy, for neatly trimming the epochs of history. On the contrary, our difficulties begin only when we set about the observation and the arrangement—the real depiction of our historical material, whether of a past epoch or of the present. The removal of these difficulties is governed by premises which it is quite impossible to state here, but which only the study of the actual life-process and the activity of the individuals of each epoch will make evident.

Soren Aabye Kierkegaard (1813-55) was born in Copenhagen, a city in which he spent almost the whole of his life. From 1830 he attended Copenhagen University as a theology student, but his interests at this time were primarily philosophical and literary, and a decade was to elapse before he finally took his examinations. In the same year (1840) he became engaged, but later broke off the relationship; this episode was to haunt him afterwards and references to it recur in his writings. In 1843 he published Either Or, a book in which two forms of life—an "aesthetic" and an "ethical"—are contrasted, and it was followed by a succession of works with philosophical, religious, and psychological themes; they include Fear and Trembling (1843), The Concept of Dread (1844), Philosophical Fragments (1844), Concluding Unscientific Postscript (1846), and The Sickness Unto Death (1849). He also kept a journal in which he recorded in considerable detail his personal and spiritual development. During the two years that preceded his death Kierkegaard was involved in a bitter controversy with the Danish state church, which he accused of perverting and emasculating the faith it claimed to represent.

As the first of the selections given below indicates, Kierkegaard, though himself a dedicated Christian, had no use for attempts to justify religious belief in rational terms; and for similar reasons he was deeply hostile to the Hegelian claim to have preserved the essential content of Christianity within the framework of an all-embracing metaphysical theory. As against the "System," with its vaunted reconciliation of opposites, its unification of thought and existence, its subordination of the individual to universal categories and historical forces, he stressed separation and division, insisting upon the priority of concrete human reality to abstract thinking and underlining the significance of personal choice and commitment; despite his differences