







**V. I. LENIN**



**THE THEORETICAL PRINCIPLES  
OF MARXISM**

# V • I • L E N I N

## SELECTED WORKS

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IN TWELVE VOLUMES

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# **V·I·LENIN**

## **SELECTED WORKS**

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**VOLUME XI**

**THE THEORETICAL PRINCIPLES  
OF MARXISM**



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## PREFACE

THE present volume of *Selected Works* coincides with Part I of Vol. VI of the Russian six-volume edition of the *Selected Works* of V. I. Lenin prepared by the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute, Moscow.

The explanatory notes given in the preceding volumes of *Selected Works* have been omitted from this volume for reasons already stated in the Preface to Vol. IX.



**PART I**  
**GENERAL DESCRIPTION**  
**OF MARXISM**





## THE THREE SOURCES AND THREE COMPONENT PARTS OF MARXISM

THROUGHOUT the civilised world the teachings of Marx evoke the utmost hostility and hatred of all bourgeois science (both official and liberal), which regards Marxism as a kind of "pernicious sect." And no other attitude is to be expected, for there can be no "impartial" social science in a society based on class struggle. In one way or another, *all* official and liberal science *defends* wage-slavery, whereas Marxism has declared relentless war on wage-slavery. To expect science to be impartial in a wage-slave society is as silly and naïve as to expect impartiality from manufacturers on the question whether workers' wages should be increased by decreasing the profits of capital.

But this is not all. The history of philosophy and the history of social science show with perfect clarity that there is nothing resembling "sectarianism" in Marxism, in the sense of its being a hidebound, petrified doctrine, a doctrine which arose *away from* the highroad of development of world civilisation. On the contrary, the genius of Marx consists precisely in the fact that he furnished answers to questions which had already engrossed the foremost minds of humanity. His teachings arose as a direct and immediate *continuation* of the teachings of the greatest representatives of philosophy, political economy and Socialism.

The Marxian doctrine is omnipotent because it is true. It is complete and harmonious, and provides men with an integral world conception which is irreconcilable with any form of superstition, reaction, or defence of bourgeois oppression. It is the legitimate successor of the best that was created by humanity in the nineteenth century in the shape of German philosophy, English political economy and French Socialism.

On these three sources of Marxism, which are at the same time its component parts, we shall briefly dwell.

## I

The philosophy of Marxism is *materialism*. Throughout the modern history of Europe, and especially at the end of the eighteenth century in France, which was the scene of a decisive battle against every kind of mediæval rubbish, against feudalism in institutions and ideas, materialism has proved to be the only philosophy that is consistent, true to all the teachings of natural science and hostile to superstition, Kant and so forth. The enemies of democracy therefore tried in every way to "refute," undermine and defame materialism, and advocated various forms of philosophical idealism, which always, in one way or another, amounts to an advocacy or support of religion.

Marx and Engels always defended philosophical materialism in the most determined manner and repeatedly explained the profound erroneousness of every deviation from this basis. Their views are most clearly and fully expounded in the works of Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach* and *Anti-Dühring*, which, like the *Communist Manifesto*, are handbooks for every class-conscious worker.

But Marx did not stop at the materialism of the eighteenth century; he advanced philosophy. He enriched it with the acquisitions of German classical philosophy, especially of the Hegelian system, which in its turn led to the materialism of Feuerbach. The chief of these acquisitions is *dialectics*, i.e., the doctrine of development in its fullest and deepest form, free of one-sidedness—the doctrine of the relativity of human knowledge, which provides us with a reflection of eternally developing matter. The latest discoveries of natural science—radium, electrons, the transmutation of elements—have remarkably confirmed Marx's dialectical materialism, despite the teachings of the bourgeois philosophers with their "new" reversions to old and rotten idealism.

Deepening and developing philosophical materialism, Marx completed it, extended its knowledge of nature to the knowledge of *human society*. Marx's *historical materialism* was one of the great

est achievements of scientific thought. The chaos and arbitrariness that had previously reigned in the views on history and politics gave way to a strikingly integral and harmonious scientific theory, which shows how, in consequence of the growth of productive forces, out of one system of social life another and higher system develops—how capitalism, for instance, grows out of feudalism.

Just as man's knowledge reflects nature (*i.e.*, developing matter), which exists independently of him, so man's *social knowledge* (*i.e.*, the various views and doctrines—philosophical, religious, political, and so forth) reflects the *economic system* of society. Political institutions are a superstructure on the economic foundation. We see, for example, that the various political forms of the modern European states serve to fortify the rule of the bourgeoisie over the proletariat.

Marx's philosophy is finished philosophical materialism, which has provided humanity, and especially the working class, with powerful instruments of knowledge.

## II

Having recognised that the economic system is the foundation on which the political superstructure is erected, Marx devoted most attention to the study of this economic system. Marx's principal work, *Capital*, is devoted to a study of the economic system of modern, *i.e.*, capitalist, society.

Classical political economy, before Marx, evolved in England, the most developed of the capitalist countries. Adam Smith and David Ricardo, by their investigations of the economic system, laid the foundations of the *labour theory of value*. Marx continued their work. He rigidly proved and consistently developed this theory. He showed that the value of every commodity is determined by the quantity of socially necessary labour time spent on its production.

Where the bourgeois economists saw a relation of things (the exchange of one commodity for another), Marx revealed a *relation of men*. The exchange of commodities expresses the tie by which

individual producers are bound through the market. *Money* signifies that this tie is becoming closer and closer, inseparably binding the entire economic life of the individual producers into one whole. *Capital* signifies a further development of this tie: man's labour power becomes a commodity. The wage-worker sells his labour power to the owner of the land, factories and instruments of labour. The worker uses one part of the labour day to cover the expense of maintaining himself and his family (wages), while the other part of the day the worker toils without remuneration, creating *surplus value* for the capitalist, the source of profit, the source of the wealth of the capitalist class.

The doctrine of surplus value is the corner-stone of Marx's economic theory.

Capital, created by the labour of the worker, presses on the worker by ruining the small masters and creating an army of unemployed. In industry, the victory of large-scale production is at once apparent, but we observe the same phenomenon in agriculture as well: the superiority of large-scale capitalist agriculture increases, the application of machinery grows, peasant economy falls into the noose of money-capital, it declines and sinks into ruin, burdened by its backward technique. In agriculture, the decline of small-scale production assumes different forms, but the decline itself is an indisputable fact.

By destroying small-scale production, capital leads to an increase in productivity of labour and to the creation of a monopoly position for the associations of big capitalists. Production itself becomes more and more social—hundreds of thousands and millions of workers become bound together in a systematic economic organism—but the product of the collective labour is appropriated by a handful of capitalists. The anarchy of production grows, as do crises, the furious chase after markets and the insecurity of existence of the mass of the population.

While increasing the dependence of the workers on capital, the capitalist system creates the great power of united labour.

Marx traced the development of capitalism from the first germs of commodity economy, from simple exchange, to its highest forms, to large-scale production.

And the experience of all capitalist countries, old and new, is clearly demonstrating the truth of this Marxian doctrine to increasing numbers of workers every year.

Capitalism has triumphed all over the world, but this triumph is only the prelude to the triumph of labour over capital.

### III

When feudalism was overthrown, and "*free*" capitalist society appeared on God's earth, it at once became apparent that this freedom meant a new system of oppression and exploitation of the toilers. Various Socialist doctrines immediately began to arise as a reflection of and protest against this oppression. But early Socialism was *utopian* Socialism. It criticised capitalist society, it condemned and damned it, it dreamed of its destruction, it indulged in fancies of a better order and endeavoured to convince the rich of the immorality of exploitation.

But utopian Socialism could not point the real way out. It could not explain the essence of wage-slavery under capitalism, nor discover the laws of its development, nor point to the *social force* which is capable of becoming the creator of a new society.

Meanwhile, the stormy revolutions which everywhere in Europe, and especially in France, accompanied the fall of feudalism, of serfdom, more and more clearly revealed the *struggle of classes* as the basis and the motive force of the whole development.

Not a single victory of political freedom over the feudal class was won except against desperate resistance. Not a single capitalist country evolved on a more or less free and democratic basis except by a life and death struggle between the various classes of capitalist society.

The genius of Marx consists in the fact that he was able before anybody else to draw from this and consistently apply the deduction that world history teaches. This deduction is the doctrine of the *class struggle*.

People always were and always will be the stupid victims of deceit and self-deceit in politics until they learn to discover the *interests* of some class behind all moral, religious, political and

social phrases, declarations and promises. The supporters of reforms and improvements will always be fooled by the defenders of the old order until they realise that every old institution, however barbarous and rotten it may appear to be, is maintained by the forces of some ruling classes. And there is *only one* way of smashing the resistance of these classes, and that is to find, in the very society which surrounds us, and to enlighten and organise for the struggle, the forces which can—and, owing to their social position, *must*—constitute a power capable of sweeping away the old and creating the new.

Marx's philosophical materialism has alone shown the proletariat the way out of the spiritual slavery in which all oppressed classes have hitherto languished. Marx's economic theory has alone explained the true position of the proletariat in the general system of capitalism.

Independent organisations of the proletariat are multiplying all over the world, from America to Japan and from Sweden to South Africa. The proletariat is becoming enlightened and educated by waging its class struggle; it is ridding itself of the prejudices of bourgeois society; it is rallying its ranks ever more closely and is learning to gauge the measure of its successes; it is steeling its forces and is growing irresistibly.

March 1913

## KARL MARX

KARL MARX was born May 5, 1818, in the city of Trier (Rhenish Prussia). His father was a lawyer, a Jew, who in 1824 adopted Protestantism. The family was well-to-do, cultured, but not revolutionary. After graduating from the *gymnasium* in Trier, Marx entered university, first at Bonn and later at Berlin, where he studied jurisprudence and, chiefly, history and philosophy. He concluded his course in 1841, submitting his doctoral dissertation on the philosophy of Epicurus. In his views Marx at that time was still a Hegelian idealist. In Berlin he belonged to the circle of "Left Hegelians" (Bruno Bauer and others) who sought to draw atheistic and revolutionary conclusions from Hegel's philosophy.

After graduating from the university, Marx moved to Bonn, expecting to become a professor. But the reactionary policy of the government—which in 1832 deprived Ludwig Feuerbach of his chair and in 1836 refused to allow him to return to the university, and in 1841 forbade the young professor, Bruno Bauer, to lecture at Bonn—forced Marx to abandon the idea of pursuing an academic career. At that time the views of the Left Hegelians were developing very rapidly in Germany. Ludwig Feuerbach, particularly after 1836, began to criticise theology and to turn to materialism, which in 1811 gained the upper hand in his philosophy (*Das Wesen des Christentums* [*The Essence of Christianity*]); in 1843 his *Grundsätze der Philosophie der Zukunft* (*Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*) appeared. "One must himself have experienced the liberating effect" of these books, Engels subsequently wrote of these works of Feuerbach. "We [*i.e.*, the Left Hegelians, including Marx] all became at once Feuerbachians."<sup>1</sup> At that time some Rhenish radical bourgeois who had certain points in common with

<sup>1</sup> F. Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach*, Eng. ed., 1934, p. 28—Ed.



the Left Hegelians founded an opposition paper in Cologne, the *Rheinische Zeitung* (*Rhenish Gazette*)—the first number appeared on January 1, 1842. Marx and Bruno Bauer were invited to be the chief contributors, and in October 1842 Marx became chief editor and removed from Bonn to Cologne. The revolutionary-democratic trend of the paper became more and more pronounced under Marx's editorship, and the government first subjected the paper to double and triple censorship and then on January 1, 1843, decided to suppress it altogether. Marx had to resign the editorship before that date, but his resignation did not save the paper, which was closed down in March 1843. Of the more important articles contributed by Marx to the *Rheinische Zeitung*, Engels notes, in addition to those indicated below (see *Bibliography*),<sup>1</sup> an article on the condition of the peasant wine-growers of the Moselle Valley. His journalistic activities convinced Marx that he was not sufficiently acquainted with political economy, and he zealously set out to study it.

In 1843, in Kreuznach, Marx married Jenny von Westphalen, a childhood friend to whom he had been engaged while still a student. His wife came from a reactionary family of the Prussian nobility. Her elder brother was Prussian Minister of the Interior at a most reactionary period, 1850-58. In the autumn of 1843 Marx went to Paris in order, together with Arnold Ruge (born 1802, died 1880; a Left Hegelian; in 1825-30, in prison; after 1848, a political exile; after 1866-70, a Bismarckian), to publish a radical magazine abroad. Only one issue of this magazine, *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* (*German-French Annals*) appeared. It was discontinued owing to the difficulty of secret distribution in Germany and to disagreements with Ruge. In his articles in this magazine Marx already appears as a revolutionary; he advocates the "merciless criticism of everything existing," and in particular the "criticism of arms," and appeals to the *masses* and to the *proletariat*.

In September 1844 Frederick Engels came to Paris for a few days, and from that time forth became Marx's closest friend. They

<sup>1</sup> I.e., the *Bibliography of Marxism*, which Lenin appended to the original article, but which, from lack of space, is omitted in this edition.—Ed.

both took a most active part in the then seething life of the revolutionary groups in Paris (of particular importance was Proudhon's doctrine, which Marx thoroughly demolished in his *Poverty of Philosophy*, 1847), and, vigorously combating the various doctrines of petty-bourgeois Socialism, worked out the theory and tactics of revolutionary *proletarian Socialism*, or Communism (Marxism). See Marx's works of this period, 1844-48, in the *Bibliography*. In 1845, on the insistent demand of the Prussian government, Marx was banished from Paris as a dangerous revolutionary. He removed to Brussels. In the spring of 1847 Marx and Engels joined a secret propaganda society called the Communist League, took a prominent part in the Second Congress of the League (London, November 1847), and at its request drew up the famous *Communist Manifesto*, which appeared in February 1848. With the clarity and brilliance of genius, this work outlines the new world-conception, consistent materialism, which also embraces the realm of social life, dialectics, the most comprehensive and profound doctrine of development, the theory of the class struggle and of the historic revolutionary role of the proletariat—the creator of the new, Communist society.

When the Revolution of February 1848 broke out, Marx was banished from Belgium. He returned to Paris, whence, after the March Revolution, he went to Germany, again to Cologne. There the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* (*New Rhenish Gazette*) appeared from June 1, 1848, to May 19, 1849; Marx was the chief editor. The new theory was brilliantly corroborated by the course of the revolutionary events of 1848-49, as it has been since corroborated by all proletarian and democratic movements of all countries in the world. The victorious counter-revolution first instigated court proceedings against Marx (he was acquitted on February 9, 1849) and then banished him from Germany (May 16, 1849). Marx first went to Paris, was again banished after the demonstration of June 13, 1849, and then went to London, where he lived to the day of his death.

His life as a political exile was a very hard one, as the correspondence between Marx and Engels (published in 1913)<sup>1</sup> clearly reveals. Marx and his family suffered dire poverty. Were it not for

<sup>1</sup> Hereafter referred to as the *Briefwechsel* (*Correspondence*).—*Trans.*

Engels' constant and self-sacrificing financial support, Marx would not only have been unable to finish *Capital* but would have inevitably perished from want. Moreover, the prevailing doctrines and trends of petty-bourgeois Socialism, and of non-proletarian Socialism in general, forced Marx to carry on a continuous and merciless fight and sometimes to repel the most savage and monstrous personal attacks (*Herr Vogt*). Holding aloof from the circles of political exiles, Marx developed his materialist theory in a number of historic works (see *Bibliography*), devoting his efforts chiefly to the study of political economy. Marx revolutionised this science (see below, "The Marxian Doctrine") in his *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859) and *Capital* (Vol. I, 1867).

The period of revival of the democratic movements at the end of the 'fifties and the 'sixties recalled Marx to practical activity. In 1864 (September 28) the International Workingmen's Association—the famous First International—was founded in London. Marx was the heart and soul of this organisation; he was the author of its first Address and of a host of resolutions, declarations and manifestoes. By uniting the labour movement of various countries, by striving to direct into the channel of joint activity the various forms of non-proletarian, pre-Marxian Socialism (Mazzini, Proudhon, Bakunin, liberal trade unionism in England, Lassalleian vacillations to the Right in Germany, etc.), and by combating the theories of all these sects and schools, Marx hammered out a uniform tactic for the proletarian struggle of the working class in the various countries. After the fall of the Paris Commune (1871)—of which Marx gave such a profound, clear-cut, brilliant, *effective* and revolutionary analysis (*The Civil War in France*, 1871), and after the International was split by the Bakunists, the existence of that organisation in Europe became impossible. After the Hague Congress of the International (1872) Marx had the General Council of the International transferred to New York. The First International had accomplished its historical role, and it made way for a period of immeasurably larger growth of the labour movement in all the countries of the world, a period, in fact, when the movement grew in *breadth* and when *mass* Socialist labour parties in individual national states were created.

His strenuous work in the International and his still more strenuous theoretical occupations completely undermined Marx's health. He continued his work on the reshaping of political economy and the completion of *Capital*, for which he collected a mass of new material and studied a number of languages (Russian, for instance); but ill-health prevented him from finishing *Capital*.

On December 2, 1881, his wife died. On March 14, 1883, Marx peacefully passed away in his armchair. He lies buried with his wife and Helene Demuth, their devoted servant who was almost a member of the family, in the Highgate Cemetery, London.

### THE MARXIAN DOCTRINE

*Marxism* is the system of the views and teachings of Marx. Marx was the genius who continued and completed the three main ideological currents of the nineteenth century, belonging to the three most advanced countries of mankind: classical German philosophy, classical English political economy, and French Socialism together with French revolutionary doctrines in general. The remarkable consistency and integrity of Marx's views, acknowledged even by his opponents, views which in their totality constitute modern materialism and modern scientific Socialism, as the theory and programme of the labour movement in all the civilised countries of the world, oblige us to present a brief outline of his world-conception in general before proceeding to the exposition of the principal content of Marxism, namely, Marx's economic doctrine.

### PHILOSOPHICAL MATERIALISM

From 1844-45, when his views took shape, Marx was a materialist, in particular a follower of L. Feuerbach, whose weak sides he even later considered to consist exclusively in the fact that his materialism was not consistent and comprehensive enough. Marx regarded the historic and "epoch-making" importance of Feuerbach to be that he had resolutely broken away from Hegelian idealism and had proclaimed materialism, which already in the

eighteenth century, especially in France, "had been a struggle not only against the existing political institutions and against . . . religion and theology, but also . . . against all metaphysics" (in the sense of "intoxicated speculation" as distinct from "sober philosophy") (*The Holy Family*, in the *Literarischer Nachlaß*).

"To Hegel . . ." wrote Marx, "the process of thinking, which, under the name of 'the Idea,' he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurgos [the creator, the maker] of the real world. . . . With me, on the contrary, the idea is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought" (*Capital*, Vol. I, Preface to the Second Edition).<sup>1</sup>

In full conformity with this materialist philosophy of Marx's, and expounding it, Frederick Engels wrote in *Anti-Dühring* (which Marx read in manuscript):

"The unity of the world does not consist in its being. . . . The real unity of the world consists in its materiality, and this is proved . . . by a long and tedious development of philosophy and natural science. . . ." <sup>2</sup> "*Motion is the mode of existence of matter.* Never anywhere has there been matter without motion, nor can there be. . . ." <sup>3</sup> But if the . . . question is raised: what then are thought and consciousness, and whence they come, it becomes apparent that they are products of the human brain and that man himself is a product of nature, which has been developed in and along with its environment; whence it is self-evident that the products of the human brain, being in the last analysis also products of nature, do not contradict the rest of nature but are in correspondence with it."<sup>4</sup>

"Hegel was an idealist, that is to say, the thoughts within his mind were to him not the more or less abstract images [*Abbilder*, reflections; Engels sometimes speaks of "imprints"] of real things and processes, but, on the contrary, things and their development were to him only the images made real of the 'Idea' existing somewhere or other already before the world existed."<sup>5</sup>

In his *Ludwig Feuerbach*—in which he expounds his and Marx's views on Feuerbach's philosophy, and which he sent to the press after re-reading an old manuscript written by Marx and himself

<sup>1</sup> Here and elsewhere in this book quotations from *Capital* are taken from the edition of Charles H. Kerr & Co., Chicago.—*Trans.*

<sup>2</sup> *Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science (Anti-Dühring)*, Eng. ed., 1934, p. 54.—*Ed.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.—*Ed.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.—*Ed.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31. *Ed.*

in 1844-45 on Hegel, Feuerbach and the materialist conception of history—Frederick Engels writes:

"The great basic question of all philosophy, especially of modern philosophy, is that concerning the relation of thinking and being . . . spirit to nature . . . which is primary, spirit or nature. . . . The answers which the philosophers gave to this question split them into two great camps. Those who asserted the primacy of spirit to nature and, therefore, in the last instance, assumed world creation in some form or other . . . comprised the camp of idealism. The others, who regarded nature as primary, belong to the various schools of materialism."<sup>1</sup>

Any other use of the concepts of (philosophical) idealism and materialism leads only to confusion. Marx decidedly rejected not only idealism, always connected in one way or another with religion, but also the views, especially widespread in our day, of Hume and Kant, agnosticism, criticism, positivism in their various forms, regarding such a philosophy as a "reactionary" concession to idealism and at best a "shamefaced way of surreptitiously accepting materialism, while denying it before the world."<sup>2</sup> On this question, see, in addition to the above-mentioned works of Engels and Marx, a letter of Marx to Engels dated December 12, 1866, in which Marx, referring to an utterance of the well-known naturalist Thomas Huxley that was "more materialistic" than usual, and to his recognition that "as long as we actually observe and think, we cannot possibly get away from materialism," at the same time reproaches him for leaving a "loophole" for agnosticism and Humeism. It is especially important to note Marx's view on the relation between freedom and necessity: "Freedom is the appreciation of necessity. 'Necessity is blind only in so far as it is not understood'" (Engels, *Anti-Dühring*).<sup>3</sup> This means the recognition of objective law in nature and of the dialectical transformation of necessity into freedom (in the same manner as the transformation of the unknown, but knowable, "thing-in-itself" into the "thing-for-us," of the "essence of things" into "phenomena"). Marx and Engels considered the fundamental limitations of the "old" materialism, in-

<sup>1</sup> F. Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach*, Eng. ed., 1934, pp. 30-31.—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.—Ed.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 130.—Ed.

cluding the materialism of Feuerbach (and still more of the "vulgar" materialism of Büchner, Vogt and Moleschott), to be: (1) that this materialism was "predominantly mechanical," failing to take account of the latest developments of chemistry and biology (in our day it would be necessary to add: and of the electrical theory of matter); (2) that the old materialism was non-historical, non-dialectical (metaphysical, in the sense of anti-dialectical), and did not adhere consistently and comprehensively to the standpoint of development; (3) that it regarded the "human essence" abstractly and not as the "*ensemble*" of all concretely defined historical "social relations," and therefore only "interpreted" the world, whereas the point is to "change" it! that is to say, it did not understand the importance of "revolutionary, practical-critical, activity."

### DIALECTICS

Hegelian dialectics, as the most comprehensive, the most rich in content, and the most profound doctrine of development, was regarded by Marx and Engels as the greatest achievement of classical German philosophy. They considered every other formulation of the principle of development, of evolution, one-sided and poor in content, and distorting and mutilating the real course of development (often proceeding by leaps, catastrophes and revolutions) in nature and in society.

"Marx and I were pretty well the only people to rescue conscious dialectics [from the destruction of idealism, including Hegelianism] and apply it in the materialist conception of nature. . . .<sup>1</sup> Nature is the test of dialectics, and it must be said for modern natural science that it has furnished extremely rich [this was written before the discovery of radium, electrons, the transmutation of elements, etc.!] and daily increasing materials for this test, and has thus proved that in the last analysis nature's process is dialectical and not metaphysical."<sup>2</sup>

"The great basic thought," Engels writes, "that the world is not to be comprehended as a complex of ready-made *things*, but as a complex of *processes*, in which the things apparently stable, no less than their mind-images in our heads, the concepts, go through an uninterrupted change of coming in-

<sup>1</sup> *Anti-Dühring*, p. 15.—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 29.—Ed.



to being and passing away . . . this great fundamental thought has, especially since the time of Hegel, so thoroughly permeated ordinary consciousness that in this generality it is scarcely ever contradicted. But to acknowledge this fundamental thought in words and to apply it in reality in detail to each domain of investigation are two different things."<sup>1</sup>

"For it [dialectical philosophy] nothing is final, absolute, sacred. It reveals the transitory character of everything and in everything; nothing can endure before it except the uninterrupted process of becoming and of passing away, of endless ascendancy from the lower to the higher. And dialectical philosophy itself is nothing more than the mere reflection of this process in the thinking brain."<sup>2</sup>

Thus, according to Marx, dialectics is "the science of the general laws of motion—both of the external world and of human thought."<sup>3</sup>

This revolutionary side of Hegel's philosophy was adopted and developed by Marx. Dialectical materialism "no longer needs any philosophy standing above the other sciences."<sup>4</sup> Of former philosophy there remains "the science of thought and its laws—formal logic and dialectics."<sup>5</sup> And dialectics, as understood by Marx, and in conformity with Hegel, includes what is now called the theory of knowledge, or epistemology, which, too, must regard its subject matter historically, studying and generalising the origin and development of knowledge, the transition from *non-knowledge* to knowledge.

