Background Info

Both Marx* and Engels were rich and hence privileged but shocked by the English poverty.
They mainly focused on "putting Hegel back on his feet"
Both thought that real problems are material(= cannot be captured by ideas) and philosophy is limited

*Marx was a young Hegelian himself

Material ideas

Marx and Engels agreed with La Mettrie on the notion that ideas are material things of the brain.
They claimed that the brain and its ideas are formed by material circumstances
-> resolving problems is thus not done by ideas which are themselves consequences of problematic circumstances
we should be changing our material circumstances, rather than ideas.

Ideology

= the claim that ideas can make things better; it is every notion that consciousness/ideas are the first structure
It is supposed to form a distraction from material structures
-> But according to Marx and Engels that's impossible
the problem of ideology: it hides the real requirement for resolving problems
-> this problem rises from material circumstances since material problems require material solutions
BUT: (genetic) empirical research can help us

Communism

main points of communism:
- one should be able to enjoy the fruits of their own labour
- personal good and common good align
- there should be freedom of self-expression in labour: one should have the freedom to have the job they desire
- strives for equality instead of differences: "everyone is taken care of"

communism was sparked by the industrial revolution:
In this new society philosophers (and scientists) were dependent on economic circumstances. which meant that only ideas that “survive the market” can be maintained and research was determined by economic structures.
-> this caused philosophy and most science to be suspicious

Old/Right Hegelians

the old/right Hegelians were according to them politically conservative.
These Hegelians think that the state is provably rational and thereby religion is validated. They also claimed that simple progression* doesn't understand itself
-> hence God is unfolded in and validates the Prussian state

they were mostly influenced by Hegel's metaphysics

Young/Left Hegelian

the young/left Hegelians are more humanistic, as they were self-conscious. History is, according to them, revolutionary. Religion is only a pre-stage of real understanding*
they try to exchange an idea with another idea; its not important whether that idea is God or the human being (mainstream hegalians)
they claimed that doing philosophy as an exchange of ideas is meaningless, as ideas are not a condition but a consequence of change (marx/engels)

*they based this on Hegel's claims that God occurs in the cultural understanding of Man and is part of the historical dialect.

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Dialectical Materialism

Was a term by Engels.
It claims that:
1) history unfolds itself; unfolding by the development of means of production (rather than by logical contradiction)
2) matter is primary
-> They think that there is a necessary dialectical development of history based on our socio-economic needs and development of technology; the last stage of this development is communism and we know this by means of the empirical method

The problems of Hegelians

According to Marx and Engels, problems are (always) material/socio-economical problems.
The problem of Hegelians, according to them, is they are too influenced and "possessed" by ideas/truths told to them by society (e.g. gravity).
-> if they were to get these notions out of their heads and be more sceptic they would be able to see clearer

“Once upon a time a valiant fellow had the idea that men were drowned in water only because they were possessed with the idea of gravity. If they were to get this notion out of their heads, say by avowing it to be a superstitious, a religious concept, they would be sublimely proof against any danger from water.”

The Human Being

They claim the human being makes itself.
and while animals are determined by their environment, human beings decide and produce our environments
-> this new environment allows the human being to determine their environment even further
in short, the world is changeable
According to Marx/Engels, the human being forms itself because it tries to sustain itself
-> this sustainment depends on other people (in the 1st place on sexual reproduction, but also other forms of production)
History is formed new forms of production

Emperical Knowledge

the problem with empirical knowledge is that it doesn't seem to be normative
-> normativity seems ideological

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