MARXISM AND DARWINISM

A MAN'S EYE VIEW OF EVOLUTION

It is no longer a moot question or a matter of opinion whether the theory of organic evolution (Darwinism) is valid or not. The science editor of Saturday Review, John Lear, in a special Darwin issue (11/14/59) says:

> "...the irrefutable evidence (proves) that living things — from invisible microbes to man — slowly acquired their present dimensions, properties and functions (including consciousness) under such analyzable natural law as variations and natural selection."

This general acceptance of Darwin's epoch-making contribution underlies the widespread celebration of the 100th anniversary of the publication of the "Origin of Species." There is hardly a popular journal that has not had a special issue devoted to Darwinism. (1)

It is especially significant that Darwinism has uprooted religious superstitions. In spite of the appearances of religious growth and persistence, hardly any one is any longer religious in his own daily spheres of activities. Apologists usually qualify their defense of religion with statements that transform their "convictions" into statements of ethics and morals. A case in point is no less an authority than Samuel Miller, Dean of the Harvard Divinity School, who wrote in a featured article, devoted to Darwinism, in the Saturday Review (11/14/59):

> "The whole imaginative structure of Christian truth, elaborated in myth and symbol, for the most part has crumbled under the impact of the last three centuries of revolutionary thought, scientific methods, and historical studies. The vision of reality articulated in this great Biblical formulary has evaporated and no longer serves as the frame of reference for elucidating the mysteries of being human... We have reached a new maturity of freedom from superstition and credulity."

(1) Of special interest to the readers of The Western Socialist would be the **"Darwin Centenary Issue"** of the Socialist Standard, November, 1959.

And John Lear (referred to above) goes a step further:

> "Our now misplaced supernaturalism, slightly mitigated, but persisting into the new Age of Science, has left our social and political leadership unprepared to define accurately our present problems."

EVOLUTION — ORGANIC AND SOCIAL

We find the key for the understanding of biological evolution in Darwinism, which deals with the evolution of biological organs, in particular, the evolution of animal organs transmitted through heredity. Marxism may be summarized as the study of the social evolution of human tools (the deliberate planning and making of things to be used by man) as a substitute for animal organs. Progress of man may be seen in his ever-increasing mastery over nature, traced through the evolution of his material conditions of existence.

Both Darwinism and Marxism have the same purpose of explaining the processes enabling living beings to ensure their food and life.

Darwinism shows why those animals best adapted survive in the struggle for life and transplant their more suitable qualities on to their progeny. What is selected and transplanted is their equipment — their organs. These organs are part of the body and are subject to biological laws of heredity and variation.

Marxism, in its examination of man's evolution, is the study of tools, outside the body. Man's struggle for existence is carried on with tools. Its evolution is a social phenomenon and not a biological one. Man is not limited by biological restrictions as is the rest of the animal kingdom. Man is not limited to specific modes of life or natural environments. With the aid of tools he adapts himself to

varying climates and changing conditions. Whilst his bodily equipment essentially has not changed for tens of thousands of years, his "artificial organs" (tools) have enabled him to adapt to constant and rapid changes. (It might be said that man, with his knowledge of biological laws, is bringing to a close the biological evolution of the previous billions of years. Truly, man is on the verge of becoming master over his own destiny.)

MATERIALISM

The reason why the Marxists of 1859 were among the very first to hail Darwinism was the realization of a landmark in corroborating the validity of the materialist attitude that there are physical-material explanations for all phenomena and that everything is interrelated and in a constant process of motion and change. Modern science is becoming aware that there is neither dualism (the concept of the universe being two-fold, the spirit world and the material world) nor design in nature and that it is monist (the concept that all existence is an interrelated whole with no independent parts).

Coupled together, Darwinism and Marxism were powerful blows against superstition and led the way to the realization of the evolution of existence. Who would deny, today, that there was a time when there were no men or even living organism? Anyone aware of geological truths would not dispute that there was a time without the existence of the earth. Less understood is that there was a time without astronomy and without mass (matter in the form of particles). What more appropriate occasion to point out the spreading recognition of evolutionary processes in all phases of infinite existence than in these comments dealing with Darwinism and Marxism.

We next proceed to the ambitious task of correlating the multitude of scientific explorations and contributions into a unified outlook on science, as an interrelated whole, establishing the patterns of evolutionary processes that bring us up to the present.

PANORAMA OF EVOLUTION IN MOTION

Let us summarize a man's eye view of the evolution of existence in light of today's science. It is a summary of processes and not mechanisms. It is concerned with generalizations and not specific details. Both Darwinism and Marxism are on sound grounds in their generalizations of processes, yet history may and does reveal errors in their specific details and applications.

All existence may be classified into five major stages: Matter, Astronomy, Geology, Biology and Sociology.

By its very nature, existence is never at rest, it is in a constant process of motion resulting in a parade of changes. The further one goes back, the simpler, more widespread and longer-enduring are the stages. In the evolutionary process, each succeeding progression emerging out of its antecedents becomes more complex and less widespread. Each later stage is but a particular phase of the preceding larger general stage of evolution.

The all-encompassing generalization of all existence is matter, from which rose astronomy. Eventually, geology — the child of astronomy — appeared on the scene, one of its consequences being biology, from which sprang sociology.

The above description of motion and change also applies within the development of each of these great generalized stages of existence, as well.

In a word, we are tracing, here, the evolution of existence from its simpler and earlier form as energy to its latest and most complex form as capitalism.

MATTER

All existence consists of matter. Matter is not confined to mass, however (things that are tangible and occupy space). Energy is also matter. The very strides in atomic physics are the visible demonstration that both energy and mass are forms of matter — are material. The famous Einstein formula. (Energy equals mass