Nowadays, the idea of development, of evolution, has penetrated the social consciousness almost in its entirety, but by different ways, not by way of the Hegelian philosophy. But as formulated by Marx and Engels on the basis of Hegel, this idea is far more comprehensive, far richer in content than the current idea of evolution. A development that seemingly repeats the stages already passed, but repeats them otherwise, on a higher basis ("negation of negation"), a development, so to speak, in spirals, not in a straight line;—a development by leaps, catastrophes, revolutions;—"breaks in continuity";—the transformation of quantity into quality;—the inner impulses to development, imparted by the contradiction

<sup>1</sup> *Ludwig Feuerbach*, p. 54.—*Ed.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.—*Ed.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.—*Ed.*

<sup>4</sup> *Anti-Dühring*, p. 32.—*Ed.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.—*Ed.*

and conflict of the various forces and tendencies acting on a given body, or within a given phenomenon, or within a given society;—the interdependence and the closest, indissoluble connection of *all* sides of every phenomenon (while history constantly discloses ever new sides), a connection that provides a uniform, law-governed, universal process of motion—such are some of the features of dialectics as a richer (than the ordinary) doctrine of development. (See Marx's letter to Engels of January 8, 1868, in which he ridicules Stein's "wooden trichotomies," which it would be absurd to confuse with materialist dialectics.)

### THE MATERIALIST CONCEPTION OF HISTORY

Having realised the inconsistency, incompleteness, and one-sidedness of the old materialism, Marx became convinced of the necessity of "bringing the science of society . . . into harmony with the materialist foundation, and of reconstructing it thereupon."<sup>1</sup> Since materialism in general explains consciousness as the outcome of being, and not conversely, materialism as applied to the social life of mankind had to explain *social* consciousness as the outcome of *social* being.

"Technology," writes Marx (*Capital*, Vol. I), "discloses man's mode of dealing with nature, the process of production by which he sustains his life, and thereby also lays bare the mode of formation of his social relations, and of the mental conceptions that flow from them."<sup>2</sup>

In the preface to his *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Marx gives an integral formulation of the fundamental principles of materialism as extended to human society and its history, in the following words:

"In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will; these relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material forces of production. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society—the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production in material life determines the

<sup>1</sup> *Ludwig Feuerbach*, p. 39—*Ed.*

<sup>2</sup> *Capital*, Vol. I. p. 406—*Ed.*

social, political and intellectual life processes in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material forces of production in society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or—what is but a legal expression for the same thing—with the property relations within which they have been at work before. From forms of development of the forces of production these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations a distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, æsthetic or philosophic—in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as our opinion of an individual is not based on what he thinks of himself, so can we not judge of such a period of transformation by its own consciousness; on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained rather from the contradictions of material life, from the existing conflict between the social forces of production and the relations of production. . . . In broad outlines we can designate the Asiatic, the ancient, the feudal, and the modern bourgeois modes of production as so many epochs in the progress of the economic formation of society.”<sup>1</sup> (Cf. Marx’s brief formulation in a letter to Engels dated July 7, 1866: “Our theory that the organisation of labour is determined by the means of production.”)

The discovery of the materialist conception of history, or rather, the consistent extension of materialism to the domain of social phenomena, removed two of the chief defects of earlier historical theories. In the first place, they at best examined only the ideological motives of the historical activity of human beings, without investigating what produced these motives, without grasping the objective laws governing the development of the system of social relations, and without discerning the roots of these relations in the degree of development of material production; in the second place, the earlier theories did not cover the activities of the masses of the population, whereas historical materialism made it possible for the first time to study with the accuracy of the natural sciences the social conditions of the life of the masses and the changes in these conditions. Pre-Marxian “sociology” and historiography *at best* provided an accumulation of raw facts, collected at random, and a depiction of certain sides of the historical process. By examining the *ensemble* of all the opposing tendencies, by reduc-

<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, Vol. I. Eng. ed., 1935, pp. 356-57 - Ed.

ing them to precisely definable conditions of life and production of the various *classes* of society, by discarding subjectivism and arbitrariness in the choice of various "leading" ideas or in their interpretation, and by disclosing that all ideas and all the various tendencies, without exception, have their *roots* in the condition of the material forces of production, Marxism pointed the way to an all-embracing and comprehensive study of the process of rise, development, and decline of social-economic formations. People make their own history. But what determines the motives of people, of the mass of people; that is: what gives rise to the clash of conflicting ideas and strivings; what is the ensemble of all these clashes of the whole mass of human societies; what are the objective conditions of production of material life that form the basis of all historical activity of man; what is the law of development of these conditions—to all this Marx drew attention and pointed out the way to a scientific study of history as a uniform and law-governed process in all its immense variety and contradictoriness.

### THE CLASS STRUGGLE

That in any given society the strivings of some of its members conflict with the strivings of others, that social life is full of contradictions, that history discloses a struggle between nations and societies as well as within nations and societies, and, in addition, an alternation of periods of revolution and reaction, peace and war, stagnation and rapid progress or decline—are facts that are generally known. Marxism provided the clue which enables us to discover the laws governing this seeming labyrinth and chaos, namely, the theory of the class struggle. Only a study of the ensemble of strivings of all the members of a given society or group of societies can lead to a scientific definition of the result of these strivings. And the source of the conflict of strivings lies in the differences in the position and mode of life of the *classes* into which each society is divided.

"The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles," wrote Marx in the *Communist Manifesto* (except the history of the primitive community—Engels added).

"Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes. . . .

"The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones.

"Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: it has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other—bourgeoisie and proletariat."

Ever since the Great French Revolution, European history has very clearly revealed in a number of countries this real undersurface of events, the struggle of classes. And the Restoration period in France already produced a number of historians (Thierry, Guizot, Mignet, Thiers) who, generalising from events, were forced to recognise that the class struggle was the key to all French history. And the modern era—the era of the complete victory of the bourgeoisie, representative institutions, wide (if not universal) suffrage, a cheap, popular daily press, etc., the era of powerful and ever-expanding unions of workers and unions of employers, etc.—has revealed even more manifestly (though sometimes in a very one-sided, "peaceful," "constitutional" form) that the class struggle is the main-spring of events. The following passage from Marx's *Communist Manifesto* will show us what Marx required of social science in respect to an objective analysis of the position of each class in modern society in connection with an analysis of the conditions of development of each class:

"Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of modern industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product.

"The lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shopkeeper, the artisan, the peasant, all these fight against the bourgeoisie to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the lower middle class. They are therefore not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history. If by chance they are revolutionary, they are so only in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat; they thus defend not their present, but their future interests; they desert their own standpoint to place themselves at that of the proletariat."

In a number of historic works (see *Bibliography*), Marx has given us brilliant and profound examples of materialist historiography, of an analysis of the position of *each* individual class, and sometimes of various groups or strata within a class, showing plainly why and how "every class struggle is a political struggle." The above-quoted passage is an illustration of what a complex network of social relations and *transitional* stages between one class and another, from the past to the future, Marx analyses in order to determine the resultant of historical development.

The most profound, comprehensive and detailed confirmation and application of Marx's theory is his economic doctrine.

### MARX'S ECONOMIC DOCTRINE

"It is the ultimate aim of this work to lay bare the economic law of motion of modern society" (that is to say, capitalist, bourgeois society), says Marx in the preface to *Capital*. The investigation of the relations of production in a given, historically defined society, in their genesis, development, and decline—such is the content of Marx's economic doctrine. In capitalist society it is the production of *commodities* that dominates, and Marx's analysis therefore begins with an analysis of the commodity.

#### *Value*

A commodity is, in the first place, a thing that satisfies a human want; in the second place, it is a thing that can be exchanged for another thing. The utility of a thing makes it a *use-value*. Exchange-value (or simply, value) presents itself first of all as a relation, as the proportion in which a certain number of use-values of one sort are exchanged for a certain number of use-values of another sort. Daily experience shows us that millions upon millions of such exchanges are constantly equating one with another every kind of use-value, even the most diverse and incomparable. Now, what is there in common between these various things, things constantly equated one with another in a definite system of social relations? What is common to them is that they are *products of labour*. In exchanging products people equate to

one another the most diverse kinds of labour. The production of commodities is a system of social relations in which the single producers create diverse products (the social division of labour), and in which all these products are equated to one another in exchange. Consequently, what is common to all commodities is not the concrete labour of a definite branch of production, not labour of one particular kind, but *abstract* human labour—human labour in general. All the labour power of a given society, as represented in the sum total of values of all commodities, is one and the same human labour power; millions and millions of acts of exchange prove this. And, consequently, each particular commodity represents only a certain share of the *socially necessary* labour time. The magnitude of value is determined by the amount of socially necessary labour, or by the labour time that is socially necessary for the production of the given commodity, of the given use-value.

“... Whenever, by an exchange, we equate as values our different products, by that very act, we also equate, as human labour, the different kinds of labour expended upon them. We are not aware of this, nevertheless we do it.”<sup>1</sup>

As one of the earlier economists said, value is a relation between two persons; only he ought to have added: a relation between persons expressed as a relation between things. We can understand what value is only when we consider it from the standpoint of the system of social relations of production of one particular historical formation of society, relations, moreover, which manifest themselves in the mass phenomenon of exchange, a phenomenon which repeats itself millions upon millions of times.

“As values, all commodities are only definite masses of congealed labour time.”<sup>2</sup>

Having made a detailed analysis of the twofold character of the labour incorporated in commodities, Marx goes on to analyse the *forms of value* and *money*. Marx's main task here is to study the *origin* of the money form of value, to study the *historical process* of development of exchange, from isolated and casual acts of exchange (“elementary or accidental form of value,” in

<sup>1</sup> *Capital*, Vol. I. p. 85—*Ed.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.—*Ed.*

which a given quantity of one commodity is exchanged for a given quantity of another) to the universal form of value, in which a number of different commodities are exchanged for one and the same particular commodity, and to the money form of value, when gold becomes this particular commodity, the universal equivalent. Being the highest product of the development of exchange and commodity production, money masks and conceals the social character of all individual labour, the social tie between the individual producers who are united by the market. Marx analyses in great detail the various functions of money; and it is essential to note here in particular (as generally in the opening chapters of *Capital*), that the abstract and seemingly at times purely deductive mode of exposition in reality reproduces a gigantic collection of factual material on the history of the development of exchange and commodity production.

"... If we consider money, its existence implies a definite stage in the exchange of commodities. The particular functions of money which it performs, either as the mere equivalent of commodities, or as means of circulation, or means of payment, as hoard or as universal money, point, according to the extent and relative preponderance of the one function or the other, to very different stages in the process of social production" (*Capital*, Vol. I).<sup>1</sup>

### *Surplus Value*

At a certain stage in the development of commodity production money becomes transformed into capital. The formula of commodity circulation was C—M—C (commodity—money—commodity), *i.e.*, the sale of one commodity for the purpose of buying another. The general formula of capital, on the contrary, is M—C—M (money—commodity—money), *i.e.*, purchase for the purpose of selling (at a profit). The increase over the original value of money put into circulation Marx calls surplus value. The fact of this "growth" of money in capitalist circulation is well known. It is this "growth" which transforms money into *capital*, as a special, historically defined, social relation of production. Surplus value cannot arise out of commodity circulation, for the latter knows only the exchange of equivalents; it cannot arise out of an addition

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 189.—*Ed.*



to price, for the mutual losses and gains of buyers and sellers would equalise one another, whereas what we have here is not an individual phenomenon but a mass, average, social phenomenon. In order to derive surplus value, the owner of money "must . . . find . . . in the market a commodity whose use-value possesses the peculiar property of being a source of value"<sup>1</sup>—a commodity whose process of consumption is at the same time a process of creation of value. And such a commodity exists. It is human labour power. Its consumption is labour, and labour creates value. The owner of money buys labour power at its value, which, like the value of every other commodity, is determined by the socially necessary labour time requisite for its production (*i.e.*, the cost of maintaining the worker and his family). Having bought labour power, the owner of money is entitled to use it, that is, to set it to work for the whole day—twelve hours, let us suppose. Yet, in the course of six hours ("necessary" labour time) the labourer produces product sufficient to cover the cost of his own maintenance; and in the course of the next six hours ("surplus" labour time), he produces "surplus" product, or surplus value, for which the capitalist does not pay. In capital, therefore, from the standpoint of the process of production, two parts must be distinguished: constant capital, expended on means of production (machinery, tools, raw materials, etc.), the value of which, without any change, is transferred (all at once or part by part) to the finished product; and variable capital, expended on labour power. The value of this latter capital is not invariable, but grows in the labour process, creating surplus value. Therefore, to express the degree of exploitation of labour power by capital, surplus value must be compared not with the whole capital but only with the variable capital. Thus in the example given, the rate of surplus value, as Marx calls this ratio, will be 6:6, *i.e.*, 100 per cent.

The historical conditions necessary for the genesis of capital were, firstly, the accumulation of a certain sum of money in the hands of individuals and a relatively high level of development of commodity production in general, and, secondly, the existence of

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 186.—*Ed.*

a labourer who is "free" in a double sense: free from all constraint or restriction on the sale of his labour power, and free from the land and of all means of production in general, a propertyless labourer, a "proletarian," who cannot subsist except by the sale of his labour power.

There are two principal methods by which surplus value can be increased: by lengthening the working day ("absolute surplus value"), and by shortening the necessary working day ("relative surplus value"). Analysing the first method, Marx gives a most impressive picture of the struggle of the working class to shorten the working day and of governmental interference to lengthen the working day (from the fourteenth century to the seventeenth century) and to shorten the working day (factory legislation of the nineteenth century). Since the appearance of *Capital*, the history of the working-class movement in all civilised countries of the world has provided a wealth of new facts amplifying this picture.

Analysing the production of relative surplus value, Marx investigates the three main historical stages by which capitalism has increased the productivity of labour: (1) simple co-operation; (2) division of labour and manufacture; (3) machinery and large-scale industry. How profoundly Marx has here revealed the basic and typical features of capitalist development is incidentally shown by the fact that investigations of what is known as the "kustar" industry<sup>1</sup> of Russia furnish abundant material illustrating the first two of the mentioned stages. And the revolutionising effect of large-scale machine industry, described by Marx in 1867, has been revealed in a number of "new" countries (Russia, Japan, etc.) in the course of the half-century that has since elapsed.

To continue. New and important in the highest degree is Marx's analysis of the *accumulation of capital*, i.e., the transformation of a part of surplus value into capital, its use, not for satisfying the personal needs or whims of the capitalist, but for new production. Marx revealed the mistake of all the earlier classical political economists (from Adam Smith on), who assumed that the entire surplus value which is transformed into capital goes to form vari-

<sup>1</sup> Home industry. - *Trans.*

able capital. In actual fact, it is divided into *means of production* and variable capital. Of tremendous importance to the process of development of capitalism and its transformation into Socialism is the more rapid growth of the constant capital share (of the total capital) as compared with the variable capital share.

The accumulation of capital, by accelerating the replacement of workers by machinery and creating wealth at one pole and poverty at the other, also gives rise to what is called the "reserve army of labour," to the "relative surplus" of workers, or "capitalist overpopulation," which assumes the most diverse forms and enables capital to expand production at an extremely fast rate. This, in conjunction with credit facilities and the accumulation of capital in the means of production, incidentally furnishes the clue to the *crises* of overproduction that occur periodically in capitalist countries—at first at an average of every ten years, and later at more lengthy and less definite intervals. From the accumulation of capital under capitalism must be distinguished what is known as primitive accumulation: the forcible divorcement of the worker from the means of production, the driving of the peasants from the land, the stealing of the commons, the system of colonies and national debts, protective tariffs, and the like. "Primitive accumulation" creates the "free" proletariat at one pole, and the owner of money, the capitalist, at the other.

The "*historical tendency of capitalist accumulation*" is described by Marx in the following famous words:

"The expropriation of the immediate producers was accomplished with merciless vandalism, and under the stimulus of passions the most infamous, the most sordid, the pettiest, the most meanly odious. Self-earned private property [of the peasant and handicraftsman], that is based, so to say, on the fusing together of the isolated, independent labouring-individual with the conditions of his labour, is supplanted by capitalistic private property, which rests on exploitation of the nominally free labour of others. . . . That which is now to be expropriated is no longer the labourer working for himself, but the capitalist exploiting many labourers. This expropriation is accomplished by the action of the immanent laws of capitalistic production itself, by the centralisation of capital. One capitalist always kills many. Hand in hand with this centralisation, or this expropriation of many capitalists by few, develop, on an ever extending scale, the co-operative form of the labour process, the conscious technical application of science, the methodical cultivation of the soil, the transformation of the instruments of labour into instruments of labour only usable in common, the economising of all means

of production by their use as the means of production of combined, socialised labour, the entanglement of all peoples in the net of the world market, and, with this, the international character of the capitalistic regime. Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolise all advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the working class, a class always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united, organised by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself. The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production, which has sprung up and flourished along with and under it. Centralisation of the means of production and socialisation of labour at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated" (*Capital*, Vol. I).<sup>1</sup>

New and important in the highest degree, further, is the analysis Marx gives in the second volume of *Capital* of the reproduction of the aggregate social capital. Here, too, Marx deals not with an individual phenomenon but with a mass phenomenon; not with a fractional part of the economy of society but with this economy as a whole. Correcting the mistake of the classical economists mentioned above, Marx divides the entire social production into two big sections: (I) production of means of production, and (II) production of articles of consumption, and examines in detail, with arithmetical examples, the circulation of the aggregate social capital—both in the case of production in its former dimensions and in the case of accumulation. The third volume of *Capital* solves the problem of the formation of the average rate of profit on the basis of the law of value. The immense advance in economic science made by Marx consists in the fact that he conducts his analysis from the standpoint of mass economic phenomena, of the social economy as a whole, and not from the standpoint of individual cases or of the external, superficial aspects of competition, to which vulgar political economy and the modern "theory of marginal utility" are frequently limited. Marx first analyses the origin of surplus value, and then goes on to consider its division into profit, interest, and ground rent. Profit is the ratio between the surplus value and the total capital invested in an undertaking. Capital with a "high organic composition" (i.e., with a preponderance of constant capital over variable capital exceeding the social average) yields a

<sup>1</sup> *Capital*, Vol. I, pp. 835-37.—Ed.

lower than average rate of profit; capital with a "low organic composition" yields a higher than average rate of profit. The competition of capitals, and the freedom with which they transfer from one branch to another reduces the rate of profit to the average in both cases. The sum total of the values of all the commodities of a given society coincides with the sum total of prices of the commodities; but, owing to competition, in individual undertakings and branches of production commodities are sold not at their values but at the *prices of production* (or production prices), which are equal to the expended capital plus the average profit.

In this way the well-known and indisputable fact of the divergence between prices and values and of the equalisation of profits is fully explained by Marx on the basis of the law of value; for the sum total of values of all commodities coincides with the sum total of prices. However, the reduction of (social) value to (individual) prices does not take place simply and directly, but in a very complex way. It is quite natural that in a society of separate producers of commodities, who are united only by the market, law can reveal itself only as an average, social, mass law, when individual deviations to one side or the other mutually compensate one another.

An increase in the productivity of labour implies a more rapid growth of constant capital as compared with variable capital. And since surplus value is a function of variable capital alone, it is obvious that the rate of profit (the ratio of surplus value to the whole capital, and not to its variable part alone) tends to fall. Marx makes a detailed analysis of this tendency and of a number of circumstances that conceal or counteract it. Without pausing to give an account of the extremely interesting sections of the third volume of *Capital* devoted to usurer's capital, commercial capital and money capital, we pass to the most important section, the theory of *ground rent*. Owing to the fact that the land area is limited and, in capitalist countries, is all occupied by individual private owners, the price of production of agricultural products is determined by the cost of production not on average soil, but on the worst soil, not under average conditions, but under the worst conditions of delivery of produce to the market. The difference between this price

and the price of production on better soil (or under better conditions) constitutes *differential* rent. Analysing this in detail, and showing how it arises out of the difference in fertility of different plots of land and the difference in the amount of capital invested in land, Marx fully exposed (see also *Theories of Surplus Value*, in which the criticism of Rodbertus deserves particular attention) the error of Ricardo, who considered that differential rent is derived only when there is a successive transition from better land to worse. On the contrary, there may be inverse transitions, land may pass from one category into others (owing to advances in agricultural technique, the growth of towns, and so on), and the notorious "law of diminishing returns" is a profound error which charges nature with the defects, limitations and contradictions of capitalism. Further, the equalisation of profit in all branches of industry and national economy in general presupposes complete freedom of competition and the free flow of capital from one branch to another. But the private ownership of land creates monopoly, which hinders this free flow. Owing to this monopoly, the products of agriculture, which is distinguished by a lower organic composition of capital, and, consequently, by an individually higher rate of profit, do not participate in the entirely free process of equalisation of the rate of profit: the landowner, being a monopolist, can keep the price above the average, and this monopoly price engenders *absolute rent*. Differential rent cannot be done away with under capitalism, but absolute rent *can*—for instance, by the nationalisation of the land, by making it the property of the state. Making the land the property of the state would put an end to the monopoly of private landowners, and would lead to a more systematic and complete application of freedom of competition in the domain of agriculture. And, therefore, Marx points out, in the course of history bourgeois radicals have again and again advanced this progressive bourgeois demand for the nationalisation of the land, which, however, frightens away the majority of the bourgeoisie, because it too closely "touches" another monopoly, which is particularly important and "sensitive" in our day—the monopoly of the means of production in general. (Marx gives a remarkably popular, concise, and clear exposition of his theory of the average rate of

profit on capital and of absolute ground rent in a letter to Engels, dated August 2, 1862. See *Briefwechsel*, Vol. III, pp. 77-81; also the letter of August 9, 1862, Vol. III, pp. 86-87.)<sup>1</sup> For the history of ground rent it is also important to note Marx's analysis showing how labour rent (when the peasant creates surplus product by labouring on the lord's land) is transformed into rent in produce or in kind (when the peasant creates surplus product on his own land and cedes it to the lord due to "non-economic constraint"), then into money rent (which is rent in kind transformed into money, the *obrok*<sup>2</sup> of old Russia, due to the development of commodity production, and finally into capitalist rent, when the peasant is replaced by the agricultural entrepreneur, who cultivates the soil with the help of wage-labour. In connection with this analysis of the "genesis of capitalist ground rent," note should be made of a number of subtle ideas (especially important for backward countries like Russia) expressed by Marx on the *evolution of capitalism in agriculture*.

"The transformation of rent in kind into money rent is not only necessarily accompanied, but even anticipated by the formation of a class of propertyless day labourers, who hire themselves out for wages. During the period of their rise, when this new class appears but sporadically, the custom necessarily develops among the better situated tributary farmers of exploiting agricultural labourers for their own account, just as the wealthier serfs in feudal times used to employ serfs for their own benefit. In this way they gradually acquire the ability to accumulate a certain amount of wealth and to transform themselves even into future capitalists. The old self-employing possessors of the land thus give rise among themselves to a nursery for capitalist tenants, whose development is conditioned upon the general development of capitalist production outside of the rural districts" (*Capital*, Vol. III).<sup>3</sup>

"The expropriation and eviction of a part of the agricultural population not only set free for industrial capital, the labourers, their means of subsistence, and material for labour; it also created the home market."<sup>4</sup>

The impoverishment and ruin of the agricultural population lead, in their turn, to the formation of a reserve army of labour for capital. In every capitalist country

<sup>1</sup> The references are to the Russian edition. Cf. *Marx-Engels Selected Correspondence*, Martin Lawrence Ltd., London, pp. 129-33 and 137-38—*Trans.*

<sup>2</sup> Quit-rent.—*Trans.*

<sup>3</sup> *Capital*, Vol. III, p. 928.—*Ed.*

<sup>4</sup> *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 819.—*Ed.*

"part of the agricultural population is therefore constantly on the point of passing over into an urban or manufacturing proletariat. . . . (Manufacture is used here in the sense of all non-agricultural industries.) This source of relative surplus population is thus constantly flowing. . . . The agricultural labourer is therefore reduced to the minimum of wages, and always stands with one foot already in the swamp of pauperism" (*Capital*, Vol. I).<sup>1</sup>

The private ownership of the peasant in the land he tills constitutes the basis of small-scale production and the condition for its prospering and attaining a classical form. But such small-scale production is compatible only with a narrow and primitive framework of production and society. Under capitalism the

"exploitation [of the peasants] differs only in *form* from the exploitation of the industrial proletariat. The exploiter is the same: *capital*. The individual capitalists exploit the individual peasants through *mortgages* and *usury*; the capitalist class exploits the peasant class through the state taxes" (*The Class Struggles in France 1848-50*).<sup>2</sup> "The small holding of the peasant is now only the pretext that allows the capitalist to draw profits, interest and rent from the soil, while leaving it to the tiller of the soil himself to see how he can extract his wages."<sup>3</sup>

As a rule the peasant cedes to capitalist society, *i.e.*, to the capitalist class, even a part of the wages, sinking "to the level of the *Irish tenant farmer*—all under the pretence of being a *private proprietor*" (*The Class Struggles in France 1848-50*).<sup>4</sup>

What is

"one of the causes which keeps the price of cereals lower in countries with a predominance of small farmers than in countries with a capitalist mode of production"? (*Capital*, Vol. III).<sup>5</sup>

It is that the peasant cedes to society (*i.e.*, to the capitalist class) part of his surplus product without an equivalent.

"This lower price [of cereals and other agricultural produce] is also a result of the poverty of the producers and by no means of the productivity of their labour" (*Capital*, Vol. III).<sup>6</sup>

The smallholding system, which is the normal form of small-scale production, deteriorates, collapses, perishes under capitalism.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 705.—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, Eng. ed., p. 282.—Ed.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, in *Selected Works*, Vol. II, Eng. ed., pp. 418-19.—Ed.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, Eng. ed., p. 282.—Ed.

<sup>5</sup> *Capital*, Vol. III, p. 937.—Ed.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 937.—Ed.



"Small peasants' property excludes by its very nature the development of the social powers of production of labour, the social forms of labour, the social concentration of capitals, cattle raising on a large scale, and a progressive application of science.

"Usury and a system of taxation must impoverish it everywhere. The expenditure of capital in the price of the land withdraws this capital from cultivation. An infinite dissipation of means of production and an isolation of the producers themselves go with it. [Co-operative societies, i.e., associations of small peasants, while playing an extremely progressive bourgeois role, only weaken this tendency without eliminating it; nor must it be forgotten that these co-operative societies do much for the well-to-do peasants, and very little, almost nothing, for the mass of poor peasants; and then the associations themselves become exploiters of wage-labour.] Also an enormous waste of human energy. A progressive deterioration of the conditions of production and a raising of the price of means of production is a necessary law of small peasants' property."<sup>1</sup>

In agriculture, as in industry, capitalism transforms the process of production only at the price of the "martyrdom of the producers."

"The dispersion of the rural labourers over larger areas breaks their power of resistance while concentration increases that of the town operatives. In modern agriculture, as in the urban industries, the increased productiveness and quantity of the labour set in motion are bought at the cost of laying waste and consuming by disease labour power itself. Moreover, all progress in capitalistic agriculture is a progress in the art, not only of robbing the labourer, but of robbing the soil. . . . Capitalist production, therefore, develops technology, and the combining together of various processes into a social whole, only by sapping the original sources of all wealth—the soil and the labourer" (*Capital*, Vol. I).<sup>2</sup>

## SOCIALISM

From the foregoing it is evident that Marx deduces the inevitability of the transformation of capitalist society into Socialist society wholly and exclusively from the economic law of motion of contemporary society. The socialisation of labour, which is advancing ever more rapidly in thousands of forms, and which has manifested itself very strikingly during the half-century that has elapsed since the death of Marx in the growth of large-scale production, capitalist cartels, syndicates and trusts, as well as in the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 938-39.—*Ed.*

<sup>2</sup> *Capital*, Vol. I, pp. 555-56.—*Ed.*

gigantic increase in the dimensions and power of finance capital, forms the chief material foundation for the inevitable coming of Socialism. The intellectual and moral driving force and the physical executant of this transformation is the proletariat, which is trained by capitalism itself. The struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, which manifests itself in various and, as to its content, increasingly richer forms, inevitably becomes a political struggle aiming at the conquest of political power by the proletariat ("the dictatorship of the proletariat"). The socialisation of production is bound to lead to the conversion of the means of production into the property of society, to the "expropriation of the expropriators." This conversion will directly result in an immense increase in productivity of labour, a reduction of working hours, and the replacement of the remnants, the ruins of small-scale primitive, disunited production by collective and improved labour. Capitalism finally snaps the bond between agriculture and industry; but at the same time, in its highest development it prepares new elements of this bond, of a union between industry and agriculture based on the conscious application of science and the combination of collective labour, and on a redistribution of the human population (putting an end at one and the same time to the rural remoteness, isolation and barbarism, and to the unnatural concentration of vast masses of people in big cities). A new form of family, new conditions in the status of women and in the upbringing of the younger generation are being prepared by the highest forms of modern capitalism: female and child labour and the break-up of the patriarchal family by capitalism inevitably assume the most terrible, disastrous, and repulsive forms in modern society. Nevertheless

" . . . modern industry, by assigning as it does an important part in the process of production, outside the domestic sphere, to women, to young persons, and to children of both sexes, creates a new economical foundation for a higher form of the family and of the relations between the sexes. It is, of course, just as absurd to hold the Teutonic-Christian form of the family to be absolute and final as it would be to apply that character to the ancient Roman, the ancient Greek, or the Eastern forms which, moreover, taken together form a series in historic development. Moreover, it is obvious that the fact of the collective working group being composed of individuals of both sexes and all ages, must necessarily, under suitable conditions, become

a source of humane development; although in its spontaneously developed, brutal, capitalistic form, where the labourer exists for the process of production, and not the process of production for the labourer, that fact is a pestiferous source of corruption and slavery" (*Capital*, Vol. I).<sup>1</sup>

In the factory system is to be found

"the germ of the education of the future, an education that will, in the case of every child over a given age, combine productive labour with instruction and gymnastics, not only as one of the methods of adding to the efficiency of production, but as the only method of producing fully developed human beings" (*ibid.*).<sup>2</sup>

Marxian Socialism puts the question of nationality and of the state on the same historical footing, not only in the sense of explaining the past but also in the sense of a fearless forecast of the future and of bold practical action for its achievement. Nations are an inevitable product, an inevitable form in the bourgeois epoch of social development. The working class could not grow strong, could not become mature and formed without "constituting itself within the nation," without being "national" ("though not in the bourgeois sense of the word"). But the development of capitalism more and more breaks down national barriers, destroys national seclusion, substitutes class antagonisms for national antagonisms. It is, therefore, perfectly true that in the developed capitalist countries "the workingmen have no country" and that "united action" of the workers, of the civilised countries at least, "is one of the first conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat" (*Communist Manifesto*). The state, which is organised violence, inevitably came into being at a definite stage in the development of society, when society had split into irreconcilable classes, and when it could not exist without an "authority" ostensibly standing above society and to a certain degree separate from society. Arising out of class contradictions, the state becomes

"the state of the most powerful economic class that by force of its economic supremacy becomes also the ruling political class and thus acquires new means of subduing and exploiting the oppressed class. The antique state was, therefore, the state of the slave-owners for the purpose of holding the slaves in

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 536.- *Ed.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 529-30.- *Ed.*

check. The feudal state was the organ of the nobility for the oppression of the serfs and dependent farmers. The modern representative state is a tool of the capitalist exploiters of wage-labour" (Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, a work in which the writer expounds his own and Marx's views).<sup>1</sup>

Even the freest and most progressive form of the bourgeois state, the democratic republic, in no way removes this fact, but merely changes its form (connection between the government and the stock exchange, corruption—direct and indirect—of the officialdom and the press, etc.). Socialism, by leading to the abolition of classes, will thereby lead to the abolition of the state.

"The first act," writes Engels in *Anti-Dühring*, "in which the state really comes forward as the representative of society as a whole—the taking possession of the means of production in the name of society—is at the same time its last independent act as a state. The interference of the state power in social relations becomes superfluous in one sphere after another, and then ceases of itself. The government of persons is replaced by the administration of things and the direction of the processes of production. The state is not 'abolished,' it withers away."<sup>2</sup>

"The society, that is to reorganise production on the basis of a free and equal association of the producers, will transfer the machinery of state where it will then belong: into the museum of antiquities by the side of the spinning wheel and the bronze axe" (Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*).<sup>3</sup>

Finally, as regards the attitude of Marxian Socialism towards the small peasantry, which will continue to exist in the period of the expropriation of the expropriators, we must refer to a declaration made by Engels which expresses Marx's views.

"When we take possession of the state power, we shall not even think of forcibly expropriating the small peasants (with or without compensation), as we shall have to do in relation to the large landowners. Our task as regards the small peasants will first of all be to lead their private enterprise and private property into co-operative lines, not forcibly, but by example and by granting public aid for this purpose. And then, of course, we shall have ample means of showing the small peasant all the advantages connected with such a transformation, advantages which even now should be explained to him" (Engels, "The Peasant Question in France and Germany." Original in the *Neue Zeit*).

<sup>1</sup> Charles H. Kerr edition, Chicago, 1902, pp. 208-09.—*Ed.*

<sup>2</sup> *Anti-Dühring*, p. 315.—*Ed.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 211-12.—*Ed.*

## TACTICS OF THE CLASS STRUGGLE OF THE PROLETARIAT

Having as early as 1844-45<sup>1</sup> examined one of the chief defects of the earlier materialism, namely, its inability to understand the conditions or appreciate the importance of practical-revolutionary activity, Marx, along with his theoretical work, all his life devoted unrelaxed attention to the tactical problems of the class struggle of the proletariat. An immense amount of material bearing on this is contained in *all* the works of Marx and particularly in the four volumes of his correspondence with Engels published in 1913. This material is still far from having been assembled, collated, studied and examined. We shall therefore have to confine ourselves here to the most general and briefest remarks, emphasising that Marx justly considered that without *this* side to it materialism was irresolute, one-sided, and lifeless. Marx defined the fundamental task of proletarian tactics in strict conformity with all the postulates of his materialist-dialectical conception. Only an objective consideration of the sum total of reciprocal relations of all the classes of a given society without exception, and, consequently, a consideration of the objective stage of development of that society and of the reciprocal relations between it and other societies, can serve as a basis for the correct tactics of the advanced class. At the same time, all classes and all countries are not regarded statically, but dynamically, *i.e.*, not in a state of immobility, but in motion (the laws of which are determined by the economic conditions of existence of each class). Motion, in its turn, is regarded not only from the standpoint of the past, but also from the standpoint of the future, and, at the same time, not in accordance with the vulgar conception of the "evolutionists," who see only slow changes, but dialectically: in historical developments of such magnitude twenty years are no more than a day. Marx wrote to Engels, "although later there may come days in which twenty years are concentrated" (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. III, p. 127).<sup>2</sup> At each stage of development, at each moment, proletarian tactics must take account of this objectiv-

<sup>1</sup> Lenin is referring to Marx's and Engels' *The Holy Family* and *German Ideology* and to Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach*.—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> The references are to the German edition.—Trans.

ely inevitable dialectics of human history, on the one hand utilising the periods of political stagnation or of sluggish, so-called "peaceful" development in order to develop the class-consciousness, strength and fighting capacity of the advanced class, and, on the other hand, conducting all this work of utilisation towards the "final aim" of the movement of the advanced class and towards the creation in it of the faculty for practically performing great tasks in the great days in which "twenty years are concentrated." Two of Marx's arguments are of special importance in this connection: one of these is contained in *The Poverty of Philosophy* and concerns the economic struggle and economic organisations of the proletariat; the other is contained in the *Communist Manifesto* and concerns the political tasks of the proletariat. The first argument runs as follows:

"Large-scale industry concentrates in one place a crowd of people unknown to one another. Competition divides their interests. But the maintenance of wages, this common interest which they have against their boss, unites them in a common thought of resistance—*combination*. . . . Combinations, at first isolated, constitute themselves into groups . . . and in face of always united capital, the maintenance of the association becomes more necessary to them [i.e., the workers] than that of wages. . . . In this struggle—a veritable civil war—are united and developed all the elements necessary for a coming battle. Once it has reached this point, association takes on a political character."<sup>1</sup>

Here we have the programme and tactics of the economic struggle and of the trade union movement for several decades to come, for the whole long period in which the proletariat will muster its forces for the "coming battle." Side by side with this must be placed numerous references by Marx and Engels to the example of the British labour movement: how industrial "prosperity" leads to attempts "to buy the workers" (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. I, p. 136), to divert them from the struggle; how this prosperity generally "demoralises the workers" (Vol. II, p. 213); how the British proletariat becomes "bourgeoisified"—"this most bourgeois of all nations seems to want in the end to have a bourgeois aristocracy and a bourgeois proletariat side by side with the bourgeoisie" (Vol. II, p. 290; how its "revolutionary energy" oozes away (Vol. III, p. 124), how it will be necessary to wait a more or less long time

<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Eng. ed., 1935, p. 145.—Ed.

"before the British workers rid themselves of their apparent bourgeois corruption" (Vol. III, p. 127); how the British labour movement "lacks the mettle of the Chartists" (1866; Vol. III, p. 305); how the British workers' leaders are becoming a type midway between "a radical bourgeois and a worker" (in reference to Holyoake, Vol. IV, p. 209); how, owing to British monopoly, and as long as this monopoly lasts, "the British working-man will not budge" (Vol. IV, p. 433). The tactics of the economic struggle, in connection with the general course (*and outcome*) of the labour movement, are here considered from a remarkably broad, comprehensive, dialectical, and genuinely revolutionary standpoint.

The *Communist Manifesto* set forth the fundamental Marxian principle on the tactics of the political struggle:

"The Communists fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class; but in the movement of the present, they also represent and take care of the future of that movement."

That was why in 1848 Marx supported the party of the "agrarian revolution" in Poland, "the party which initiated the Cracow insurrection in the year 1846." In Germany in 1848 and 1849 Marx supported the extreme revolutionary democracy, and subsequently never retracted what he had then said about tactics. He regarded the German bourgeoisie as an element which "was inclined from the very beginning to betray the people" (only an alliance with the peasantry could have brought the bourgeoisie the integral fulfilment of its aims) "and to compromise with the crowned representatives of the old society." Here is Marx's summary of the analysis of the class position of the German bourgeoisie in the era of the bourgeois-democratic revolution—an analysis which, incidentally, is a sample of that materialism which examines society in motion, and examines it, at the same time, not only from the side of the motion which is directed *backwards*!

"Lacking faith in itself, lacking faith in the people, grumbling at those above, trembling before those below . . . intimidated by the world storm . . . nowhere with energy, everywhere with plagiarism . . . without initiative . . . an execrable old man, doomed to guide the first youthful impulses of a youthful and robust people in his own senile interests . . ." (*Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, 1848; see *Literarischer Nachlaß*, Vol. III, p. 212),

About twenty years later, in a letter to Engels (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. III, p. 224), Marx declared that the cause of the failure of the Revolution of 1848 was that the bourgeoisie had preferred peace with slavery to the mere prospect of a fight for freedom. When the revolutionary era of 1848-49 ended, Marx opposed every attempt to play at revolution (the fight he put up against Schapper and Willich), and insisted on the ability to work in the new phase which in a seemingly "peaceful" way was preparing for new revolutions. The spirit in which Marx wanted the work to be carried on is shown by his estimate of the situation in Germany in 1856, the blackest period of reaction:

"The whole thing in Germany will depend on the possibility to back the proletarian revolution by some second edition of the Peasant War" (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. II, p. 108).

As long as the democratic (bourgeois) revolution in Germany was not finished, Marx wholly concentrated attention in the tactics of the Socialist proletariat on developing the democratic energy of the peasantry. He held that Lassalle's attitude was "objectively . . . a betrayal of the whole workers' movement to Prussia" (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. III, p. 210), incidentally because Lassalle connived at the actions of the Junkers and Prussian nationalism.

"In a predominantly agricultural country," wrote Engels in 1865, exchanging ideas with Marx on the subject of an intended joint statement by them in the press, ". . . it is dastardly . . . in the name of the industrial proletariat to attack the bourgeoisie exclusively, and never to say a word about the patriarchal cudgel exploitation of the rural proletariat by the big feudal nobles" (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. III, p. 217).

From 1864 to 1870, when the era of the completion of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Germany, the era of the efforts of the exploiting classes of Prussia and Austria to complete this revolution in one way or another *from above*, was coming to an end, Marx not only condemned Lassalle, who was coquetting with Bismarck, but also corrected Liebknecht, who had inclined towards "Austrophilism" and the defence of particularism. Marx demanded revolutionary tactics which would combat both Bismarck and the Austrophiles with equal ruthlessness, tactics which would not be adapted to the "victor," the Prussian Junker, but which would im-



mediately renew the revolutionary struggle against him *also on the basis* created by the Prussian military victories (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. III, pp. 134, 136, 147, 179, 204, 210, 215, 418, 437, 440-41). In the famous Address of the International Workingmen's Association of September 9, 1870, Marx warned the French proletariat against an untimely uprising; but when the uprising nevertheless took place (1871), Marx enthusiastically hailed the revolutionary initiative of the masses, who were "storming heaven" (letter of Marx to Kugelmann).<sup>1</sup> The defeat of the revolutionary action in this situation, as in many others, was, from the standpoint of Marxian dialectical materialism, a lesser evil in the general course *and outcome* of the proletarian struggle than the abandonment of a position already occupied, than a surrender without battle. Such a surrender would have demoralised the proletariat and undermined its fighting capacity. Fully appreciating the use of legal means of struggle during periods when political stagnation prevails and bourgeois legality dominates, Marx, in 1877 and 1878, after the passage of the Anti-Socialist Law, sharply condemned Most's "revolutionary phrases"; but he no less, if not more sharply, attacked the opportunism that had temporarily gained sway in the official Social-Democratic Party, which did not at once display resoluteness, firmness, revolutionary spirit and a readiness to resort to an illegal struggle in response to the Anti-Socialist Law (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. IV, pp. 397, 404, 418, 422, 424; cf. also letters to Sorge).

July-November, 1914

<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx, *Letters to Dr. Kugelmann*, Eng. ed., 1934, p. 123. *Ed.*

## THE MARX-ENGELS CORRESPONDENCE

### ENGELS AS ONE OF THE FOUNDERS OF COMMUNISM

THE long-promised edition of the correspondence of the famous founders of scientific Socialism has at last been published. Engels bequeathed the publication to Bebel and Bernstein, and Bebel managed to complete his part of the editorial work shortly before his death.

The Marx-Engels correspondence, published a few weeks ago by Dietz, Stuttgart, consists of four big volumes. They contain in all 1,386 letters of Marx and Engels covering an extensive period, from 1844 to 1883.

The editorial work, *i.e.*, the writing of prefaces to the correspondence of various periods, was done by Eduard Bernstein. As might have been expected, this work is unsatisfactory from both the technical and the ideological standpoint. After his notorious "evolution" to extreme opportunist views, Bernstein should never have undertaken to edit letters which are impregnated with the revolutionary spirit through and through. Bernstein's prefaces are in part meaningless and in part simply false—as, for instance, when, instead of a precise, clear and frank characterisation of the opportunist errors of Lassalle and Schweitzer which Marx and Engels exposed, one meets with eclectic phrases and thrusts, such as that "one can justly question whether Marx and Engels always judged Lassalle's policy rightly" (Vol. III, page xviii), or that in their tactics they were "much nearer" to Schweitzer than to Liebknecht (Vol. IV, p. x). These attacks have no meaning save as a screen and embellishment for opportunism. Unfortunately, the eclectic attitude to Marx's ideological struggle against many of his opponents is becoming increasingly widespread among present-day German Social-Democrats.

From the technical standpoint, the index is unsatisfactory—only one for all four volumes (for instance, Kautsky and Stirling are omitted); the notes on each letter are too scanty and are lost in the prefaces of the editor instead of being placed in proximity to the letters they refer to, as they were by Sorge, and so forth.

The price of the publication is unduly high—about 20 rubles for the four volumes. There can be no doubt that the complete correspondence could and should have been published in a less luxurious edition at a more popular price, and that, in addition, a selection of passages most important from the standpoint of principle could and should have been published for wide distribution among workers.

All these defects of the edition of course hamper a study of the correspondence. This is a pity, because its scientific and political value is tremendous. Not only do Marx and Engels stand out before the reader in clear relief in all their greatness, but the extremely rich theoretical content of Marxism is unfolded in a highly graphic way, because in the letters Marx and Engels return again and again to the most diverse aspects of their teaching, emphasizing and explaining—at times discussing and debating—what is newest (in relation to earlier views), most important and most difficult.

There unfolds before the reader a strikingly vivid picture of the history of the labour movement all over the world—at its most important junctures and in its most essential points. Even more valuable is the history of the *politics* of the working class. On the most diverse occasions, in various countries of the old and new worlds, and at diverse historical moments, Marx and Engels discuss the most important principles of the *presentation* of the *political* tasks of the working class. And the period covered by the correspondence was a period in which the working class separated off from bourgeois democracy, a period in which an independent labour movement arose, a period in which the fundamental principles of proletarian tactics and policy were defined. The more we have occasion in our day to observe how the labour movement in various countries suffers from opportunism in consequence of the stagnation and decay of the bourgeoisie, in consequence of the at-

tion of the labour leaders being engrossed in the trivialities of the day, and so on—the more valuable becomes the wealth of material contained in the correspondence, displaying as it does a most profound comprehension of the *basic* transformatory aims of the proletariat, and providing an unusually flexible definition of the given tasks of tactics from the standpoint of these revolutionary aims, without making the slightest concession to opportunism or revolutionary phrasemongering.

If one were to attempt to define by a single word the focus, so to speak, of the whole correspondence, the central point in which the whole body of ideas expressed and discussed converges—that word would be *dialectics*. The thing that interested Marx and Engels most of all, the thing to which they contributed what was most essential and now, the thing that constituted the masterly advance they made in the history of revolutionary thought, was the application of materialist dialectics to the reshaping of all political economy, from its foundations up—to history, natural science, philosophy and to the policy and tactics of the working class.

\* \* \*

We intend in the following account, after giving a general review of the correspondence, to outline the more interesting remarks and arguments of Marx and Engels, without pretending to give an exhaustive account of the contents of the letters.

### GENERAL REVIEW

The correspondence opens with letters written in 1844 by the 24-year old Engels to Marx. The situation in Germany at that time is brought out in striking relief. The first letter is dated the end of September 1844 and was sent from Barmen, where Engels' family lived and where he was born. Engels was not quite 24 years old at the time. He was bored with family life and was anxious to break away. His father was a despot, a pious manufacturer, who was outraged at his son's continual running about to political meetings and at his Communist views. Were it not for his mother, whom he really loved, Engels wrote, he would not have

stood even the few days still remaining until his departure. What petty reasons, what superstitious fears were put forward by the family against his departure, he complained to Marx.

While he was still in Barmen—where he was delayed a little longer by a love affair—Engels gave way to his father and worked for about two weeks in the factory office (his father was a manufacturer).

"Huckstering is horrible," he writes to Marx. "Barmen is horrible, the way they spend their time is horrible, and it is most horrible of all to remain, not merely a bourgeois, but a manufacturer, a bourgeois who actively opposes the proletariat. . . ."

He consoled himself, Engels goes on to say, by working on his book on the condition of the working class (this book appeared, as is known, in 1845 and is one of the best works of world Socialist literature).

"One can while being a Communist remain in outward conditions a bourgeois and a huckstering beast as long as one does not write, but to carry on wide Communist propaganda and at the same time engage in huckstering and industry will not work. I am leaving. Add to this the drowsy life of a thoroughly Christian-Prussian family—I cannot stand it any longer. I might in the end become a German philistine and introduce philistinism into Communism."

Thus wrote the young Engels. After the Revolution of 1848 the exigencies of life obliged him to return to his father's office and to become a "huckstering beast" for many long years. But he was able to stand firm and to create for himself, not Christian-Prussian surroundings, but entirely different, comradely surroundings, and to become for the rest of his life a relentless foe of the "introduction of philistinism into Communism."

Social life in the German provinces in 1844 resembled Russian social life at the beginning of the twentieth century, before the Revolution of 1905. There was a general urge for political life, a general seething indignation in opposition to the government; the priests fulminated against the youth for their atheism; children in bourgeois families quarreled with their parents for their "aristocratic treatment of servants or workers."

The general spirit of opposition found expression in the fact that everybody declared himself to be a Communist. "The Police Commissary in Barmen is a Communist," Engels writes to Marx. He was

in Cologne . . . Düsseldorf . . . Elberfeld—and wherever you turn you stumble over Communists! “One ardent Communist, a cartoonist . . . named Steel, is going to Paris in two months. I will give him your address; you will all like him for his enthusiastic nature, his love of music, and he could be used as a cartoonist.”

“. . . Miracles are happening here in Elberfeld. Yesterday [this was written on February 22, 1845], we held our third Communist meeting in the largest hall and the best restaurant of the city. The first meeting was attended by 40 people, the second by 130 and the third by at least 200. The whole of Elberfeld and Barmen, from the moneyed aristocracy to the small shopkeepers, was represented, all except the proletariat.”

This is literally what Engels wrote. Everybody in Germany at that time was Communist, except the proletariat. Communism was a form of expression of the opposition sentiments of all, and chiefly of the bourgeoisie.

“The most stupid, the most lazy and most philistine people, whom nothing in the world interested, are almost becoming enthusiastic for Communism.”

The chief preachers of Communism at that time were people of the type of our *Narodniki*, “Socialist-Revolutionaries,” “Populist Socialists,” and so forth, that is to say, well-meaning bourgeois who were more or less furious with the government.

And under such conditions, amidst countless pseudo-Socialist trends and factions, Engels was able to find his way to *proletarian* Socialism, without fearing to break off relations with the mass of well-intentioned people, ardent revolutionaries but bad Communists.

In 1846 Engels was in Paris. Paris was then seething with politics and the discussion of various Socialist theories. Engels eagerly studied Socialism, made the acquaintance of Cabet, Louis Blanc and other prominent Socialists, and ran from editorial office to editorial office and from circle to circle.

His attention was chiefly focussed on the most important and most widespread Socialist doctrine of the time—Proudhonism. And even before the publication of Proudhon’s *Philosophy of Poverty* (October 1846; Marx’s reply—the famous book, *The Poverty of Philosophy*—appeared in 1847), Engels, with relentless mordacity and remarkable profundity, criticised Proudhon’s main ideas, which

were then being particularly advocated by the German Socialist Grün. His excellent knowledge of English (which Marx mastered much later) and of English literature enabled Engels at once (letter of September 18, 1846) to point to the example of the bankruptcy of the notorious Proudhonist "labour-exchange bazaars" in England. Proudhon *disgraces* Socialism. Engels exclaims indignantly—it follows from Proudhon that the workers must *buy out* capital.

The 26-year old Engels simply annihilates "true Socialism." We meet this expression in his letter of October 23, 1846, long before the *Communist Manifesto*, and Grün is mentioned as its chief exponent. An "anti-proletarian, petty-bourgeois, philistine" doctrine, "sheer phrasemongering" all sorts of "humanitarian" aspirations, "superstitious fear of 'crude' Communism" (*Löffel-Kommunismus*, literally: "spoon Communism" or "belly Communism"), "peaceful plans of happiness" for mankind—these are some of Engels' epithets, which apply to *all* species of pre-Marxian Socialism.

"The Proudhon Associations' scheme," writes Engels, "was discussed for three evenings. At first I had nearly the whole clique against me. . . . The chief point was to prove the necessity for revolution by force." (October 23, 1846.)

In the end he got furious, he writes, and pressed his opponents so that they were obliged to make an open attack on Communism. He demanded a vote on whether they were Communists or not. This greatly horrified the Grünites who began to argue that they met together to discuss "the good of mankind" and that they must know what Communism *really was*. Engels gave them an extremely simple definition so as to permit no opportunity for digressions and evasions.

"I therefore defined," Engels writes, "the objects of the Communists in this way: 1) To achieve the interests of the proletariat in opposition to those of the bourgeoisie; 2) To do this through the abolition of private property and its replacement by community of goods; 3) To recognise no means of carrying out these objects other than a democratic revolution by force."<sup>1</sup> (Written one and a half years before the 1848 Revolution.)

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Marx-Engels Selected Correspondence*. Martin Lawrence Ltd., London, pp. 1-2.--Ed.

The discussion concluded by the meeting adopting Engels' definition by thirteen votes against the votes of two Grünites. These meetings were attended by some twenty journeymen carpenters. Thus the foundations of the Social-Democratic Labour Party of Germany were laid in Paris sixty-seven years ago.

A year later, in his letter of November 24, 1847, Engels informed Marx that he had prepared a draft of the *Communist Manifesto*, incidentally declaring himself opposed to the catechism form originally proposed.

"I begin: What is Communism?" writes Engels. "And then straight to the proletariat—history of its origin, difference from former workers, development of the contradiction between proletariat and bourgeoisie, crises, results. . . . In conclusion the Party policy of the Communists. . . ."

This historical letter of Engels' on the first draft of a work which has travelled all over the world and which to this day is true in all its fundamentals and as actual and topical as though it were written yesterday, clearly proves that Marx and Engels are justly named side by side as the founders of modern Socialism.

October 1913



## THE HISTORICAL DESTINY OF THE DOCTRINE OF KARL MARX

THE main thing in the doctrine of Marx is that it brings out the historic role of the proletariat as the builder of a Socialist society. Has the progress of world events confirmed this doctrine since it was expounded by Marx?

Marx first advanced it in 1844. The *Communist Manifesto* of Marx and Engels, published in 1848, already gives a complete and systematic exposition of this doctrine, which has remained the best exposition to this day. Subsequent world history clearly falls into three main periods: 1) from the Revolution of 1848 to the Paris Commune (1871); 2) from the Paris Commune to the Russian Revolution (1905); 3) since the Russian Revolution.

Let us see what has been the destiny of Marx's doctrine in each of these periods.

### I

At the beginning of the first period Marx's doctrine by no means dominated. It was only one of the extremely numerous factions or trends of Socialism. The forms of Socialism which did dominate were in the main akin to our *Narodism*: non-comprehension of the materialist basis of historical movement, inability to assign the role and significance of each class in capitalist society, concealment of the bourgeois essence of democratic reforms under diverse, pseudo-socialistic phrases about "the people," "justice," "right," etc.

The Revolution of 1848 struck a fatal blow at all these vociferous, motley and ostentatious forms of *pre-Marxian* Socialism. In all countries the revolution revealed the various classes of society *in action*. The shooting down of the workers by the republican bourgeoisie in the June Days of 1848 in Paris finally established

that the proletariat *alone* was Socialist by nature. The liberal bourgeoisie feared the independence of this class a hundred times more than it did any kind of reaction. The craven liberals grovelled before reaction. The peasantry were content with the abolition of the relics of feudalism and joined the supporters of order, only wavering at times between *the democratic workers and the bourgeois liberals*. All doctrines of *non-class* Socialism and *non-class* politics proved to be sheer nonsense.

The Paris Commune (1871) completed this development of bourgeois reforms; the republic, *i.e.*, the form of state organisation in which class relations appear in their most unconcealed form, had only the heroism of the proletariat to thank for its consolidation.

In all the other European countries a more entangled and less finished development also led to a definitely shaped bourgeois society. Towards the end of the first period (1848-71)—a period of storms and revolutions—pre-Marxian Socialism *died away*. Independent *proletarian* parties were born: the First International (1864-72) and the German Social-Democratic Party.

## II

The second period (1872-1904) was distinguished from the first by its “peaceful” character, by the absence of revolutions. The West had finished with bourgeois revolutions. The East had not yet arrived at the stage of bourgeois revolutions.

The West entered a phase of “peaceful” preparation for the future era of change. Socialist parties, basically proletarian, were formed everywhere and learned to make use of bourgeois parliamentarism and to create their own daily press, their educational institutions, their trade unions and their co-operative societies. The Marxian doctrine gained a complete victory and *spread*. The process of selection and accumulation of the forces of the proletariat and of the preparation of the proletariat for the impending battles progressed slowly but steadily.

The dialectics of history were such that the theoretical victory of Marxism obliged its enemies to *disguise themselves* as Marxists.

Liberalism, rotten to the core, attempted a revival in the form of Socialist *opportunism*. The opportunists interpreted the period of preparation of forces for the great battles as a renunciation of these battles. The improvement of the position of the slaves for the struggle against wage-slavery they represented as the necessity for the slaves to sell their right to liberty for a mess of pottage. They pusillanimously preached "social peace" (*i.e.*, peace with the slave-owners), the renunciation of the class struggle, and so forth. They had many adherents among Socialist members of parliament, various officials of the labour movement, and the "sympathetic" intellectuals.

### III

But the opportunists had scarcely congratulated themselves on "social peace" and the needlessness of storms under "democracy" when a new source of great world storms opened up in Asia. The Russian revolution was followed by the Turkish, the Persian and the Chinese revolutions. It is in this era of storms and their "repercussion" on Europe that we are now living. Whatever may be the fate of the great Chinese Republic, against which the various "civilised" hyenas are now baring their teeth, no power on earth can restore the old serfdom in Asia, or wipe out the heroic democracy of the masses of the people in the Asiatic and semi-Asiatic countries.

Certain people, who were inattentive to the conditions of preparation and development of the mass struggle, were driven to despair and to anarchism by the prolonged postponements of the decisive struggle against capitalism in Europe. We can now see how short-sighted and pusillanimous this anarchist despair is.

The fact that Asia, with its population of eight hundred million, has been drawn into the struggle for these same European ideals should inspire us with courage and not despair.

The Asiatic revolutions have revealed the same spinelessness and baseness of liberalism, the same exceptional importance of the independence of the democratic masses, and the same sharp line of division between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie of all

kinds. After the experience both of Europe and Asia, whoever now speaks of *non-class* politics and of *non-class* Socialism simply deserves to be put in a cage and exhibited alongside of the Australian kangaroo.

After Asia, Europe has also begun to stir, although not in the Asiatic way. The "peaceful" period of 1872-1904 has passed completely, never to return. The high cost of living and the oppression of the trusts is leading to an unprecedented accentuation of the economic struggle, which has roused even the British workers, who have been most corrupted by liberalism. Before our eyes a political crisis is brewing even in that extreme "dichard," bourgeois-Junker country, Germany. Feverish armaments and the policy of imperialism are turning modern Europe into a "social peace" which is more like a barrel of gunpowder than anything else. And at the same time the decay of *all* the bourgeois parties and the maturing of the proletariat are steadily progressing.

Each of the three great periods of world history since the appearance of Marxism has brought Marxism new confirmation and new triumphs. But a still greater triumph awaits Marxism as the doctrine of the proletariat in the period of history that is now opening.

March 1913

## CERTAIN FEATURES OF THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF MARXISM

Our doctrine—said Engels, referring to himself and his famous friend—is not a dogma, but a guide to action. This classical statement stresses with remarkable force and expressiveness that aspect of Marxism which is constantly being lost sight of. And by losing sight of it, we turn Marxism into something one-sided, disfigured and lifeless; we deprive it of its living soul; we undermine its basic theoretical foundations—dialectics, the doctrine that historical development is all-embracing and full of contradictions; we sever its connection with the definite practical tasks of the epoch, which may change with every new turn of history.

And, indeed, in our time people are very frequently to be met with among those interested in the fate of Marxism in Russia who lose sight precisely of this aspect of Marxism. Yet, it must be clear to everybody that in recent years Russia has undergone changes so abrupt as to alter the situation with unusual rapidity and unusual force—the social and political situation, which in a most direct and immediate manner determines the conditions of action, and, hence, the aims of action. I am not referring, of course, to general and fundamental aims, which do not change with turns of history so long as the fundamental relations between classes do not change. It is perfectly obvious that this general trend of economic (and not only economic) evolution in Russia, like the fundamental relations between the various classes of Russian society, has not changed during, say, the last six years.

But the aims of direct and immediate action have changed very markedly during this period, just as the concrete social and political situation has changed—and, *consequently*, in Marxism too, since it is a living doctrine, *various sides were bound* to come to the fore.

In order to make this thought clear, let us take a glance at the change that has taken place in the concrete social and political situation during the past six years. We at once discern two three-year periods into which this six-year period falls, the one ending roughly with the summer of 1907, and the other with the summer of 1910. The first three-year period, regarded from the purely theoretical standpoint, is distinguished by rapid changes in the fundamental features of the state system in Russia. The course of these changes was very uneven and the amplitude of oscillations in both directions was very great. The social and economic basis of these changes in the "superstructure" was the action of *all* classes of Russian society in *the most varying* fields (activity inside and outside the Duma, the press, unions, meetings, and so forth), so open and impressive and on such a mass scale as is not often to be observed in history.

The second three-year period, on the contrary, was distinguished—we repeat that we are here confining ourselves to the purely theoretical "sociological" standpoint—by an evolution so slow that it almost amounted to stagnation. There were no changes at all noticeable in the state system. There were no, or almost no open and variegated actions by the *classes* in the majority of the "arenas" in which these actions were enacted in the preceding period.

The similarity between the two periods consisted in the fact that the evolution of Russia in both periods remained the same as before, capitalist evolution. The contradiction between this economic evolution and the existence of a number of feudal, mediæval institutions was not removed and also remained as before in consequence of the fact that the assumption of a partially bourgeois character by certain institutions could only aggravate rather than ameliorate this contradiction.

The difference between the two periods consisted in the fact that during the first of these periods the foreground of the historical arena was occupied by the question of what exact form the result of the rapid and uneven changes aforementioned would take. The content of these changes was bound to be bourgeois owing to the capitalist character of the evolution of Russia. But there is a bourgeoisie and a bourgeoisie. The middle and big bourgeoisie, which

professed a more or less moderate liberalism, was, owing to its very class position, afraid of abrupt changes and strove for the retention of large remnants of the old institutions both in the agrarian system and in the political "superstructure." The rural petty bourgeoisie, which is interwoven with the peasantry that lives by "the labour of its own hands," was bound to strive for bourgeois reforms of a different kind, reforms that would leave far less room for mediæval survivals. The wage-labourers, to the extent that they consciously realised what was going on around them, were bound to work out for themselves a definite attitude towards this clash of two distinct tendencies, both of which remained within the framework of the bourgeois system, but which determined entirely different forms for it, entirely different rates of its development, different degrees of its progressive influences.

In this way, the period of the past three years, not fortuitously but necessarily, brought to the forefront in Marxism those problems which are usually referred to as problems of tactics. Nothing is more erroneous than the opinion that the disputes and differences that arose over these questions were "intellectual" disputes, that they were "a struggle for influence over the immature proletariat," that they were an expression of the "adaptation of the intelligentsia to the proletariat," as all the *Vekha*-ites of various kinds think. On the contrary, it was precisely because this class had reached maturity that it could not remain indifferent to the clash of the two different tendencies in the entire bourgeois development of Russia, and the ideologists of this class could not avoid providing theoretical formulations corresponding (directly or indirectly, in direct or reverse reflection) to these different tendencies.

In the second three-year period the clash between the different tendencies of bourgeois development in Russia was *not* on the order of the day, because *both* these tendencies had been crushed by the "diehards," forced back, driven inwards and, for the time being, smothered. The mediæval diehards not only occupied the foreground but also inspired broad sections of bourgeois society with *Vekha*-ite sentiments, with a spirit of despondency and recantation. It was not the collision between two methods of reforming the old order that appeared on the surface, but a loss of faith in reforms of all

kinds, a spirit of "meekness" and "repentance," an infatuation for anti-social doctrines, a fad of mysticism, and so on.

And this astonishingly abrupt change was not fortuitous, nor was it the result of "external" pressure alone. The preceding period had so profoundly stirred up strata of the population who for generations and centuries had stood aloof from, and were strangers to, political questions, that "a revaluation of all values," a new study of fundamental problems, a new interest in theory, in elementals, in a study beginning with the rudiments, arose naturally and inevitably. The millions, suddenly awakened from their long sleep, and suddenly confronted with extremely important problems, could not remain on this level long, could not carry on without a respite, without a return to elementary questions, without a new training which would help them to "digest" lessons of unparalleled richness and make it possible for incomparably wider masses again to march forward, but now far more firmly, more consciously, more assuredly and more persistently.

The dialectics of historical development was such that in the first period it was the accomplishment of immediate reforms in every sphere of the country's life that was on the order of the day, while in the second period on the order of the day was the study of experience, its assimilation by wider strata, its penetration, if one may so express it, to the subsoil, to the backward ranks of the various classes.

It is precisely because Marxism is not a lifeless dogma, not a final, finished and ready-made doctrine, but a living guide to action that it was bound to reflect the astonishingly abrupt change in the conditions of social life. A reflection of the change was a profound disintegration and disunity, vacillations of all kinds, in a word, a very serious *internal* crisis of Marxism. The necessity of putting up a determined resistance to this disintegration, of waging a determined and persistent struggle on behalf of the *foundations* of Marxism was again on the order of the day. In the preceding period, extremely wide sections of the classes that cannot avoid Marxism in formulating their aims had assimilated Marxism in an extremely one-sided and mutilated fashion, having learnt by rote certain "slogans," certain answers to tactical questions, *without*



*having understood* the Marxist criteria of these answers. The "re-valuation of values" in all the various spheres of social life led to a "revision" of the most abstract and general philosophical foundations of Marxism. The influence of bourgeois philosophy in its multifarious idealist shades found expression in the Machian epidemic that broke out among the Marxists. The repetition of "slogans" learnt by rote but not understood and not thought out led to the widespread prevalence of empty phrasemongering, which in practice amounted to absolutely un-Marxist, petty-bourgeois currents, such as frank or shamefaced "Otzovism," or the recognition of Otzovism as a "legitimate shade" of Marxism.

On the other hand, the spirit of *Vekha*-ism, the spirit of recantation which had taken possession of very wide sections of the bourgeoisie, penetrated to the current which endeavours to confine Marxist theory and practice to "moderate and decent" channels. All that remained Marxist here was the phraseology that served to clothe the arguments about "hierarchy," "hegemony" and so forth, which were thoroughly infected by the spirit of liberalism.

It cannot, of course, be the purpose of this article to examine these arguments. A mere reference to them is sufficient to illustrate what has been said above regarding the profundity of the crisis through which Marxism is passing, regarding its connection with the whole social and economic situation in the present period. The questions raised by this crisis cannot be brushed aside. Nothing can be more pernicious or unprincipled than the attempts to dismiss them by phrasemongering. Nothing is more important than to rally *all* Marxists who have realised the profundity of the crisis and the necessity of combating it, for the purpose of defending the theoretical foundations of Marxism and its basic propositions, which are being distorted from diametrically opposite sides by the spread of the bourgeois influence to the various "fellow-travellers" of Marxism.

The past three years have awakened wide sections to a conscious participation in social life, sections that in many cases are for the first time beginning to acquaint themselves with Marxism in a real way. In this connection the bourgeois press is creating far more fallacious ideas than ever before, and is disseminating

them more widely. Under these circumstances the disintegration in the ranks of the Marxists is particularly dangerous. Therefore, to understand the reasons for the inevitability of this disintegration at the present time and to consolidate themselves for the purpose of waging a consistent struggle against this disintegration is, in the most direct and precise meaning of the term, the task of the era for Marxists.

January 1911

## FROM THE HISTORY OF THE LABOUR PRESS IN RUSSIA

THE history of the labour press in Russia is intimately bound up with the history of the democratic and Socialist movement. And, therefore, only if we know the principal stages of the emancipation movement can we really get to understand why the preparatory stages and rise of the labour press proceeded as they did and not otherwise.

The emancipation movement in Russia has passed through three principal stages, corresponding with the three principal classes of Russian society that have left their impress on the movement: 1) the aristocratic period, roughly from 1825 to 1861; 2) the commoner, or bourgeois-democratic, period, approximately from 1861 to 1895; 3) the proletarian period, from 1895 to the present day.

The most prominent figures during the aristocratic period were the Decembrists and Herzen. At that time, under serfdom, there could be no question of a working class becoming separated out from the general mass of serfs, the unfranchised, "lower" orders, the "common people." The precursor of the labour (proletarian-democratic or Social-Democratic) press at that time was the general-democratic, uncensored press headed by Herzen's *Kolokol*.

Just as the Decembrists awakened Herzen, so Herzen and his *Kolokol* helped to awaken the commoners, the educated representatives of the liberal and democratic bourgeoisie, who did not belong to the nobility, but to the officials, the burghers, the merchants and the peasants. A precursor of the complete elimination of the nobility by the commoners in our emancipation movement, while serfdom still existed, was V. G. Belinsky. His famous "Letter to Gogol," which summed up Belinsky's literary activities, was one of the best of the writings that appeared in the uncensored democratic press, and it has retained its tremendous, living significance to this day.

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The collapse of serfdom was accompanied by the appearance of the commoner as the principal mass figure in the movement for emancipation in general and in the uncensored democratic press in particular. Narodism became the prevailing trend, the trend that corresponded with the views of the commoners. As a social current it was never able to dissociate itself from liberalism on the Right and from anarchism on the Left. But Chernyshevsky, who followed Herzen in developing Narodist views, made a big advance on Herzen. Chernyshevsky was a far more consistent and militant democrat. His writings breathe the spirit of the class struggle. He vigorously pursued the line of exposing the treachery of liberalism, the line which to this day is so repugnant to the Cadets and the Liquidators. He was a remarkably profound critic of capitalism, in spite of his utopian Socialism.

The period of the 'sixties and 'seventies witnessed the appearance of a number of uncensored writings of a militant democratic and utopian Socialist nature which began to appeal to the "masses." And among the most prominent of the figures of that period were workers, Pyotr Alexeyev, Stepan Khalturin and others. But the proletarian-democratic current was unable to separate itself from the general flood of Narodism. This became possible only after the Russian Marxist trend became defined ideologically (the "Emancipation of Labour" Group in 1883) and when an uninterrupted labour movement began in connection with the Social-Democratic movement (the St. Petersburg strikes of 1895 and 1896).

But before proceeding to deal with this period, in which the labour press in Russia really originated, we shall cite figures that strikingly demonstrate the *class* difference between the movements in the three historical periods aforementioned. These figures refer to the distribution, according to social rank<sup>1</sup> and according to occupation (class), of persons tried for state (political) crimes. Of every 100 such persons there were:

<sup>1</sup> In pre-revolutionary days the population of Russia was officially divided into four social ranks, orders, or estates: nobles, *meshchanye* (burghers), merchants and clergy.—*Trans.*

	Social Rank		Occupation		
	Nobles	Burghers and Peas- ants	Peasants	Workers	Intellectuals
1827-1846	76.0	23.0	?	?	?
1884-1890	30.6	46.6	7.1	15.1	73.2
1901-1903	10.7	80.9	9.0	46.1	36.7
1905-1908	9.1	87.7	24.2	47.4	28.4

In the aristocratic period, the period of serfdom (1827-46), the vast majority (76 per cent) of the "politicals" were nobles, who constituted an insignificant minority of the population. In the Narodnik or commoner period (1884-90; unfortunately no detailed figures are available for the 'sixties and 'seventies) the nobles retired into the background, but still constituted a large proportion (30.6 per cent). The overwhelming majority (73.2 per cent) of the participants in the democratic movement were intellectuals.

The period 1901-03, the period in fact of the appearance of the first Marxist political newspaper, the *old Iskra*, is already marked by a *predominance* of workers (46.1 per cent) over intellectuals (36.7 per cent), and by the fact that the movement has already become completely democratised (10.7 per cent nobles and 80.9 per cent "unprivileged").

Anticipating a little, let us point out that the only change noticeable in the period of the first mass movement (1905-08) is the replacement of the intellectuals (28.4 per cent, as against 36.7 per cent) by the peasants (24.2 per cent, as against 9 per cent).

The Social-Democratic movement in Russia was founded by the "Emancipation of Labour" Group, formed outside of Russia in 1883. The writings of this group, printed abroad and not subjected to censorship, were the first to give a systematic exposition of the ideas of Marxism with all their practical deductions, the only ideas which, as the experience of the whole world has shown, reflect the true nature of the working class movement and its aims. During the twelve years 1883-95, almost the only attempt to create a Social-Democratic labour press in Russia was the publication in St. Peters-

burg in 1895 of a Social-Democratic newspaper entitled *Rabochy*, of course uncensored. But only two issues of this newspaper appeared. The absence of a mass working class movement prevented the wide development of a labour press.

In 1895 and 1896, with the famous strikes in St. Petersburg, a mass working class movement began in which the Social-Democrats participated. It was at this time that a labour press in the true sense of the word began to appear in Russia. The chief productions of the labour press at that time were uncensored leaflets—the majority of which were not printed but hectographed—devoted to “economic” (and also non-economic) agitation, that is, to setting forth the needs and demands of the workers in various factories and branches of production. Of course, had the advanced workers not taken a most active part in the compilation and distribution of this literature, it could not have existed. Of the workers of St. Petersburg who were active at that period, mention should be made of Vassily Andreyevich Shelgunov, who later became blind and was unable to act with his former energy, and Ivan Vassilyevich Babushkin, an ardent *Iskra*-ist (1900-03) and “Bolshevik” (1903-05), who was later shot for his part in an uprising in Siberia at the end of 1905 or the beginning of 1906.

The leaflets were issued by Social-Democratic groups, circles and organisations, which at the end of 1895 for the most part began to call themselves “Leagues of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class.” And in 1898 a congress of representatives of the Social-Democratic organisations from the various localities founded the “Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party.”

The leaflets were followed by the appearance of uncensored labour newspapers, e.g., the *Sankt-Peterburgsky Rabochy Listok* in St. Petersburg in 1897, and the *Rabochaya Mysl*, also in St. Petersburg but very soon transferred abroad. From that time on, local Social-Democratic newspapers continued to exist, uncensored, almost uninterruptedly down to the Revolution. They were constantly destroyed, of course, but continued to spring up in all parts of Russia.

Taken together, the labour leaflets and Social-Democratic newspapers of that period, that is, twenty years ago, were the im-



mediate and direct precursors of the present labour press: they contained the same "accusations" against factories, the same chronicle of the "economic" struggle, the same treatment of the principles underlying the aims of the working class movement from the standpoint of Marxism and consistent democracy, and finally, *the same two fundamental trends*, the Marxist and the opportunist, in the labour press.

A remarkable fact, one that is by no means adequately appreciated to this day, is that as soon as a *mass* working class movement sprang up in Russia (1895-96) there at once began a division into a Marxist and an opportunist trend, a division which may have changed in form, appearance, and so on, but which remained unchanged essentially throughout the period 1894 to 1914. There are evidently profound social and class reasons for precisely such a division, and no other, in the internal struggle among the Social-Democrats.

The *Rabochaya Mysl* referred to above represented the opportunist trend of the time, which was known as "Economism." In the disputes among the participants in the working class movement at home, this trend became evident as early as 1894 and 1895. Abroad, where the awakening of the Russian workers led to a luxuriant outcrop of Social-Democratic literature as early as 1896, the appearance and consolidation of the "Economists" ended in a split in the spring of 1900 (that is, before the rise of the *Iskra*, the first number of which appeared at the very end of 1900).

The history of the labour press during the two decades 1894 to 1914 is the history of two trends in Russian Marxism and in Russian (or rather, *Rossiskaya*<sup>1</sup>) Social-Democracy. In order to *understand* the history of the labour press in Russia, one must know not only, and not so much, the names of the various publications, names which mean nothing to the modern reader and only confuse him, but the *content*, the nature, the ideological line of the various sections of the Social-Democratic movement.

The chief publications of the "Economists" were *Rabochaya*

<sup>1</sup> *Rossiskaya* refers to all the nations and peoples inhabiting Russia (*Rossiya*), as distinct from the Russians proper.—*Trans.*

*Mysl* (1897 to 1900) and *Rabocheye Dyelo* (1898 to 1901). *Rabocheye Dyelo* was headed by B. Krichevsky, who subsequently went over to the syndicalists, A. Martynov, a prominent Menshevik and now a Liquidator, and Akimov, now an "Independent Social-Democrat" who is heart and soul in agreement with the Liquidators.

The Economists were at first combated only by Plekhanov and the whole "Emancipation of Labour" Group (the journal *Rabotnik* and so on), and later by the *Iskra* (from 1900 to August 1903, that is, down to the Second Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party). What was the essence of "Economism"?

Verbally, the "Economists" were very energetic in their advocacy of a mass working class movement and the independent action of the workers, insisting on the prime importance of "economic" agitation and on the observance of moderation and gradualness in the adoption of political agitation. As the reader sees, these are the same old favourite phrases the Liquidators love to make play of. But in practice the "Economists" pursued a liberal-labour policy, the essence of which Mr. S. N. Prokopovich, one of the leaders of "Economism" at that time, briefly expressed as follows: "The economic struggle for the workers—the political struggle for the liberals." In practice, the "Economists," who talked more about independent labour action and a mass movement than anybody else, constituted an opportunist, petty-bourgeois intellectual wing of the labour movement.

The overwhelming majority of the class conscious workers—from whose midst, in 1901-03, 46 out of every 100 political offenders already came, as against 37 from the intellectuals—supported the *old Iskra* as against opportunism. The three years (1901-03) of activity of the *Iskra* helped to work out the programme of the Social-Democratic Party, the basic lines of its tactics and the forms of combination of the economic and political struggles of the workers on the basis of consistent Marxism. In the years immediately preceding the Revolution, the labour press, centred around the *Iskra* and under its ideological guidance, attained big proportions. The number of uncensored leaflets and unsanctioned printshops was extraordinarily large, and grew rapidly all over Russia.

The complete victory gained in 1903 by the *Iskra* over "Econ-

omism," by consistent proletarian tactics over intellectual opportunist tactics, led to a new and bigger influx of "fellow-travellers" into the ranks of the Social-Democratic Party, and opportunism was resurrected *on the soil of Iskra-ism*, and as a part of it, in the shape of "Menshevism."

Menshevism was formed at the Second Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (August 1903) from the *minority* of the *Iskra*-ists (hence the name Menshevism<sup>1</sup>) and *from all the opportunist opponents of Iskra*. The "Mensheviks" reverted to "Economism"—of course, in a somewhat renovated form; all the "Economists" who still remained in the movement, headed by A. Martynov, joined the ranks of the "Mensheviks."

The *new Iskra*, which from November 1903 began to appear under the direction of a new editorial board, became the chief organ of the "Mensheviks." "Between the old and the new *Iskra* lies an abyss"—Trotsky, at that time an ardent Menshevik, frankly declared. The principal publications of the "Bolsheviks,"<sup>2</sup> who advocated the tactics of consistent Marxism faithful to the old *Iskra*, were *Vperyod* and *Proletary* (1905).

The years of revolution, 1905-07, served as a test for both the principal trends, the Menshevik and the Bolshevik, in Social-Democracy and in the labour press, as regards their real contact with the masses and the extent to which they expressed the tactics of the proletarian masses. An open Social-Democratic press could not have at once arisen in the autumn of 1905 had not the activities of the advanced workers, who had close contacts with the masses, paved the way for it. And the fact that the open Social-Democratic press of 1905, 1906 and 1907 consisted of *two* trends and two factions cannot, in its turn, be explained otherwise than by the difference between the petty-bourgeois and the proletarian lines in the labour movement of that period.

An open labour press appeared in all three periods of upsurge and relative "freedom": the autumn of 1905 (*Novaya Zhizn* of the Bolsheviks and *Nachalo* of the Mensheviks—to mention only the chief among many), the spring of 1906 (*Volna*, *Echo*, etc., of the

<sup>1</sup> From *menshinstvo*, a minority.—*Trans.*

<sup>2</sup> From *bolshinstvo*, a majority.—*Trans.*

Bolsheviks, *Narodnaya Duma*, etc., of the Mensheviks), and the spring of 1907.

The essence of the Menshevik tactics of that period was recently expressed by L. Martov himself in the following words:

“‘Menshevism saw no other chance of the proletariat fruitfully participating in the present crisis’ except by assisting the bourgeois liberal democrats in their attempts to remove the reactionary section of the possessing classes from state power—which assistance, however, the proletariat was to give while preserving complete political independence.”

And these tactics of “assisting” the liberals meant in practice that the workers would be *dependent* on the liberals; they amounted in practice to a liberal-labour policy. The tactics of the Bolsheviks, on the contrary, ensured the independence of the proletariat during the bourgeois crisis by waging a struggle to bring this crisis to a head, by exposing the treachery of liberalism and by educating and consolidating the petty bourgeoisie (particularly the rural petty bourgeoisie) to counterbalance this treachery.

We know—and the Mensheviks themselves, including the present Liquidators, Koltsov, Levitsky and others, have frequently admitted—that during these years (1905-07) the working class masses followed the Bolsheviks. Bolshevism expressed the proletarian essence of the movement, Menshevism its opportunist, petty-bourgeois intellectual wing.

We cannot here give a more detailed description of the character and significance of the tactics of the two trends in the labour press. We must confine ourselves to a precise statement of the principal facts, to a definition of the chief lines of historical development.

The labour press in Russia has almost a century of history behind it—first, the preparatory phase, that is, the history *not* of the labour movement, *not* of the proletarian movement, but of the “general-democratic,” *i.e.*, the bourgeois-democratic movement for emancipation—and then its own history, the twenty-year history of the proletarian movement, proletarian democracy, or Social-Democracy.

Nowhere in the world has the proletarian movement arisen, or could it have arisen, “in a trice,” complete and in a pure class

form, like Minerva from the head of Jupiter. It was only the prolonged struggle and the arduous effort of the advanced workers themselves, of all the class-conscious workers, that made possible the separation of the proletarian class movement from all kinds of petty-bourgeois admixtures, limitations, restrictions and distortions, and its consolidation. The working class exists side by side with the petty bourgeoisie, which, in the course of its decay, provides ever fresh recruits for the ranks of the proletariat. And Russia is the most petty-bourgeois, the most lower-middle-class, of the capitalist countries; it is only just passing through that era of bourgeois revolutions which in England, for instance, marked the seventeenth century and in France the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century.

The class-conscious worker, who is now taking up a cause which he has at heart—the conduct of the labour press, its organisation, consolidation and development—will not forget the twenty-year history of Marxism and of the Social-Democratic press in Russia.

Those faint-hearted intellectual friends of the labour movement who ignore the internal struggle among the Social-Democrats and who fill the air with cries and appeals to ignore it, are doing a poor service to the working class movement. These people are well-meaning but futile, and futile are their outcries.

Only by studying the history of the struggle of Marxism against opportunism, only by making themselves thoroughly and minutely familiar with the process of separation of the independent proletarian-democratic movement from the petty-bourgeois hodge-podge, can the advanced workers definitely increase their knowledge and strengthen their labour press.

May 5 (April 22), 1914



**PART II**  
**DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM**





## ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MILITANT MATERIALISM

ALL that is essential about the general tasks of the magazine *Under the Banner of Marxism* has already been said by Comrade Trotsky in No. 1-2, and said very aptly. I should like to dwell on certain questions that more closely define the content and programme of the work set forth by the editors of the magazine in the introductory announcement to No. 1-2.

This announcement states that not all those gathered around the magazine *Under the Banner of Marxism* are Communists, but that they are all consistent materialists. I think that this alliance of Communists and non-Communists is absolutely essential and correctly defines the tasks of the magazine. One of the biggest and most dangerous mistakes of Communists (as generally of revolutionaries who have successfully accomplished the beginning of a great revolution) is the idea that a revolution can be made by revolutionaries alone. On the contrary, to be successful every serious revolutionary work requires the understanding and translation into action of the idea that revolutionaries are capable of playing the part only of the vanguard of the truly virile and advanced class. A vanguard performs its task as vanguard only when it is able to avoid becoming divorced from the masses it leads and is able really to lead the whole mass forward. Without an alliance with non-Communists in the most varied spheres of activity there can be no question of any successful Communist constructive work.

This likewise refers to the work of defending materialism and Marxism which has been undertaken by the magazine *Under the Banner of Marxism*. Fortunately, the main trends of advanced social thought in Russia have a solid materialist tradition. To say nothing of G. V. Plekhanov, it is enough to mention Chernyshevsky, from whom the modern Narodniks (the Populist Socialists, Socialist-Revolutionaries, etc.) have retreated frequently in a quest for

fashionable reactionary philosophical doctrines, captivated by the tinsel of the so-called "last word" in European science and unable to discern beneath this tinsel one or another variety of servility to the bourgeoisie, bourgeois prejudice and bourgeois reaction.

At any rate, in Russia we still have—and shall undoubtedly have for a fairly long time to come—materialists from the non-Communist camp, and it is our absolute duty to enlist all adherents of consistent and militant materialism in the joint work of combating philosophical reaction and the philosophical prejudices of so-called "educated society." Dietzgen senior—not to be confused with his writer son, who was as pretentious as he was unsuccessful—correctly, aptly and clearly expressed the fundamental Marxist view of the philosophical trends which prevail in bourgeois countries and which enjoy the attention of their scientists and publicists, when he said that in effect the professors of philosophy in modern society are in the majority of cases nothing but the "graduated flunkys of clericalism."

Our Russian intellectuals, who are fond of thinking themselves advanced, as indeed their brethren in all other countries, are very much averse to shifting the question to the plane of the opinion expressed in Dietzgen's words. But they are averse to it because they cannot look the truth in the face. One has only to reflect ever so little on the governmental, general economic, social and every other kind of dependence of modern educated people on the ruling bourgeoisie to realise that Dietzgen's mordant description was absolutely true. One has only to recall the vast majority of the fashionable philosophical trends that arise so frequently in European countries, beginning for example with those connected with the discovery of radium and ending with those which seek to clutch hold of Einstein, to gain an idea of the connection between the class interests and the class position of the bourgeoisie and its support of all forms of religion on the one hand, and the ideological content of the fashionable philosophical trends on the other.

It will be seen from what has been said that a magazine that sets out to be an organ of militant materialism must be a fighting organ in the first place, in the sense of unflinchingly exposing

and indicting all modern "graduated flunkeys of clericalism," irrespective of whether they appear as the representatives of official science or as free-lances calling themselves "democratic Left or ideologically Socialist" publicists.

In the second place, such a magazine must be an organ of militant atheism. We have departments, or at least state institutions, which are in charge of this work. But this work is being carried on extremely apathetically and extremely unsatisfactorily, and is apparently suffering from the general conditions of our truly Russian (even though Soviet) bureaucracy. It is therefore highly essential that in addition to the work of these state institutions, and in order to improve and infuse life into this work, a magazine which sets out to be an organ of militant materialism should carry on untiring atheist propaganda and an untiring atheist fight. The literature on the subject in all languages should be carefully followed and everything at all valuable in this sphere should be translated, or at least reviewed.

Engels long ago advised the leaders of the modern proletariat to translate for mass distribution among the people the militant atheist literature of the end of the eighteenth century. To our shame be it said, we have not done this up to the present (one of the numerous proofs that it is easier to win power in a revolutionary epoch than to know how to use this power properly). Our apathy, inactivity and incapacity are sometimes excused on all sorts of "lofty" grounds, as, for example, that the old atheist literature of the eighteenth century is antiquated, unscientific, naïve, etc. There is nothing worse than such pseudo-scientific sophistries, which serve to conceal either pedantry or a complete misunderstanding of Marxism. There is, of course, much that is unscientific and naïve in the atheist writings of the revolutionaries of the eighteenth century. But nobody prevents the publishers of these writings from abridging them and providing them with brief post-scripts pointing out the progress made by mankind since the end of the eighteenth century in the scientific criticism of religions, mentioning the latest writings on the subject, and so forth. It would be the biggest and most grievous mistake a Marxist could make to think that the millions (especially the peasants and ar-

tisans), who have been condemned by all modern society to darkness, ignorance and prejudice, can emancipate themselves from this darkness only along the straight line of a purely Marxist education. These millions should be supplied with the most varied atheist propaganda material, they should be made acquainted with facts from the most varied spheres of life, they should be approached in this way and in that way, so as to interest them, rouse them from their religious torpor, stir them from the most varied angles and by the most varied methods, and so forth.

The keen, vivacious and talented writings of the old atheists of the eighteenth century, which wittily and openly attacked the prevailing clericalism, will very often prove to be a thousand times more suitable for arousing people from their religious torpor than the dull and dry paraphrases of Marxism, almost completely unillustrated by skilfully selected facts, which predominate in our literature and which (it is no use hiding the fact) frequently distort Marxism. We have translations of all the bigger works of Marx and Engels. There are absolutely no grounds for fearing that the old atheism and old materialism may remain unsupplemented by the corrections introduced by Marx and Engels. The most important thing—and this is most frequently overlooked by our would-be Marxian Communists, who in fact mutilate Marxism—is to know how to awaken in the still quite undeveloped masses a conscious interest in religious questions and a conscious criticism of religion.

On the other hand, take a glance at the representatives of the modern scientific criticism of religion. These representatives of the educated bourgeoisie almost invariably “supplement” their own refutations of religious prejudices by arguments which immediately expose them as ideological slaves of the bourgeoisie, as “graduated flunkys of clericalism.”

Two examples. Professor R. Y. Vipper published in 1918 a little book entitled *The Origin of Christianity* (Pharos Publishing House, Moscow). While giving an account of the principal results of modern science, the author not only refrains from combating the prejudices and deception which are the weapons of the church as a political organisation, not only evades these questions,

but announces the simply ridiculous and most reactionary claim that he rises superior to both "extremes"—the idealist and the materialist. This is toadying to the ruling bourgeoisie, which all over the world devotes hundreds of millions of rubles from the profits squeezed out of the toilers to the support of religion.

The well-known German scientist, Arthur Drews, while refuting the religious prejudices and fables in his book, *The Christ Myth*, and while proving that Christ never existed, at the end of the book declares in favour of religion, albeit a renovated, purified and more subtle religion, one that would be capable of withstanding "the daily growing naturalistic torrent" (fourth German edition, 1910, p. 238). Here we have an outspoken and deliberate reactionary who is openly helping the exploiters to replace the old and decayed religious prejudices by new, more odious and vile prejudices.

This does not mean that Drews should not be translated. It means that while in a certain measure effecting their alliance with the progressive section of the bourgeoisie, Communists, and all consistent materialists, should unflinchingly expose it when it is guilty of reaction. It means that to shun an alliance with the representatives of the bourgeoisie of the eighteenth century, i.e., the period when it was revolutionary, would be to betray Marxism and materialism; for an "alliance" with the Drewses, in one form or another and in one degree or another, is essential for our struggle against the ruling religious obscurantists.

The magazine *Under the Banner of Marxism*, which sets out to be an organ of militant materialism, must devote a lot of space to atheist propaganda, to reviews of the literature on the subject and to correcting the immense shortcomings of our governmental work in this field. It is particularly important to utilise books and pamphlets which contain many concrete facts and comparisons showing how the class interests and class organisations of the modern bourgeoisie are connected with the organisations of religious institutions and religious propaganda.

Extremely important is all material relating to the United States of America, where the official, state connection between religion and capital is less manifest. But, on the other hand, it

makes it clearer to us that so-called "modern democracy" (which the Mensheviks, the Socialist-Revolutionaries, partly also the anarchists, etc., so unreasonably worship) is nothing but the freedom to preach what it is to the advantage of the bourgeoisie to preach, namely, the most reactionary ideas, religion, obscurantism, defence of the exploiters, etc.

One would like to hope that a magazine which sets out to be an organ of militant materialism will provide our reading public with reviews of atheist literature, showing for which circle of readers any particular writing might be suitable and in what respect, and mentioning what literature has been published in our country (only decent translations should be noticed, and they are not so many) and what should still be published.

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In addition to the alliance with consistent materialists who do not belong to the Communist Party, of no less and perhaps even of more importance for the work which militant materialism should perform is an alliance with those representatives of modern natural science who incline towards materialism and are not afraid to defend and preach it as against the modish philosophical wanderings into idealism and scepticism which are prevalent in so-called "educated society."

The article by A. Timiryazev on Einstein's theory of relativity published in *Under the Banner of Marxism*, No. 1-2, permits us to hope that the magazine will succeed in effecting this second alliance too. Greater attention should be paid to it. It should be remembered that it is precisely the abrupt change which modern natural science is undergoing that very often gives rise to reactionary philosophical schools and minor schools, trends and minor trends. Therefore, unless the problems raised by the recent revolution in natural science are followed, and unless natural scientists are enlisted in this work of a philosophical magazine, militant materialism can be neither militant nor materialism. While Timiryazev was obliged to observe in the first number of the magazine that the theory of Einstein, who, according to Timiryazev, is himself not making any active attack on the foundations of materialism,

has already been seized upon by a vast number of representatives of the bourgeois intelligentsia of all countries, it should be noted that this applies not only to Einstein, but to a number, if not to the majority, of the great reformers of natural science since the end of the nineteenth century.

And in order that our attitude towards this phenomenon may not be an uninformed one, it must be realised that unless it stands on a solid philosophical ground no natural science and no materialism can hold its own in the struggle against the onslaught of bourgeois ideas and the restoration of the bourgeois world outlook. In order to hold its own in this struggle and to carry it to a victorious finish, the natural scientist must be a modern materialist, a conscious adherent of the materialism which is represented by Marx, *i.e.*, he must be a dialectical materialist. In order to attain this aim, the contributors to the magazine *Under the Banner of Marxism* must arrange for the systematic study of Hegelian dialectics from a materialist standpoint, *i.e.*, the dialectics which Marx applied practically in his *Capital* and in his historical and political works, and applied so successfully that now every day of the awakening to life and struggle of new classes in the East (Japan, India and China)—*i.e.*, the hundreds of millions of human beings who form the greater part of the population of the world and whose historical passivity and historical torpor have hitherto been conditions responsible for stagnation and decay in many advanced European countries—every day of the awakening to life of new peoples and new classes serves as a fresh confirmation of Marxism.

Of course, this study, this interpretation, this propaganda of Hegelian dialectics is extremely difficult, and the first experiments in this direction will undoubtedly be accompanied by errors. But only he who never does anything never commits errors. Taking as our basis Marx's method of applying the Hegelian dialectics materialistically conceived, we can and should treat this dialectics from all sides, print excerpts from Hegel's principal works in the magazine, interpret them materialistically and comment on them with the help of examples of the way Marx applied dialectics, as well as of examples of dialectics in the sphere of economic and political relations, which recent history, especially modern im-

perialist war and revolution, is providing in unusual abundance. The group of editors and contributors of the magazine *Under the Banner of Marxism* should, in my opinion, be a kind of "Society of Materialist Friends of Hegelian Dialectics." Modern natural scientists will find (if they know how to seek, and if we learn to help them) in the Hegelian dialectics materialistically interpreted a series of answers to the philosophical problems which are being raised by the revolution in natural science and which make the intellectual admirers of bourgeois fashion "stumble" into reaction.

Unless it sets itself such a task, and systematically fulfils it, materialism cannot be militant materialism. It will be not so much the combatant as the combated, to use an expression of Shchedrin's. Without this, great natural scientists will as often as hitherto be helpless in making their philosophical deductions and generalisations. For natural science is progressing so fast and is undergoing such a profound revolutionary change in all spheres that it cannot possibly dispense with philosophical deductions.

In conclusion, I will cite an example which, while not related to the domain of philosophy, is at any rate related to the domain of social questions, to which the magazine *Under the Banner of Marxism* also desires to devote attention.

It is an example of the way in which modern pseudo-science serves in effect as a vehicle for the grossest and most infamous reactionary views.

I was recently sent a copy of the *Economist*, No. 1 (1922), published by the Eleventh Department of the Russian Technical Society. The young Communist who sent me this journal (he probably had no time to acquaint himself with its contents) rashly expressed an exceedingly sympathetic opinion of it. In reality the journal is—I do not know how deliberately—an organ of the modern feudalists, disguised of course under a cloak of science, democracy and so forth.

A certain Mr. P. A. Sorokin publishes in this journal an extensive so-called "sociological" enquiry into "The Influence of the War." This scientific article abounds in scientific references to the "sociological" works of the author and his numerous teachers and colleagues abroad. Here is an example of his science.



On page 83 I read:

"For every 10,000 marriages in Petrograd there are now 92.2 divorces—a fantastic figure. Of every 100 annulled marriages, 51.1 had lasted less than one year, 11 per cent less than one month, 22 per cent less than two months, 41 per cent less than three to six months and only 26 per cent over six months. These figures show that modern legal marriage is a form which conceals what is in effect extra-conjugal sexual intercourse, enabling lovers of 'strawberries' to satisfy their 'appetites' in a 'legal' way" (*Economist*, No. 1, page 83).

Both this gentleman and the Russian Technical Society which publishes this journal and gives space to this kind of argument no doubt regard themselves as adherents of democracy and would consider it a great insult to be called what they are in fact, namely, feudalists, reactionaries and "graduated flunkies of clericalism."

Even the slightest acquaintance with the legislation of bourgeois countries on marriage, divorce and children born out of wedlock, and with the actual state of affairs in this respect, is enough to show anyone interested in the subject that modern bourgeois democracy, even in the most democratic bourgeois republics, exhibits a truly feudal attitude in this respect towards women and towards children born out of wedlock.

This of course does not prevent the Mensheviks, the Socialist-Revolutionaries, a part of the anarchists and the corresponding parties in the West from shouting about democracy and how it is being violated by the Bolsheviks. But as a matter of fact the Bolshevik revolution is the only consistently democratic revolution in respect to such questions as marriage, divorce and the position of children born out of wedlock. And this is a question which in a most direct manner affects the interests of more than half the population of any country. The Bolshevik revolution, in spite of the vast number of bourgeois revolutions which preceded it and which call themselves democratic, was the first and only revolution to wage a resolute struggle in this respect both against reaction and feudalism and against the usual hypocrisy of the ruling and propertied classes.

If 92 divorces for every 10,000 marriages seems to Mr. Sorokin a fantastic figure, one can only suppose either that the author lived and was brought up in a monastery so entirely walled-off

from life that hardly anyone will believe that such a monastery ever existed, or that the author is distorting the truth in the interests of reaction and the bourgeoisie. Anybody in the least acquainted with social conditions in bourgeois countries knows that the actual number of actual divorces (of course, not sanctioned by church and law) is everywhere immeasurably greater. The only difference between Russia and other countries in this respect is that our laws do not sanctify hypocrisy and the unfranchised position of woman and her child, but openly and in the name of the government declare systematic war on all hypocrisy and on all unfranchisement.

The Marxist magazine will have to wage war also on these modern "educated" feudalists. Many of them, very likely, are in receipt of government money and are engaged in government employment in educating the youth, although they are no more fitted for this than notorious seducers are fitted for the post of superintendents of educational establishments for the young.

The working class of Russia has succeeded in winning power; but it has not yet learnt to utilise it, for otherwise it long ago would have very politely dispatched such teachers and members of learned societies to countries with a bourgeois "democracy." That is the proper place for such feudalists.

But it will learn, if it only wants to learn.

March 12, 1922

## ON DIALECTICS

THE division of the one and the cognition of its contradictory parts (see the quotation from Philo on Heraclitus at the beginning of Part III, "Knowledge," in Lassalle's book on Heraclitus) is the *essence* (one of the "essentials," one of the principal, if not the principal, characteristics or features) of dialectics. This is precisely how Hegel also puts the matter (Aristotle in his *Metaphysics* continually *grapples* with it and *combats* Heraclitus and Heraclitean ideas).

The correctness of this side of the content of dialectics must be tested by the history of science. This side of dialectics as a rule receives inadequate attention (e.g., Plekhanov); the identity of opposites is taken as the sum total of *examples* ("for example, a seed," "for example, primitive Communism." The same is true of Engels. But with him it is "in the interests of popularisation . . .") and not as a law of knowledge (and as a law of the objective world):

In mathematics: + and —. Differential and integral.

In mechanics: action and reaction.

In physics: positive and negative electricity.

In chemistry: the combination and dissociation of atoms.

In social science: the class struggle.

The identity of opposites (their "unity," perhaps it would be more correct to say?—although the difference between the terms identity and unity is not particularly important here. In a certain sense both are correct) is the recognition (discovery) of the contradictory, *mutually exclusive*, opposite tendencies in *all* phenomena and processes of nature (*including* mind and society). The condition for the knowledge of all processes of the world in their "*self-movement*," in their spontaneous development, in their real life, is the knowledge of them as a unity of opposites. Develop-

ment is the "struggle" of opposites. The two basic (or two possible? or two historically observable?) conceptions of development (evolution) are: development as decrease and increase, as repetition, *and* development as a unity of opposites (the division of the one into mutually exclusive opposites and their reciprocal relation).

In the first conception of motion, *self*-movement, its *driving* force, its source, its motive, remains in the shade (or this source is made *external*—God, subject, etc.). In the second conception it is to the knowledge of the *source* of "*self*"-movement that attention is chiefly directed.

The first conception is lifeless, poor and dry. The second is vital. The second *alone* furnishes the key to the "self-movement" of everything in existence; it alone furnishes the key to the "leaps," to the "break in continuity," to the "transformation into the opposite," to the destruction of the old and the emergence of the new.

The unity (coincidence, identity, resultant) of opposites is conditional, temporary, transitory, relative. The struggle of mutually exclusive opposites is absolute, just as development and motion are absolute.

N.B. The distinction between subjectivism (scepticism, sophistry, etc.) and dialectics, incidentally, is that in (objective) dialectics the difference between the relative and the absolute is itself relative. For objective dialectics there is an absolute even *within* the relative. For subjectivism and sophistry the relative is only relative and excludes the absolute.

In his *Capital*, Marx first analyses the simplest, most ordinary, fundamental, most common and everyday *relation* of bourgeois (commodity) society, a relation that is encountered billions of times, *viz.*, the exchange of commodities. In this very simple phenomenon (in this "cell" of bourgeois society) analysis reveals *all* the contradictions (or the germs of *all* the contradictions) of modern society. The subsequent exposition shows us the development (*both* growth *and* movement) of these contradictions and of this society in the  $\Sigma^1$  of its individual parts, from its beginning to its end.

Such must also be the method of exposition (or study) of

<sup>1</sup> Sum.—Ed.

dialectics in general (for with Marx the dialectics of bourgeois society is only a particular case of dialectics). To begin with the simplest, most ordinary, commonest, etc., *proposition*, any proposition one pleases: the leaves of a tree are green; John is a man; Fido is a dog, etc. Here already we have *dialectics* (as Hegel's genius recognised): the *singular* is the *general* (cf. Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, translated by Schwegler, Bd. II, S. 40, Buch 3, Kapitel IV, 8 und 9: "denn natürlich kann man nicht der Meinung sein, daß es ein Haus [a house in general] gebe außer den sichtbaren Häusern," "ὅς γὰρ ἂν θείημεν εἶναι τινὶ οἴκῳ πρὸς τὰς τιὰς οἰκίας").<sup>1</sup> Consequently, opposites (the singular as opposed to the general) are identical: the singular exists only in the connection that leads to the general. The general exists only in the singular and through the singular. Every singular is (in one way or another) a general. Every general is (a fragment, or a side, or the essence of) a singular. Every general only approximately comprises all the singular objects. Every singular enters into the general incompletely, etc., etc. Every singular is connected by thousands of transitions with other *kinds* of singulars (things, phenomena, processes), etc. *Here already* we have the elements, the germs, the concepts of *necessity*, of objective connection in nature, etc. Here already we have the contingent and the necessary, the appearance and the essence; for when we say: John is a man, Fido is a dog, *this* is a leaf of a tree, etc., we *disregard* a number of characteristics as *contingent*; we separate the essence from the appearance, and put one in opposition to the other.

Thus in *any* given proposition we can (and must) reveal as in a "cell" ("nucleus") the germs of *all* the elements of dialectics, and thereby show that dialectics is characteristic of all human knowledge in general. And natural science shows us (and here again it must be demonstrated in *any* given simple instance) objective nature with the same qualities, the transformation of the singular into the general, of the contingent into the necessary, transitions, modulations, and the reciprocal connection of opposites. Dialectics is the theory of knowledge of (Hegel and) Marxism. This is the

<sup>1</sup> For, evidently, one cannot hold the opinion that there can be a house apart from the visible houses.--Ed.

"side" of the matter (it is not "a side" but the *essence* of the matter) to which Plekhanov, not to speak of other Marxists, paid no attention.

\* \* \*

Knowledge is represented in the form of a series of circles both by Hegel (see his *Logik*) and by the modern "epistemologist" of natural science, the eclectic and foe of Hegelianism (which he did not understand!), Paul Volkmann (see his *Erkenntnistheoretische Grundzüge der Naturwissenschaft*).<sup>1</sup>

"Circles" in philosophy: (is a chronology of *persons* essential? No!).

Ancient: from Democritus to Plato and the dialectics of Heraclitus.

Renaissance: Descartes versus Gassendi (Spinoza?).

Modern: Holbach—Hegel (via Berkeley, Hume, Kant).

Hegel—Feuerbach—Marx.

Dialectics as a *living*, many-sided knowledge (with the number of sides eternally increasing) with an infinite number of shadings of every sort of approach and approximation to reality (with a philosophical system growing into a whole out of each shade)—here we have an immeasurably rich content as compared with "metaphysical" materialism, the fundamental *misfortune* of which is its inability to apply dialectics to the *Bildertheorie*,<sup>2</sup> to the process and development of knowledge.

Philosophical idealism is *only* nonsense from the standpoint of crude, simple, metaphysical materialism. On the other hand, from the standpoint of *dialectical* materialism, philosophical idealism is a *one-sided*, exaggerated, *überschwengliches*<sup>3</sup> (Dietzgen), development (inflation, distention) of one of the features, sides, facets of knowledge into an absolute, *divorced* from matter, from nature, apotheosised. Idealism is clericalism. True. But philosophi-

NB: || cal idealism is ("more correctly" and "in addition")  
 this || a road to clericalism *through one of the shades* of the  
 aphorism || infinitely complex *knowledge* (dialectical) of man.

<sup>1</sup> *Epistemological Foundations of Modern Science.*—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> *Theory of reflection.*—Ed.

<sup>3</sup> *Extreme.*—Ed.

Human knowledge is not (or does not follow) a straight line, but a curve, which endlessly approximates to a series of circles, a spiral. Each fragment, segment, section of this curve can be transformed (transformed one-sidedly) into an independent, complete, straight line, which then (if one does not see the wood for the trees) leads into the quagmire, into clericalism (where it is *reinforced* by the class interests of the ruling classes). Rectilinearity and one-sidedness, stiffness and petrification, subjectivism and subjective blindness—*voilà* <sup>1</sup> the epistemological roots of idealism. And clericalism (= philosophical idealism), of course, has *epistemological* roots, it is not groundless; it is a *sterile flower* undoubtedly, but it is a sterile flower that grows on the living tree of living, fertile, genuine, powerful, omnipotent, objective, absolute human knowledge.

1915

<sup>1</sup> There you have,— *Ed.*





**MATERIALISM  
AND  
EMPIRIO-CRITICISM**

**CRITICAL COMMENTS ON A REACTIONARY  
PHILOSOPHY**



## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

A NUMBER of writers, would-be Marxists, have this year undertaken a veritable campaign against the philosophy of Marxism. In the course of less than half a year four books devoted mainly and almost exclusively to attacks on dialectical materialism have made their appearance. These include first and foremost *Studies in* (?—it would have been more proper to say “against”) *the Philosophy of Marxism* (St. Petersburg, 1908), a symposium by Bazarov, Bogdanov, Lunacharsky, Berman, Helfond, Yushkevich and Suvorov; Yushkevich’s *Materialism and Critical Realism*; Berman’s *Dialectics in the Light of the Modern Theory of Knowledge* and Valentinov’s *The Philosophical Constructions of Marxism*.

All these people could not have been ignorant of the fact that Marx and Engels scores of times termed their philosophical views dialectical materialism. Yet all these people, who, despite the sharp divergence of their political views, are united in their hostility toward dialectical materialism, at the same time claim that in philosophy they are Marxists! Engels’ dialectics is “mysticism,” says Berman. Engels’ views have become “antiquated,” remarks Bazarov casually, as though it were a self-evident fact. Materialism thus appears to be refuted by our bold warriors, who proudly allude to the “modern theory of knowledge,” “recent philosophy” (or “recent positivism”), the “philosophy of modern natural science,” or even the “philosophy of natural science of the twentieth century.” Supported by all these supposedly recent doctrines, our destroyers of dialectical materialism proceed fearlessly to downright fideism<sup>1</sup> (in the case of Lunacharsky it is most evident, but by no means in his case alone!). Yet when it comes to an explicit definition of their

<sup>1</sup> *Fideism* is a doctrine which substitutes faith for knowledge, or which generally attaches significance to faith.

attitude towards Marx and Engels, all their courage and all their respect for their own convictions at once disappear. In deed—a complete renunciation of dialectical materialism, *i.e.*, of Marxism; in word—endless subterfuges, attempts to evade the essence of the question, to cover their retreat, to put some materialist or other in place of materialism in general, and a determined refusal to make a direct analysis of the innumerable materialist declarations of Marx and Engels. This is truly “mutiny on one’s knees,” as it was justly characterised by one Marxist. This is typical philosophical revisionism, for it was only the revisionists who gained a sad notoriety for themselves by their departure from the fundamental views of Marxism and by their fear, or inability, to “settle accounts” openly, explicitly, resolutely and clearly with the views they had abandoned. When orthodox Marxists had occasion to pronounce against some antiquated views of Marx (for instance, Mehring when he opposed certain historical propositions), it was always done with such precision and thoroughness that no one has ever found anything ambiguous in such literary utterances.

For the rest, there is in the *Studies “in” the Philosophy of Marxism* one phrase which resembles the truth. This is Lunacharsky’s phrase: “Perhaps we [*i.e.*, all the collaborators of the *Studies* evidently] have gone astray, but we are seeking” (p. 161). That the first half of this phrase contains an absolute and the second a relative truth, I shall endeavour to demonstrate circumstantially in the present book. At the moment I would only remark that if our philosophers had spoken not in the name of Marxism but in the name of a few “seeking” Marxists, they would have shown more respect for themselves and for Marxism.

As for myself, I too am a “seeker” in philosophy. Namely, the task I have set myself in these comments is to seek for the stumbling block to people who under the guise of Marxism are offering something incredibly muddled, confused and reactionary.

THE AUTHOR

## IN LIEU OF INTRODUCTION

### HOW CERTAIN "MARXISTS" IN 1908 AND CERTAIN IDEALISTS IN 1710 REFUTED MATERIALISM

ANYONE in the least acquainted with philosophical literature must know that scarcely a single contemporary professor of philosophy (or of theology) can be found who is not directly or indirectly engaged in refuting materialism. They have declared materialism refuted a thousand times, yet are continuing to refute it for the thousand and first time. All our revisionists are engaged in refuting materialism, pretending, however, that actually they are only refuting the materialist Plekhanov, and not the materialist Engels, nor the materialist Feuerbach, nor the materialist views of Dietzgen—and, moreover, that they are refuting materialism from the standpoint of "recent" and "modern" positivism, natural science, and so forth. Without citing quotations, which anyone desiring to do so could cull by the hundred from the books above mentioned, I shall refer to those arguments by which materialism is being combated by Bazarov, Bogdanov, Yushkevich, Valentinov, Chernov<sup>1</sup> and other Machians. I shall use this latter term throughout as a synonym for "empirio-criticist," because it is shorter and simpler and has already acquired rights of citizenship in Russian literature. That Ernst Mach is the most popular representative of empirio-criticism today is universally acknowledged in philosophical literature,<sup>2</sup> while Bogdanov's and Yushkevich's departures from "pure" Machism are of absolutely secondary importance, as will be shown later.

<sup>1</sup> V. Chernov, *Philosophical and Sociological Studies*, Moscow, 1907. The author is as ardent an adherent of Avenarius and an enemy of dialectical materialism as Bazarov and Co.

<sup>2</sup> See, for instance, Dr. Richard Höningwald, *Ueber die Lehre Humes von der Realität der Außendinge* [*Hume's Doctrine of the Reality of the External World*], Berlin 1904, S. 26.

The materialists, we are told, recognise something unthinkable and unknowable—"things-in-themselves"—matter "outside of experience" and outside of our knowledge. They lapse into genuine mysticism by admitting the existence of something beyond, something transcending the bounds of "experience" and knowledge. When they say that matter, by acting upon our sense-organs, produces sensations, the materialists take as their basis the "unknown," nothingness; for do they not themselves declare our sensations to be the only source of knowledge? The materialists lapse into "Kantianism" (Plekhanov, by recognising the existence of "things-in-themselves," i.e., things outside of our consciousness); they "duplicate" the world and preach "dualism," for the materialists hold that beyond the appearance there is the thing-in-itself; beyond the immediate sense data there is something else, some fetish, an "idol," an absolute, a source of "metaphysics," a double of religion ("holy matter," as Bazarov says).

Such are the arguments levelled by the Machians against materialism, as repeated and retold in varying keys by the aforementioned writers.

In order to test whether these arguments are new, and whether they are really directed against only one Russian materialist who "lapsed into Kantianism," we shall give some detailed quotations from the works of an old idealist, George Berkeley. This historical inquiry is all the more necessary in the introduction to our comments since we shall have frequent occasion to refer to Berkeley and his trend in philosophy, for the Machians misrepresent both the relation of Mach to Berkeley and the essence of Berkeley's philosophical line.

The work of Bishop George Berkeley, published in 1710 under the title *Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*,<sup>1</sup> begins with the following argument:

"It is evident to anyone who takes a survey of the *objects* of human knowledge, that they are either ideas actually imprinted on the senses; or else such as are perceived by attending to the passions and operations of the mind; or lastly, ideas formed by help of memory and imagination. . . . By

<sup>1</sup> *Works of George Berkeley*, edited by A. C. Fraser, Oxford, 1871, Vol. I, p. 155.

sight I have the ideas of light and colours, with their several degrees and variations. By touch I perceive hard and soft, heat and cold, motion and resistance. . . . Smelling furnishes me with odours; the palate with tastes; and hearing conveys sounds. . . .

"And as several of these are observed to accompany each other, they come to be marked by one name, and so to be reputed as one thing. Thus, for example, a certain colour, taste, smell, figure and consistence having been observed to go together, are accounted one distinct thing, signified by the name *apple*; other collections of ideas constitute a stone, a tree, a book, and the like sensible things. . ." (§ 1).

Such is the content of the first section of Berkeley's work.

We must remember that Berkeley takes as the basis of his philosophy hard, soft, heat, cold, colours, tastes, odours, etc. For Berkeley, things are "collections of ideas," this expression designating the aforesaid, let us say, qualities or sensations, and not abstract thoughts.

Berkeley goes on to say that besides these "ideas or objects of knowledge" there exists something that perceives them—"mind, spirit, soul or myself" (§ 2). It is self-evident, the philosopher concludes, that "ideas" cannot exist outside of the mind that perceives them. In order to convince ourselves of this it is enough to consider the meaning of the word "exist."

"The table I write on I say exists, that is, I see and feel it; and if I were out of my study I should say it existed; meaning thereby that if I was in my study I might perceive it. . . ."

That is what Berkeley says in § 3 of his work; and thereupon he begins a polemic against the people whom he calls materialists (§§ 18, 19, etc.).

"I cannot conceive," he says, "how it is possible to speak of the absolute existence of things without their relation to the fact that somebody perceives them. To exist means to be perceived" (their *esse* is *percipi*, § 3—a dictum of Berkeley's frequently quoted in textbooks on the history of philosophy).

"It is indeed an opinion strangely prevailing amongst men, that houses, mountains, rivers, and in a word all sensible objects have an existence, natural or real, distinct from their being perceived by the understanding" (§ 4).

This opinion is a "manifest contradiction," says Berkeley.

"For, what are the aforementioned objects but the things we perceive by sense? and what do we perceive besides our own ideas or sensations? and is it not plainly repugnant that any one of these, or any combination of them, should exist unperceived?" (§ 4).

The expression "collection of ideas" Berkeley now replaces by what to him is an equivalent expression, *combination of sensations*, and accuses the materialists of an "absurd" tendency to go still further, of seeking some source of this complex—that is, of this combination of sensations. In § 5 the materialists are accused of trifling with an abstraction, for to divorce the sensation from the object, according to Berkeley, is an empty abstraction.

"In truth," he says at the end of § 5, omitted in the second edition, "the object and the sensation are the same thing, and cannot therefore be abstracted from each other."

Berkeley goes on:

"But, say you, though the ideas themselves do not exist without the mind, yet there may be things like them, whereof they are copies or resemblances, which things exist without the mind, in an unthinking substance. I answer, an idea can be like nothing but an idea; a colour or figure can be like nothing but another colour or figure. . . . I ask whether those supposed originals, or external things, of which our ideas are the pictures or representations, be themselves perceivable or no? If they are, then they are ideas and we have gained our point; but if you say they are not, I appeal to anyone whether it be sense to assert a colour is like something which is invisible; hard or soft, like something which is intangible; and so of the rest" (§ 8).

As the reader sees, Bazarov's "arguments" against Plekhanov concerning the problem of whether things can exist apart from their action on us do not differ in the least from Berkeley's arguments against the materialists whom he does not mention by name. Berkeley considers the notion of the existence of "matter or corporeal substance" (§ 9) such a "contradiction," such an "absurdity," that it is really not worth wasting time exposing it. He says:

"But because the tenet of the existence of Matter seems to have taken so deep a root in the minds of philosophers, and draws after it so many ill consequences, I choose rather to be thought prolix and tedious than omit anything that might conduce to the full discovery and extirpation of that prejudice" (§ 9).

We shall presently see to what "ill consequences" Berkeley is referring. Let us first finish with his theoretical arguments against the materialists. Denying the "absolute" existence of objects, that is, the existence of things outside human knowledge, Berkeley deliberately represents the views of his opponents as though they recognised the "thing-in-itself." In § 24 Berkeley writes in



italics that the opinion which he is refuting recognises "*the absolute existence of sensible objects in themselves, or without the mind*" (pp. 167-68, *op. cit.*). The two fundamental lines of philosophical outlook are here depicted with the straightforwardness, clarity and precision that distinguish the classical philosophers from the inventors of "new" systems in our day. Materialism is the recognition of "objects in themselves," or outside the mind; ideas and sensations are copies or images of these objects. The opposite doctrine (idealism) claims that objects do not exist "without the mind"; objects are "combinations of sensations."

This was written in 1710, fourteen years before the birth of Immanuel Kant, yet our Machians, supposedly on the basis of "recent" philosophy, made the discovery that the recognition of "objects in themselves" is a result of the infection or distortion of materialism by Kantianism! The "new" discoveries of the Machians are the product of an astounding ignorance of the history of the basic philosophical trends.

Their next "new" thought consists in this: that the concepts "matter" or "substance" are remnants of old uncritical views. Mach and Avenarius, you see, advanced philosophical thought, deepened analysis and eliminated these "absolutes," "unchangeable entities," etc. If you wish to check such assertions with the original sources, go to Berkeley and you will see that they are pretentious fictions. Berkeley says quite definitely that matter is "nonentity" (§ 68), that matter is *nothing* (§ 80). "You may," thus Berkeley ridicules the materialists, "if so it shall seem good, use the word *matter* in the same sense as other men use *nothing*" (pp. 196-97). At the beginning, says Berkeley, it was believed that colours, odours, etc., "really exist," but subsequently such views were renounced, and it was seen that they only exist in dependence on our sensations. But this elimination of old erroneous concepts was not completed; a remnant is the concept "substance" (§ 73), which is also a "prejudice" (p. 195), and which was finally exposed by Bishop Berkeley in 1710! In 1908 there are still wags who seriously believe Avenarius, Petzoldt, Mach and the rest, when they maintain that it was only "recent positivism" and "recent natural science" which at last succeeded in eliminating these "metaphysical" conceptions.

These same wags (among them Bogdanov) assure their readers that it was the new philosophy that corrected the error of the "duplication of the world" in the doctrine of the eternally refuted materialists, who speak of some sort of a "reflection" by the human consciousness of things existing outside the consciousness. A mass of sentimental verbiage has been written by the above-named authors about this "duplication." Owing to forgetfulness or ignorance, they failed to add that these new discoveries had already been discovered in 1710. Berkeley says:

"Our knowledge of these [*i.e.*, ideas or things] has been very much obscured and confounded, and we have been led into very dangerous errors by supposing a two-fold existence of the objects of sense—the one *intelligible* or in the mind, the other *real* and without the mind" (*i.e.*, outside consciousness) (§ 86).

And Berkeley ridicules this "absurd" notion, which admits the possibility of thinking the unthinkable! The source of the "absurdity," of course, "follows from our supposing a difference between *things* and *ideas* . . . the supposition of external objects" (§ 87). This same source—as discovered by Berkeley in 1710 and re-discovered by Bogdanov in 1908—engenders a faith in fetishes and idols.

"The existence of Matter," says Berkeley, "or bodies unperceived, has not only been the main support of Atheists and Fatalists, but on the same principle doth Idolatry likewise in all its various forms depend" (§ 94).

Here we arrive at those "ill consequences" derived from the "absurd" doctrine of the existence of an external world which compelled Bishop Berkeley not only to refute this doctrine theoretically, but passionately to persecute its adherents as enemies.

"For as we have shewn the doctrine of Matter or corporeal Substance to have been the main pillar and support of Scepticism, so likewise upon the same foundation have been raised all the impious schemes of Atheism and Irreligion. . . . How great a friend *material substance* has been to Atheists in all ages were needless to relate. All their monstrous systems have so visible and necessary a dependence on it, that when this cornerstone is once removed, the whole fabric cannot choose but fall to the ground, insomuch that it is no longer worth while to bestow a particular consideration on the absurdities of every wretched sect of Atheists (§ 92, p. 203).

"Matter being once expelled out of nature drags with it so many sceptical and impious notions, such an incredible number of disputes and puzzling

questions ["the principle of economy of thought," discovered by Mach in the 'seventies, "philosophy as a conception of the world according to the principle of minimum expenditure of effort"—Avenarius in 1876!] which have been thorns in the sides of divines as well as philosophers, and made so much fruitless work for mankind, that if the arguments we have produced against it are not found equal to demonstration (as to me they evidently seem), yet I am sure all friends to knowledge, peace, and religion have reason to wish they were" (§ 96).

Frankly and bluntly did Bishop Berkeley argue! In our time these very same thoughts on the "economical" elimination of "matter" from philosophy are enveloped in a much more artful form, and confused by the use of a "new" terminology, so that these thoughts may be taken by naïve people for "recent" philosophy!

But Berkeley was not only candid as to the tendencies of his philosophy, he also endeavoured to cover its idealistic nakedness, to represent it as being free from absurdities and acceptable to "common sense." Instinctively defending himself against the accusation of what would nowadays be called subjective idealism and solipsism, he says that by our philosophy "we are not deprived of any one thing in nature" (§ 34). Nature remains, and the distinction between realities and chimeras remains, only "they both equally exist in the mind" (§ 34).

"I do not argue against the existence of any one thing that we can apprehend either by sense or reflection. That the things I see with my eyes and touch with my hands do exist, really exist, I make not the least question. The only thing whose existence we deny is that which *philosophers* [Berkeley's italics] call Matter or corporeal substance. And in doing this there is no damage done to the rest of mankind, who, I dare say, will never miss it. The Atheist indeed will want the colour of an empty name to support his impiety" (§ 35).

This thought is made still clearer in § 37, where Berkeley replies to the charge that his philosophy destroys corporeal substance:

"... if the word *substance* be taken in the vulgar sense, for a combination of sensible qualities, such as extension, solidity, weight, and the like—this we cannot be accused of taking away; but if it be taken in a philosophic sense, for the support of accidents or qualities without the mind—then indeed I acknowledge that we take it away, if one may be said to take away that which never had any existence, not even in the imagination."

Not without good cause did the English philosopher Fraser, an idealist and adherent of Berkeleianism, who edited Berkeley's works and supplied them with his own annotations, designate Berkeley's doctrine by the term "natural realism" (*op. cit.*, p. x). This amusing terminology must by all means be noted, for it in fact expresses Berkeley's intention to counterfeit realism. In our further exposition we shall frequently find the "recent positivists" repeating the same stratagem or counterfeit in a different form and in a different verbal wrapping. Berkeley does not deny the existence of real things! Berkeley does not go counter to the opinion of all humanity! Berkeley denies "only" the teaching of the philosophers, *viz.*, the theory of knowledge, which seriously and resolutely takes as the foundation of all its reasoning the recognition of the external world and the reflection thereof in the minds of men. Berkeley does not deny natural science, which has always adhered (mostly unconsciously) to this, *i.e.*, the materialist, theory of knowledge. We read in § 59:

"We may, from the experience<sup>1</sup> [Berkeley—a philosophy of 'pure experience'] we have had of the train and succession of ideas in our minds . . . make . . . well-grounded predictions concerning the ideas we shall be affected with pursuant to a great train of actions, and be enabled to pass a right judgment of what would have appeared to us, in case we were placed in circumstances very different from those we are in at present. Herein consists the knowledge of nature, which [listen to this!] may preserve its use and certainty very consistently with what hath been said."

Let us regard the external world, nature, as "a combination of sensations" evoked in our mind by a deity. Acknowledge this and give up searching for the "ground" of these sensations outside the mind, outside men, and I will acknowledge within the framework of my idealist theory of knowledge *all* natural science and all the importance and authenticity of its deductions. It is precisely this framework, and only this framework, that I need for my deductions in favour of "peace and religion." Such is Berkeley's train of thought. It correctly expresses the essence of idealist philosophy and its social significance, and we shall encounter it later

<sup>1</sup>In his preface Fraser insists that both Berkeley and Locke "appeal exclusively to experience" (p. 117).

when we come to speak of the relation of Machism to natural science.

Let us now consider another recent discovery that was borrowed from Bishop Berkeley in the twentieth century by the recent positivist and critical realist, P. Yushkevich. This discovery is "empirio-symbolism." "Berkeley," says Fraser, "thus reverts to his favourite theory of a Universal Natural Symbolism" (*op. cit.*, p. 190). Did these words not occur in an edition of 1871, one might have suspected the English fideist philosopher Fraser of plagiarism from both the modern mathematician and physicist Poincaré and the Russian "Marxist" Yushkevich!

This theory of Berkeley's, which threw Fraser into raptures, is set forth by the Bishop as follows:

"The connexion of ideas [do not forget that for Berkeley ideas and things are identical] does not imply the relation of *cause* and *effect*, but only of a mark or *sign* with the thing *signified*" (§ 65).

"Hence, it is evident that those things, which under the notion of a cause co-operating or concurring to the production of effects, are altogether inexplicable, and run us into great absurdities, may be very naturally explained . . . when they are considered only as marks or signs for our information" (§ 66).

Of course, in the opinion of Berkeley and Fraser, it is no other than the deity who informs us by means of these "empirio-symbols." The epistemological significance of *symbolism* in Berkeley's theory, however, consists in this, that it is to replace "the doctrine" which "pretends to explain things by corporeal causes" (§ 66).

We have before us two philosophical trends in the question of causality. One "pretends to explain things by corporeal causes." It is clear that it is connected with the "absurd doctrine of matter" refuted by Bishop Berkeley. The other reduces the "notion of causality" to the notion of a "mark or sign" which serves for "our information" (supplied by God). We shall meet these two trends in a twentieth-century garb when we analyse the attitude of Machism and dialectical materialism to this question.

Further, as regards the question of reality, it ought also to be remarked that Berkeley, refusing as he does to recognise the existence of things outside the mind, tries to find a criterion for dis-

tinguishing between the real and the fictitious. In § 36 he says that those "ideas" which the human mind evokes at pleasure

"are faint, weak, and unsteady in respect to others they perceive by sense: which, being impressed upon them according to certain rules or laws of nature, speak themselves about the effects of a Mind more powerful and wise than human spirits. These latter are said to have *more reality* in them than the former; by which is meant that they are more affecting, orderly and distinct, and that they are not fictions of the mind perceiving them. . . ."

Elsewhere (§ 34) Berkeley tries to connect the notion of reality with the simultaneous perception of the same sensations by many people. For instance, how shall we resolve the question as to whether the transformation of water into wine, of which we are being told, is real?

"If at the table all who were present should see, and smell, and taste, and drink wine, and find the effects of it, with me there could be no doubt of its reality."

And Fraser explains:

"The simultaneous consciousness of . . . the 'same' sense-ideas by *different persons*, as distinguished from the purely individual or personal consciousness of *imaginary* objects and emotions, is here referred to as a test of the *reality* of the former."

From this it is evident that Berkeley's subjective idealism is not to be interpreted as though it ignored the distinction between individual and collective perception. On the contrary, he attempts on the basis of this distinction to construct a criterion of reality. Deriving "ideas" from the action of the deity upon the human mind, Berkeley thus approaches objective idealism: the world proves to be not my idea but the product of a single supreme spiritual cause that creates both the "laws of nature" and the laws distinguishing "more real" ideas from those less real, and so forth.

In another work, *The Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous* (1713), where he endeavours to present his views in an especially popular form, Berkeley sets forth the opposition between his doctrine and the materialist doctrine in the following way:

"I assert as well as you [materialists] that, since we are affected from without, we must allow Powers to be without, in a Being distinct from ourselves. . . . But then we differ as to the kind of this powerful being. I will have it to be Spirit, you Matter, or I know not what (I may add too, you know not what) third nature. . ." (p. 335).

## Fraser comments:

"This is the gist of the whole question. According to the Materialists, sensible phenomena are due to *material substance*, or to some unknown 'third nature'; according to Berkeley, to Rational Will; according to Hume and the Positivists, their origin is absolutely unknown, and we can only generalise them inductively, through custom, as facts."

Here the English Berkeleian, Fraser, approaches from his consistent idealist standpoint the same fundamental "lines" in philosophy which were so clearly characterised by the materialist Engels. In his work *Ludwig Feuerbach* Engels divides philosophers into "two great camps"—materialists and idealists. Engels—dealing with theories of the two trends much more developed, varied and rich in content than Fraser dealt with—sees the fundamental distinction between them in the fact that while for the materialists nature is primary and spirit secondary, for the idealists the reverse is the case. In between these two camps Engels places the adherents of Hume and Kant, who deny the possibility of knowing the world, or at least of knowing it fully, and calls them *agnostics*. In his *Ludwig Feuerbach* Engels applies this term only to the adherents of Hume (those people whom Fraser calls, and who like to call themselves, "positivists"). But in his article "On Historical Materialism," Engels explicitly speaks of the standpoint of "*the Neo-Kantian agnostic*," regarding Neo-Kantianism as a variety of agnosticism.<sup>1</sup>

We cannot dwell here on this remarkably correct and profound judgment of Engels' (a judgment which is shamelessly ignored by the Machians). We shall discuss it in detail later on. For the present we shall confine ourselves to pointing to this Marxian terminology and to this meeting of extremes: the views of a consistent materialist and of a consistent idealist on the fundamental philosophical trends. In order to illustrate these trends (with which we shall constantly have to deal in our further exposition) let us

<sup>1</sup> Friedrich Engels, "Ueber historischen Materialismus" ["On Historical Materialism"], *Neue Zeit*, XI. Jg., Bd. I (1892-93), No. 1, S. 18. Translated from the English by Engels himself. (This article was published as an introduction to the English translation of Engels' *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*.—*Trans.*)

briefly note the views of outstanding philosophers of the eighteenth century who pursued a different path from Berkeley.

Here are Hume's arguments. In his *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, in the chapter (XII) on sceptical philosophy, he says:

"It seems evident, that men are carried, by a natural instinct or prepossession, to repose faith in their senses; and that, without any reasoning, or even almost before the use of reason, we always suppose an external universe, which depends not on our perception, but would exist though we and every sensible creature were absent or annihilated. Even the animal creations are governed by a like opinion, and preserve this belief of external objects, in all their thoughts, designs, and actions. . . .

"But this universal and primary opinion of all men is soon destroyed by the slightest philosophy, which teaches us, that nothing can ever be present to the mind but an image or perception, and that the senses are only the inlets, through which these images are conveyed, without being able to produce any immediate intercourse between the mind and the object. The table, which we see, seems to diminish, as we remove farther from it: But the real table, which exists independent of us, suffers no alteration: It was, therefore, nothing but its image, which was present to the mind. These are the obvious dictates of reason; and no man, who reflects, ever doubted, that the existences, which we consider, when we say, 'this house,' and 'that tree,' are nothing but perceptions in the mind. . . .

"By what argument can it be proved, that the perceptions of the mind must be caused by external objects, entirely different from them, though resembling them (if that be possible), and could not arise either from the energy of the mind itself, or from the suggestion of some invisible and unknown spirit, or from some other cause still more unknown to us? . . .

"How shall the question be determined? By experience surely; as all other questions of a like nature. But here experience is, and must be entirely silent. The mind has never anything present to it but the perceptions, and cannot possibly reach any experience of their connection with objects. This supposition of such a connection is, therefore, without any foundation in reasoning.

"To have recourse to the veracity of the Supreme Being, in order to prove the veracity of our senses, is surely making a very unexpected circuit . . . if the external world be once called in question, we shall be at a loss to find arguments, by which we may prove the existence of that Being, or any of his attributes."<sup>1</sup>

He says the same thing in his *Treatise of Human Nature* (Part IV, Sec. II, "On Scepticism Towards Sensations"): "There is only a single existence, which I shall call indifferently *objects* or *perceptions*." By scepticism Hume means the refusal to explain

<sup>1</sup> David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding. Essays and Treatises*, London, 1882, Vol. II. pp. 151-53.



sensations as the effects of objects, spirit, etc., a refusal to reduce perceptions to the external world, on the one hand, and to a deity or to an unknown spirit, on the other. And the author of the introduction to the French translation of Hume, F. Pillon—a philosopher of a trend akin to Mach (as we shall see below)—justly remarks that for Hume the subject and the object are reduced to “groups of various perceptions,” to “elements of consciousness, to impressions, ideas, etc.”; that the only concern should be with the “groupings and combinations of these elements.”<sup>1</sup> The English Humean, Huxley, who coined the apt and correct term “agnosticism,” in his *Hume* also emphasises the fact that Hume, regarding “sensations” as the “primary and irreducible states of consciousness,” is not entirely consistent on the question how the origin of sensations is to be explained, whether by the effect of objects on man or by the creative power of the mind. “Realism and idealism are equally probable hypotheses” (*i.e.*, for Hume).<sup>2</sup> Hume does not go beyond sensations.

“Thus the colours red and blue, and the odour of a rose, are simple impressions. . . . A red rose gives us a complex impression, capable of resolution into the simple impressions of red colour, rose-scent, and numerous others” (pp. 64-65, *op. cit.*).

Hume admits both the “materialist position” and the “idealist position” (p. 82); the “collection of perceptions” may be generated by the Fichtean “ego” or may be a “signification and even a symbol” of “something real.” This is how Huxley interprets Hume.

As for the materialists, here is an opinion of Berkeley given by Diderot, the leader of the Encyclopædists:

“Those philosophers are called *idealists* who, being conscious only of their existence and of the sensations which succeed each other within themselves, do not admit anything else. An extravagant system which, to my thinking, only the blind could have originated; a system which, to the shame of human intelligence and philosophy, is the most difficult to combat, although the most absurd of all.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Psychologie de Hume. Traité de la nature humaine, etc.* Trad. par Ch. Renouvier et F. Pillon [*Hume's Psychology. A Treatise of Human Nature*, translated by Ch. Renouvier and F. Pillon], Paris, 1878. Introduction, p. x.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Huxley, *Hume*, London, 1879, p. 74.

<sup>3</sup> *Œuvres complètes de Diderot*, ed. par J. Assézat [Diderot, *Complete Works*, edited by Assézat], Paris, 1875, Vol. I, p. 304.

And Diderot, who came very close to the standpoint of contemporary materialism (that arguments and syllogisms alone do not suffice to refute idealism, and that here it is not a question for theoretical argument), notes the similarity of the premises both of the idealist Berkeley and the sensationalist Condillac. In his opinion, Condillac should have undertaken a refutation of Berkeley in order to avoid such absurd conclusions being drawn from the treatment of sensations as the only source of our knowledge.

In the "Conversation Between d'Alembert and Diderot," Diderot states his philosophical position thus:

"Suppose a piano to be endowed with the faculty of sensation and memory, tell me, would it not of its own accord repeat those airs which you have played on its keys? We are instruments endowed with sensation and memory. Our senses are so many keys upon which surrounding nature strikes and which often strike upon themselves. And this is all, in my opinion, that occurs in a piano organised like you and me."

D'Alembert retorts that such an instrument would have to possess the faculty of finding food for itself and of reproducing little pianos. Undoubtedly, contends Diderot.—But take an egg.

"This is what refutes all the schools of theology and all the temples on earth. What is this egg? A mass that is insensible until the embryo is introduced thither, and when this embryo is introduced, what is it then? An insensible mass, for in its turn, this embryo is only an inert and crude liquid. How does this mass arrive at a different organisation, arrive at sensibility and life? By means of heat. And what produces heat? Motion. . . . The animal that is hatched from the egg is endowed with all your sensations; it performs all your actions. Would you maintain with Descartes that this is a simple imitating machine? Little children will laugh at you, and the philosophers will reply that if this be a machine then you too are a machine. If you admit that the difference between these animals and you consists only in their organisation, you will prove your common sense and sagacity, you will be right. But from this will follow the conclusion that refutes you; namely, that from inert matter organised in a certain way, impregnated with another bit of inert matter, by heat and motion—sensibility, life, memory, consciousness, emotion, and thought are generated."

One of the two, continues Diderot, either admit some "hidden element" in the egg, that penetrates to it in an unknown way at a certain stage of development, an element about which it is unknown whether it occupies space, whether it is material or whether it is created for the purpose—which is contradictory to common sense, and leads to inconsistencies and absurdities; or we must

make "a simple supposition which explains everything, namely, that the faculty of sensation is a general property of matter, or a product of its organisation." To d'Alembert's objection that such a supposition implies a quality which in its essence is incompatible with matter, Diderot retorts:

"And how do you know that the faculty of sensation is essentially incompatible with matter, since you do not know the essence of any thing at all, either of matter, or of sensation? Do you understand the nature of motion any better, its existence in a body, its communication from one body to another?"

*D'Alembert*: "Without knowing the nature of sensation, or that of matter, I see, however, that the faculty of sensation is a simple quality, single, indivisible, and incompatible with a divisible subject or substratum."

*Diderot*: "Metaphysico-theological nonsense! What, do you not see that all qualities of matter, that all its forms accessible to our senses are in their essence indivisible? There cannot be a larger or a smaller degree of impenetrability. There may be half of a round body, but there is no half of roundness. . . . Be a physicist and admit the derivative character of the given effect when you see how it is derived, though you may be unable to explain the relation between the cause and the effect. Be logical and do not replace a cause that exists and explains everything by some cause which it is impossible to conceive, and the connection of which with the effect is even more difficult to conceive, and which engenders an infinite number of difficulties without solving a single one of them."

*D'Alembert*: "And if I do proceed from this cause?"

*Diderot*: "There is only one substance in the universe in men and in animals. A hand-organ is of wood, man of flesh. A finch is of flesh, and a musician is of flesh, but differently organised; but both are of the same origin, of the same formation, have the same functions and the same purpose."

*D'Alembert*: "And what establishes the similarity of sounds between your two pianos?"

*Diderot*: ". . . The instrument endowed with the faculty of sensation, or the animal, has learned by experience that after a certain sound certain consequences follow outside of it; that other sentient instruments, like itself, or similar animals, approach, recede, demand, offer, wound, caress;—and all these consequences are associated in its memory and in the memory of other animals with the formation of sounds. Mark, in intercourse between people there is nothing besides sounds and actions. And to appreciate the power of my system, mark again that it is faced with that same insurmountable difficulty which Berkeley adduced against the existence of bodies. There was a moment of insanity when the sentient piano imagined that it was the only piano in the world, and that the whole harmony of the universe resided within it."<sup>1</sup>

This was written in 1769. And with this we shall conclude

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 114-18.

our brief historical inquiry. We shall have more than one occasion to meet "the insane piano" and the harmony of the universe residing within man when we come to analyse "recent positivism."

For the present we shall confine ourselves to one conclusion: the "recent" Machians have not adduced a single argument against the materialists that had not been adduced by Bishop Berkeley.

Let us mention as a curiosity that one of these Machians, Valentinov, vaguely sensing the falsity of his position, has tried to "cover up the traces" of his kinship with Berkeley and has done so in a rather amusing manner. On page 150 of his book we read:

"When those who, speaking of Mach, point to Berkeley, we ask, which Berkeley do they mean? Do they mean the Berkeley who traditionally regards himself [Valentinov wishes to say who is regarded] as a solipsist; or the Berkeley who defends 'the immediate presence and providence of the deity'? Generally, when speaking [?], do they mean Berkeley, the philosophising bishop, the destroyer of atheism, or Berkeley, the thoughtful analyser? With Berkeley the solipsist and preacher of religious metaphysics Mach indeed has nothing in common."

Valentinov is muddled; he was unable to make clear to himself why he was obliged to defend the "thoughtful analyser" and idealist, Berkeley, against the materialist Diderot. Diderot drew a clear distinction between the fundamental philosophical trends. Valentinov confuses them, and, while doing so, very amusingly tries to console us:

"We would not consider the 'kinship' of Mach to the idealist views of Berkeley as a philosophical crime," he says, "even if this actually were the case" (p. 149).

To confound two irreconcilable fundamental trends in philosophy -- really, what "crime" is that? But that is what the whole wisdom of Mach and Avenarius amounts to. We shall now proceed to an examination of this wisdom.

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE OF EMPIRIO-CRITICISM AND OF DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM—I

#### 1. SENSATIONS AND COMPLEXES OF SENSATIONS

THE fundamental premises of the theory of knowledge of Mach and Avenarius are frankly, simply and clearly expounded by them in their early philosophical works. To these works we shall now turn, postponing for later treatment an examination of the corrections and emendations subsequently made by these writers.

"The task of science," Mach wrote in 1872, "can only be:

"1. To determine the laws of connection of ideas (Psychology).

"2. To discover the laws of connection of sensations (Physics).

"3. To explain the laws of connection between sensations and ideas (Psycho-physics)."<sup>1</sup>

This is quite clear.

The subject matter of physics is the connection between sensations and not between things or bodies, of which our sensations are the image. And in 1883, in his *Mechanik*, Mach repeats the same thought:

"Sensations are not 'symbols of things.' The 'thing' is rather a mental symbol for a complex of sensations of relative stability. Not the things (bodies) but colours, sounds, pressures, spaces, times (what we usually call sensations) are the real *elements* of the world."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E. Mach, *Die Geschichte und die Wurzel des Satzes von der Erhaltung der Arbeit*. Vortrag, gehalten in der k. Böhm. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften am 15. Nov. 1871 [*History and Roots of the Principle of the Conservation of Work*. A Lecture Delivered at the Bohemian Royal Scientific Society on November 15, 1871], Prag 1872, S. 57-58.

<sup>2</sup> E. Mach, *Die Mechanik in ihrer Entwicklung historisch-kritisch dargestellt* [*Mechanics, A Historical and Critical Account of its Development*], 3. Auflage, Leipzig 1897, S. 473.

About this word "elements," the fruit of twelve years of "reflection," we shall speak later. At present let us note that Mach explicitly states here that things or bodies are complexes of sensations, and that he quite clearly sets up his own philosophical point of view against the opposite theory, which holds that sensations are "symbols" of things (it would be more correct to say images or reflections of things). The latter theory is *philosophical materialism*. For instance, the materialist Frederick Engels—the not unknown collaborator of Marx and a founder of Marxism—constantly and without exception speaks in his works of things and their mental pictures or images (*Gedankenabbilder*), and it is obvious that these mental images arise exclusively from sensations. It would seem that this fundamental standpoint of "philosophical Marxism" ought to be known to everyone who speaks of it, and especially to anyone who comes out in print in the name of this philosophy. But because of the extraordinary confusion which our Machians have introduced, it becomes necessary to repeat what is generally known. We turn to the first section of *Anti-Dühring* and read: "things and their mental images . . ." <sup>1</sup> or to the first paragraph of the philosophical part, which reads:

"But whence does thought obtain these principles [i.e., the fundamental principles of all knowledge]? From itself? No . . . these forms can never be created and derived by thought out of itself, but only from the external world . . . the principles are not the starting point of the investigation [as Dühring, who would be a materialist, but cannot consistently adhere to materialism, holds], but its final result; they are not applied to nature and human history, but abstracted from them; it is not nature and the realm of humanity which conform to these principles, but the principles are only valid in so far as they are in conformity with nature and history. That is the only materialistic conception of the matter, and Herr Dühring's contrary conception is idealistic, makes things stand completely on their heads, and fashions the real world out of ideas" (pp. 43-44).

Engels, we repeat, applies this "only materialistic conception" everywhere and without exception, relentlessly attacking Dühring for the least deviation from materialism to idealism. Anybody who reads *Anti-Dühring* and *Ludwig Feuerbach* with the slightest care will find scores of instances when Engels speaks of things

<sup>1</sup> Frederick Engels, *Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science (Anti-Dühring)*, Eng. ed., 1935, p. 27.—*Trans.*

and their reflections in the human brain, in our consciousness, thought, etc. Engels does not say that sensations or ideas are "symbols" of things, for consistent materialism must here use "image," picture, or reflection instead of "symbol," as we shall show in detail in the proper place. But the question here is not of this or that formulation of materialism, but of the opposition of materialism to idealism, of the difference between the two fundamental *lines* in philosophy. Are we to proceed from things to sensation and thought? Or are we to proceed from thought and sensation to things? The first line, *i.e.*, the materialist line, is adopted by Engels. The second line, *i.e.*, the idealist line, is adopted by Mach. No evasions, no sophisms (a multitude of which we shall yet encounter) can remove the clear and indisputable fact that Ernst Mach's doctrine of things as complexes of sensations is subjective idealism and a simple rehash of Berkeleianism. If bodies are "complexes of sensations," as Mach says, or "combinations of sensations," as Berkeley said, it inevitably follows that the whole world is but my idea. Starting from such a premise, it is impossible to arrive at the existence of other people besides oneself: it is the purest solipsism. Much as Mach, Avenarius, Petzoldt and the others may abjure solipsism, they in fact cannot escape solipsism without falling into howling logical absurdities. To make this fundamental element of the philosophy of Machism still clearer, we shall give a few additional quotations from Mach's works. Here is a sample from the *Analyse der Empfindungen*:

"We see a body with a point S. If we touch S, that is, bring it into contact with our body, we receive a prick. We can see S without feeling the prick. But as soon as we feel the prick we find S on the skin. Thus, the visible point is a *permanent nucleus*, to which, according to circumstances, the prick is attached as something accidental. By frequent repetitions of analogous occurrences we finally accustom ourselves to regard *all* properties of bodies as 'effects' which proceed from permanent nuclei and are conveyed to the self through the medium of the body; which effects we call *sensations*. . . ." <sup>1</sup>

In other words, people "accustom" themselves to adopt the standpoint of materialism, to regard sensations as the result of

<sup>1</sup> E. Mach, *Analyse der Empfindungen* [Analysis of Sensations], Jena 1900. S. 9 u 10.—*Trans.*

the action of bodies, things, nature on our sense-organs. This "habit," so noxious to the philosophical idealists (a habit acquired by all mankind and all natural science!), is not at all to the liking of Mach, and he proceeds to destroy it.

"Thereby, however, these nuclei are deprived of their entire sensible content and are converted into naked abstract symbols."

An old song, most worthy Professor! This is a literal repetition of Berkeley, who said that matter is a naked abstract symbol. But it is Ernst Mach, in fact, who goes naked, for if he does not admit that the "sensible content" is an objective reality, existing independently of us, there remains only a "naked abstract" *I*, an *I* infallibly written with a capital letter and italicised, equal to "the insane piano, which imagined that it was the sole existing thing in this world." If the "sensible content" of our sensations is not the external world then nothing exists save this naked *I* engaged in empty "philosophical" subterfuges. A stupid and fruitless occupation!

"It is then correct that the world consists only of our sensations. In which case we have knowledge *only* of sensations, and the assumption of those nuclei, and of their interaction, from which alone sensations proceed turns out to be quite idle and superfluous. Such a view can only appeal to *half-hearted* realism or *half-hearted* criticism."

We have quoted the sixth paragraph of Mach's "anti-metaphysical observations" in full. It is a sheer plagiarism on Berkeley. Not a single idea, not a glimmer of thought, except that "we sense only our sensations." From which there is only one possible inference, namely, that "the world consists only of *my* sensations." The word "our" employed by Mach instead of "my" is employed illegitimately. By this word alone Mach betrays that "half-heartedness" of which he accuses others. For if the "assumption" of the existence of the external world is "idle," if the assumption that the needle exists independently of me and that an interaction takes place between my body and the point of the needle is really "idle and superfluous," then primarily the "assumption" of the existence of other people is idle and superfluous. Only *I* exist, and all other people, as well as the external world, come under the category of idle "nuclei." Holding this



point of view, one cannot speak of "our" sensations; and when Mach does speak of them, it is only a betrayal of his own amazing half-heartedness. It only proves that his philosophy is a jumble of idle and empty words in which their author himself does not believe.

Here is a particularly graphic example of Mach's half-heartedness and confusion. In § 6 of Chapter XI of the *Analyse der Empfindungen* we read:

"If I imagine that while I am experiencing sensations, I or someone else could observe my brain with all possible physical and chemical appliances, it would be possible to ascertain with what processes of the organism particular sensations are connected" (p. 198).

Very well! This means, then, that our sensations are connected with definite processes, which take place in the organism in general, and in our brain in particular? Yes, Mach very definitely makes this "assumption"—it would be quite a task not to make it from the standpoint of natural science! But is not this the very "assumption" of those very same "nuclei and their interaction" which our philosopher declared to be idle and superfluous? We are told that bodies are complexes of sensations; to go beyond that, Mach assures us, to regard sensations as a product of the action of bodies upon our sense-organs, is metaphysics, an idle and superfluous assumption, etc., à la Berkeley. But the brain is a body. Consequently, the brain also is no more than a complex of sensations. It follows, then, that with the help of a complex of sensations I (and I also am nothing but a complex of sensations) sense complexes of sensations. A delightful philosophy! First sensations are declared to be "the real elements of the world"; on this an "original" Berkeleianism is erected—and then the very opposite views are smuggled in, viz., that sensations are connected with definite processes in the organism. Are not these "processes" connected with an exchange of matter between the "organism" and the external world? Could this exchange of matter take place if the sensations of the particular organism did not give it an objectively correct idea of this external world?

Mach does not ask himself such embarrassing questions when he mechanically jumbles fragments of Berkeleianism with the

views of natural science, which instinctively adheres to the materialist theory of knowledge. In the same paragraph Mach writes:

"It is sometimes also asked whether (inorganic) 'matter' experiences sensation. . . ."

Does this mean that there is no doubt that *organic* matter experiences sensation? Does this mean that sensation is not something primary but that it is one of the properties of matter? Mach skips over all the absurdities of Berkeleianism!

"The question," he avers, "is natural enough, if we proceed from the current widespread physical notions, according to which matter is the *immediate* and indisputably given *reality*, out of which everything, inorganic and organic, is constructed."

Let us bear in mind this truly valuable admission of Mach's that the current widespread *physical* notions regard matter as the immediate reality, and that only one variety of this reality (organic matter) possesses the well-defined property of sensation. Mach continues:

"Then, indeed, sensation must suddenly arise somewhere in this structure [consisting of matter], or else have previously been present in the foundation. From *our* standpoint the question is a false one. For us matter is not what is primarily given. Rather, what is primarily given are the *elements* (which in a certain familiar relation are designated as sensations). . . ."

What is primarily given, then, are sensations, although they are "connected" only with definite processes in organic matter! And while uttering such absurdities Mach wants to blame materialism ("the current widespread physical notion") for leaving unanswered the question whence sensation "arises." This is a sample of the "refutation" of materialism by the fideists and their hangers-on. Does any other philosophical standpoint "solve" a problem before enough data for its solution has been collected? Does not Mach himself say in the very same paragraph?—

"As long as this problem (how far sensation extends in the organic world) has not been solved even in a single special case, no answer to the question is possible."

The difference between materialism and Machism in this particular question is thus reduced to the following. Materialism, in full agreement with natural science, takes matter as primary and regards consciousness, thought and sensation as secondary, because in its

well-defined form sensation is associated only with the higher forms of matter (organic matter), while "in the foundation of the structure of matter" one can only surmise the existence of a faculty akin to sensation. Such, for example, is the supposition of the well-known German scientist Ernst Haeckel, the English biologist Lloyd Morgan and others, not to speak of Diderot's conjecture mentioned above. Machism holds to the opposite, the idealist point of view, and at once lands into an absurdity: since, in the first place, sensation is taken as primary, in spite of the fact that it is associated only with definite processes in matter organised in a definite way; and since, in the second place, the basic premise that bodies are complexes of sensations is violated by the assumption of the existence of other living beings in general, of other "complexes" besides the given great *I*.

The word "element," which many naïve people (as we shall see) take to be some sort of a new discovery, in reality only obscures the question, for it is a meaningless term which creates a false impression that a solution or a step forward has been achieved. This impression is a false one, because there still remains to be investigated and reinvestigated how matter apparently entirely devoid of sensation is related to matter which, though composed of the same atoms (or electrons), is yet endowed with a well-defined faculty of sensation. Materialism clearly formulates the as yet unsolved problem and thereby stimulates the attempt to solve it, to undertake further experimental investigation. Machism, *i.e.*, a species of muddled idealism, befogs the issue and sidetracks it by means of the futile verbal evasion, "element."

Here is a passage from Mach's latest, comprehensive and conclusive philosophical work that clearly betrays the falsity of this idealist evasion. In his *Erkenntnis und Irrtum* we read:

"While there is no difficulty in constructing (*aufzubauen*) every physical experience out of sensations, *i.e.*, psychical elements, it is impossible to imagine (*ist keine Möglichkeit abzusehen*) how any psychical experience can be composed (*darstellen*) of the elements employed in modern physics, *i.e.*, mass and motion (in their rigidity—*Starrheit*—which is serviceable only for this special science)."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E. Mach, *Erkenntnis und Irrtum* [Knowledge and Error], 2. Auflage, 1906, S. 12, Anmerkung.

Of the rigidity of the conceptions of many modern scientists and of their metaphysical (in the Marxian sense of the term, *i.e.*, anti-dialectical) views, Engels speaks repeatedly and very precisely. We shall see later that it was just on this point that Mach went astray, because he did not understand or did not know the relation between relativism and dialectics. But this is not what concerns us here. It is important for us here to note how glaringly Mach's *idealism* emerges, in spite of the confused—ostensibly new—terminology. There is no difficulty, you see, in constructing any physical element out of sensations, *i.e.*, psychical elements! Oh yes, such constructions, of course, are not difficult, for they are purely verbal constructions, shallow scholasticism, serving as a loophole for fideism. It is not surprising after this that Mach dedicates his works to 'the immanentists'; it is not surprising that the immanentists, who profess the most reactionary kind of philosophical idealism, welcome Mach with open arms. The "recent positivism" of Ernst Mach was only about two hundred years too late. Berkeley had already sufficiently shown that "out of sensations, *i.e.*, psychical elements," nothing can be "built" except *solipsism*! As regards materialism, against which Mach here, too, sets up his own views, without frankly and explicitly naming the "enemy," we have already seen in the case of Diderot what the real views of the materialists are. These views do not consist in deriving sensation from the movement of matter or in reducing sensation to the movement of matter, but in recognising sensation as one of the properties of matter in motion. On this question Engels shared the standpoint of Diderot. Engels dissociated himself from the "vulgar" materialists, Vogt, Büchner and Moleschott, for the very reason, among others, that they erred in believing that the brain secretes thought *in the same way* as the liver secretes bile. But Mach, who constantly sets up his views in opposition to materialism, ignores, of course, all the great materialists—Diderot, Feuerbach, Marx and Engels—just as all other official professors of official philosophy do.

In order to characterise Avenarius' earliest and basic view, let us take his first independent philosophical work, *Philosophie als Denken der Welt gemäß dem Prinzip des kleinsten Kraftmaßes*.

*Prolegomena zu einer Kritik der reinen Erfahrung*,<sup>1</sup> which appeared in 1876. Bogdanov in his *Empirio-Monism* (Book 1, 2nd ed., 1905, p. 12, note) says that

"in the development of Mach's views, the starting point was philosophical idealism, while a realistic tinge was characteristic of Avenarius from the very beginning."

Bogdanov said so because he believed what Mach said (see *Analyse der Empfindungen*, S. 295). Bogdanov should not have believed Mach, and his assertion is diametrically opposed to the truth. On the contrary, Avenarius' idealism emerges so clearly in his work of 1876 that Avenarius himself in 1891 was obliged to admit it. In the introduction to *Der menschliche Weltbegriff* Avenarius says<sup>2</sup>:

"He who has read my first systematic work, *Philosophie*, etc., will at once have presumed that I would have attempted to treat the problems of a criticism of pure experience from the 'idealist' standpoint . . . [but] the sterility of . . . idealism compelled me to doubt the correctness of my previous path."

This idealist starting point of Avenarius' is universally acknowledged in philosophical literature. Of the French writers I shall refer to Couwelaert, who says that Avenarius' philosophical standpoint in the *Prolegomena* is "monistic idealism."<sup>3</sup> Of the German writers, I shall name Rudolph Willy, Avenarius' disciple, who says that

"Avenarius in his youth—and particularly in his work of 1876—was totally under the influence (*ganz im Bunne*) of so-called epistemological idealism."<sup>4</sup>

And, indeed, it would be ridiculous to deny the idealism in Avenarius' *Prolegomena*, where he explicitly states that "only

<sup>1</sup> Richard Avenarius, *Philosophy as a Conception of the World According to the Principle of the Minimum Expenditure of Effort. Prolegomena to a Critique of Pure Experience*, Leipzig, 1876.—Trans.

<sup>2</sup> *Der menschliche Weltbegriff* [The Human Concept of the World], 1891, Vorwort, S. IX u X.

<sup>3</sup> F. van Couwelaert, "L'Empirio-criticisme" ["Empirio-Criticism"], in *Revue néo-scholastique*, 1907, Feb., p. 51.

<sup>4</sup> Rudolph Willy, *Gegen die Schulweisheit. Eine Kritik der Philosophie* [Against School Wisdom. A Critique of Philosophy], München 1905, S. 170.

*sensation can be thought of as the existing*" (pp. 10 and 65 of the second German edition; all italics in quotations are ours). This is how Avenarius himself presents the contents of § 116 of his work. Here is the paragraph in full:

"We have recognised that the existing (*das Seiende*) is substance endowed with sensation; the substance falls away . . . [it is "more economical," don't you see, there is "a lesser expenditure of effort" in thinking that there is no "substance" and that no external world exists!], sensation remains; we must then regard the existing as sensation, at the basis of which there is nothing which does not possess sensation (*nichts Empfindungsloses*)."

Sensation, then, exists without "substance," i.e., thought exists without brain! Are there really philosophers capable of defending this brainless philosophy? There are! And Professor Richard Avenarius is one of them. And we must pause for a while to consider this defence, difficult though it be for a normal person to take it seriously. Here, in §§ 89 and 90 of this same work, is Avenarius' argument:

". . . And so the proposition that motion produces sensation is based on apparent experience only. This experience, which includes the act of perception, consists, presumably, in the fact that sensation is generated in a certain kind of substance (brain) as a result of transmitted motion (excitation) and with the help of other material conditions (e.g., blood). However—apart from the fact that such generation has never itself been observed—in order to construct the supposed experience, as an experience which is real in all its component parts, empirical proof, at least, is required to show that sensation, which assumedly is caused in a certain substance by transmitted motion, did not already exist in that substance in one way or another; so that the appearance of sensation cannot be conceived of in any other way than as a creative act on the part of the transmitted motion. Thus only by proving that where a sensation now appears there was none previously, not even a minimal one, would it be possible to establish a fact which, denoting as it does some act of creation, contradicts the rest of experience and radically changes our conception of nature (*Naturschauung*). But such proof is not furnished by any experience, and cannot be furnished by any experience; on the contrary, the notion of a state of a substance totally devoid of sensation which subsequently begins to experience sensation is only a hypothesis. But such a hypothesis merely complicates and obscures our understanding instead of simplifying and clarifying it.

'Should the so-called experience, viz., that the sensation is *caused* by a transmitted motion in a substance that begins to perceive from this moment, prove upon closer examination to be only apparent, there still remains sufficient material in the content of the experience to ascertain at least the relative origin of sensation from conditions of motion, namely, to ascertain

that the sensation which is present, although latent or minimal, or for some reason not manifest to the consciousness, becomes, owing to transmitted motion, released or enhanced or made manifest to the consciousness. However, even this bit of the remaining content of experience is only an appearance. Were we even by an ideal observation to trace the motion proceeding from the moving substance A, transmitted through a series of intermediate centres and reaching the substance B, which is endowed with sensation, we should at best find that sensation in substance B becomes developed or enhanced simultaneously with the reception of the incoming motion—but we should not find that this occurred as a *consequence* of the motion.”

We have purposely quoted this refutation of materialism by Avenarius in full, in order that the reader may see to what truly pitiful sophistries “recent” empirio-critical philosophy resorts. We shall compare with the argument of the idealist Avenarius the *materialist* argument of—Bogdanov, if only to punish Bogdanov for his betrayal of materialism!

In long bygone days, fully nine years ago, when Bogdanov was half “a natural-historical materialist” (that is, an adherent of the materialist theory of knowledge, to which the overwhelming majority of contemporary scientists instinctively hold), when he was only half led astray by the muddled Ostwald, he wrote:

“From ancient times to the present day, descriptive psychology has adhered to the classification of the facts of consciousness into three categories: the domain of sensations and ideas, the domain of emotions and the domain of impulses. . . . To the first category belong the *images* of phenomena of the outer or inner world, as taken by themselves in consciousness. . . . Such an image is called a ‘sensation’ if it is directly produced through the sense-organs by its corresponding external phenomenon.”<sup>1</sup>

And a little farther on he says:

“Sensation . . . arises in consciousness as a result of a certain impulse from the external environment transmitted by the external sense-organs” (p. 222).

And further:

“Sensation is the foundation of mental life; it is its immediate connection with the external world” (p. 240). “At each step in the process of sensation a transformation of the energy of external excitation into a fact of consciousness takes place” (p. 133).

<sup>1</sup> A. Bogdanov, *The Fundamental Elements of the Historical Outlook on Nature*, St. Petersburg, 1899, p. 216.

And even in 1905, when with the benevolent assistance of Ostwald and Mach Bogdanov had abandoned the materialist standpoint in philosophy for the idealist standpoint, he wrote (from forgetfulness!) in his *Empirio-Monism*:

"As is known, the energy of external excitation, transformed at the nerve-ends into a 'telegraphic' form of nerve current (still insufficiently investigated but devoid of all mysticism), first reaches the neurons that are located in the so-called 'lower' centres—ganglial, cerebral, spinal, subcortical, etc." (Book I, 2nd ed., 1905, p. 118).

For every scientist who has not been led astray by professorial philosophy, as well as for every materialist, sensation is indeed the direct connection between consciousness and the external world; it is the transformation of the energy of external excitation into a state of consciousness. This transformation has been, and is, observed by each of us a million times on every hand. The sophism of idealist philosophy consists in the fact that it regards sensation as being not the connection between consciousness and the external world, but as a fence, a wall, separating consciousness from the external world—not as an image of the external phenomenon corresponding to the sensation, but as the "sole entity." Avenarius gave but a slightly changed form to this old sophism, which had been already worn threadbare by Bishop Berkeley. Since we do not yet know all the conditions of the connection we are constantly observing between sensation and matter organised in a definite way, we therefore acknowledge the existence of sensation alone—that is what the sophism of Avenarius reduces itself to.

To conclude our description of the fundamental idealist premises of empirio-criticism, we shall briefly refer to the English and French representatives of this philosophical trend. Mach explicitly says of Karl Pearson, the Englishman, that he (Mach) is "in agreement with his epistemological (*erkenntniskritischen*) views on all essential points" (*Mechanik*, S. IX). Pearson in turn agrees with Mach.<sup>1</sup> For Pearson "real things" are "sense-impressions." He declares the recognition of things outside the bound-

<sup>1</sup> Karl Pearson, *The Grammar of Science*, 2nd ed., London, 1900, p. 326.



aries of sense-impressions to be metaphysics. Pearson fights materialism with great determination (although he does not know Feuerbach, or Marx, or Engels); his arguments do not differ from those analysed above. However, the desire to masquerade as a materialist is so foreign to Pearson (that is a specialty of the Russian Machians), Pearson is so incautious . . . that he invents no "new" names for his philosophy and simply declares that his views and those of Mach are "*idealist*" (*ibid.*, p. 326). He traces his theoretical genealogy directly to Berkeley and Hume. The philosophy of Pearson, as we shall repeatedly find, excels that of Mach in integrity and consistency.

Mach explicitly declares his solidarity with the French physicists, Pierre Duhem and Henri Poincaré.<sup>1</sup> We shall have occasion to deal with the particularly confused and inconsistent philosophical views of these writers in the chapter on the new physics. Here we shall content ourselves with noting that for Poincaré things are "groups of sensations"<sup>2</sup> and that a similar view is held by Duhem.<sup>3</sup>

We shall now proceed to examine how Mach and Avenarius, who admitted the idealist character of their original views, *corrected* them in their subsequent works.

## 2. "THE DISCOVERY OF THE WORLD-ELEMENTS"

Such is the title under which Friedrich Adler, lecturer at the University of Zürich, probably the only German author also anxious to supplement Marx by Machism, writes of Mach.<sup>4</sup> And this naïve university lecturer must be given his due: in his simplicity of heart he does Machism more harm than good. At least, he puts the question point-blank—did Mach really "discover the

<sup>1</sup> *Analyse der Empfindungen*, S. 4; Vgl. *Erkenntnis und Irrtum*, Vorwort, 2. Auflage.

<sup>2</sup> Henri Poincaré, *La valeur de la science* [*The Value of Science*]. Paris, 1905.

<sup>3</sup> P. Duhem, *La théorie physique, son objet et sa structure* [*The Physical Theory, Its Object and Structure*], Paris, 1906, pp. 6, 10.

<sup>4</sup> Friedrich W. Adler, "Die Entdeckung der Weltelemente (zu Ernst Machs 70. Geburtstag)" ["The Discovery of the World-Elements (On the Occasion of Ernst Mach's 70th Birthday)"], *Der Kampf*, 1908, No. 5 (Februar). Translated in the *International Socialist Review*, 1908, No. 10 (April).

world-elements"? If so, then, only very backward and ignorant people, of course, can still remain materialists. Or is this discovery a return on the part of Mach to the old philosophical errors?

We saw that Mach in 1872 and Avenarius in 1876 held a purely idealist view; for them the world is our sensation. In 1883 Mach's *Mechanik* appeared, and in the preface to the first edition Mach refers to Avenarius' *Prolegomena*, and greets his ideas as being "very close" (*sehr verwandte*) to his own philosophy. Here are the arguments in the *Mechanik* concerning the elements:

"All natural science can only picture and represent (*nachbilden und vorbilden*) complexes of those *elements* which we ordinarily call sensations. It is a matter of the connection of these elements. . . . The connection of A (heat) and B (flame) is a problem of *physics*, that of A and N (nerves) a problem of *physiology*. Neither exists alone; both exist simultaneously. Only temporarily can we neglect either. Even processes that are 'apparently purely mechanical' are thus . . . always physiological" (*op. cit.*, p. 498).

We find the same in the *Analyse der Empfindungen*:

"Wherever . . . the terms 'sensation,' 'complex of sensations,' are used alongside of or in place of the terms 'element,' 'complex of elements,' it must be borne in mind that it is *only* in this *connection* [namely, in the connection of A, B, C with K, L, M, that is, in the connection of "complexes which we ordinarily call bodies" with "the complex which we call our body"] and *relation*, only in this *functional dependence* that the elements are sensations. In another functional relation they are at the same time physical objects" (p. 13).

"A colour is a *physical object* when we consider its dependence, for instance, upon the source of illumination (other colours, temperatures, spaces and so forth). When we, however, consider its *dependence* upon the *retina* (the elements K, L, M), it is a *psychological object*, a sensation" (p. 14).

Thus the discovery of the world-elements amounts to this:

(1) All that exists is declared to be sensation.

(2) The sensations are called elements.

(3) Elements are divided into the physical and the psychical; the latter is that which depends on the human nerves and the human organism generally; the former does not depend on them.

(4) The connection of physical elements and the connection of psychical elements, it is declared, do not exist separately from each other; they exist only in conjunction.

(5) It is possible only temporarily to leave one or the other connection out of account.

(6) The "new" theory is declared to be free from "one-sidedness."<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, it is not one-sidedness we have here, but an incoherent jumble of antithetical philosophical points of view. Since you base yourself *only* on sensations you do not correct the one-sidedness of your idealism by the term "element," but only confuse the issue and cravenly hide from your own theory. In word, you eliminate the antithesis between the physical and the psychical,<sup>2</sup> between materialism (which regards nature, matter, as primary) and idealism (which regards spirit, mind, sensation as primary); in deed, you promptly restore this antithesis; you restore it surreptitiously, retreating from your own fundamental premises! For, if elements are sensations, you have no right even for a moment to accept the existence of "elements" *independently* of my nerves and my mind. But if you do admit physical objects that are independent of my nerves and my sensations and that cause sensation only by acting upon my retina—you are disgracefully abandoning your "one-sided" idealism and adopting the standpoint of "one-sided" materialism! If colour is a sensation only depending upon the retina (as natural science compels you to admit), then light rays, falling upon the retina, produce the sensation of colour. This means that outside us, independently of us and of our minds, there exists a movement of matter, let us say of ether waves of a definite length and of a definite velocity, which, acting upon the retina, produce in man the sensation of a particular colour. This is precisely how natural science regards it. It explains the sensations of various colours by the various lengths of light-waves existing outside the human retina, outside man and independently of him. This is materialism: matter acting upon our sense-organs produces sensation. Sensation depends on the brain, nerves, retina, etc., *i.e.*, on matter organised in a definite way. The existence of matter does not depend on sensation. Matter is primary. Sen-

<sup>1</sup> Mach says in the *Analyse der Empfindungen*: "These elements are usually called sensations. But as that term already implies a *one-sided theory* we prefer to speak simply of elements" (pp. 17-18).

<sup>2</sup> "The antithesis between the Ego and the world, sensation or appearance and the thing, then vanishes, and everything reduces itself to a complex of elements" (*ibid.*, p. 11).

sation, thought, consciousness are the supreme product of matter organised in a particular way. Such are the views of materialism in general, and of Marx and Engels in particular. Mach and Avenarius *secretly* smuggle in materialism by means of the word "element," which supposedly frees their theory of the one-sidedness of subjective idealism, which supposedly permits the assumption that the psychical is dependent on the retina, nerves and so forth, and the assumption that the physical is independent of the human organism. In fact, of course, the trick with the word "element" is a wretched sophistry, for a materialist who reads Mach and Avenarius will immediately ask: "What are the elements?" It would, indeed, be childish to think that one can dispose of the fundamental philosophical trends by inventing a new word. Either the "element" is a *sensation*, as all empirio-criticists, Mach, Avenarius, Petzoldt,<sup>1</sup> etc., maintain—in which case your philosophy, gentlemen, is *idealism* vainly seeking to hide the nakedness of its solipsism under the cloak of a more "objective terminology"; or the "element" is not a sensation—in which case *absolutely no thought whatever* is attached to the "new" term; it is merely an empty bauble.

Take Petzoldt, for instance, the last word in empirio-criticism, as V. Lesseovich, the first and most outstanding Russian empirio-criticist describes him.<sup>2</sup> Having defined elements as sensations, he says in the second volume of the work mentioned:

"In the statement that sensations are the elements of the world one must guard against taking the term 'sensation' as denoting something only subjective and therefore ethereal, transforming the ordinary picture of the world into an illusion (*Verflüchtigendes*)."<sup>3</sup>

One speaks of what hurts one most! Petzoldt feels that the world "evaporates" (*verflüchtigt sich*), or becomes transformed into an illusion, when the world-elements are regarded as sensations.

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Petzoldt, *Einführung in die Philosophie der reinen Erfahrung* [Introduction to the Philosophy of Pure Experience], Bd. I, Leipzig 1900, S. 113: "Elements are sensations in the ordinary sense of simple, irreducible perceptions (*Wahrnehmungen*)."

<sup>2</sup> V. Lesseovich, *What is Scientific* [read: fashionable, professorial, eclectic] *Philosophy?*, St. Petersburg, 1891, pp. 229, 247.

<sup>3</sup> Petzoldt, *op. cit.*, Bd. II, 1904, S. 329.

And the good Petzoldt imagines that he helps matters by the reservation that sensation must not be taken as something only subjective! Is this not a ridiculous sophistry? Does it make any difference whether we "take" sensation as sensation or whether we try to stretch the meaning of the term? Does this do away with the fact that sensations in man are connected with normally functioning nerves, retina, brain, etc., that the external world exists independently of our sensations? If you are not trying to evade the issue by a subterfuge, if you are really in earnest in wanting to "guard" against subjectivism and solipsism, you must above all guard against the fundamental idealist premises of your philosophy; you must replace the idealist line of your philosophy (from sensations to the external world) by the materialist line (from the external world to sensations); you must abandon that empty and muddled verbal embellishment, "element," and simply say that colour is the result of the action of a physical object on the retina, which is the same as saying that sensation is a result of the action of matter on our sense-organs.

Let us again take Avenarius. The most valuable material on the question of the "elements" is to be found in his last work<sup>1</sup> (and, it might be said, the most important for the comprehension of his philosophy). The author, by the way, here gives a very "graphic" table (Vol. XVIII, p. 410), the main part of which we reproduce here:

A. Elements, complexes of elements	
I. Things, or the substantial ( <i>Sachhaftes</i> )	Corporeal things
II. Thoughts, or the mental ( <i>Gedankenhaftes</i> )	Incorporeal things, recollections and fantasies

Compare this with what Mach says after all his elucidation of the "elements" (*Analyse der Empfindungen*, S. 23):

"It is not bodies that produce sensations, but complexes of elements (complexes of sensations) that make up bodies."

<sup>1</sup> R. Avenarius, "*Bemerkungen zum Begriff des Gegenstandes der Psychologie*" ["Notes on the Concept of the Subject of Psychology"], in *Vierteljahrsschrift für wissenschaftliche Philosophie*, Bd. 18, 1894, und Bd. 19, 1895.

Here you have the "discovery of the world-elements" that overcomes the one-sidedness of idealism and materialism! At first we are assured that the "elements" are something new, both physical and psychical at the same time; then a little correction is surreptitiously inserted: instead of the crude, materialist differentiation of matter (bodies, things) and the psychical (sensations, recollections, fantasies) we are presented with the doctrine of "recent positivism" regarding elements substantial and elements mental. Adler (Fritz) did not gain very much from "the discovery of the world-elements"!

Bogdanov, arguing against Plekhanov in 1906, wrote:

"... I cannot own myself a Machian in philosophy. In the general philosophical conception there is only one thing I borrowed from Mach—the idea of the neutrality of the elements of experience in relation to the 'physical' and 'psychical,' and the dependence of these characteristics solely on the connection of experience."<sup>1</sup>

This is as though a religious man were to say—"I cannot own myself a believer in religion, for there is only one thing I have borrowed from the believers—the belief in God." This "one thing" which Bogdanov borrowed from Mach is the *basic error* of Machism, the basic falsity of its entire philosophy. Those deviations of Bogdanov's from empirio-criticism to which he himself attaches great significance are in fact of entirely secondary importance and amount to nothing more than inconsiderable private and individual differences between the various empirio-criticists who are approved by Mach and who approve Mach (we shall speak of this in greater detail later). Hence when Bogdanov was annoyed at being confused with the Machians he only revealed his failure to understand what *radically* distinguishes materialism from what is common to Bogdanov and to all other Machians. How Bogdanov developed, improved or worsened Machism is not important. What is important is that he has abandoned the materialist standpoint and has thereby inevitably condemned himself to confusion and idealist aberrations.

In 1899, as we saw, Bogdanov had the correct standpoint when he wrote:

<sup>1</sup> *Empirio-Monism*, Bk. III, St. Petersburg, 1906, p. xi.

"The image of the man before me, directly given to me by vision, is a sensation."<sup>1</sup>

Bogdanov did not trouble to give a criticism of this earlier position of his. He blindly believed Mach and began to repeat after him that the "elements" of experience are neutral in relation to the physical and psychical.

"As has been established by recent positivist philosophy," wrote Bogdanov in Book I of *Empirio-Monism* (2nd ed., p. 90), "the elements of psychic experience are identical with the elements of experience in general, as they are with the elements of physical experience."

Or in 1906 (Bk. III, p. xx):

"As to 'idealism,' can it be called idealism merely on the grounds that the elements of 'physical experience' are regarded as identical with the elements of 'psychic experience,' or with elementary sensations—when this is simply an indubitable fact?"

Here we have the true source of all Bogdanov's philosophical misadventures, a source which he shares with the rest of the Machians. We can and must call it idealism when "the elements of physical experience" (*i.e.*, the physical, the external world, matter) are regarded as identical with sensations, for this is sheer Berkeleyanism. There is not a trace here of recent philosophy, or positivist philosophy, or of "indubitable fact." It is merely an old, old idealist sophistry. And were one to ask Bogdanov how he would prove the "indubitable fact" that the physical is identical with sensations, one would get no other argument save the eternal refrain of the idealists: "I am aware only of my sensations"; the "testimony of self-consciousness" (*die Aussage des Selbstbewußtseins*) of Avenarius in his *Prolegomena* (2nd German ed., § 93, p. 56); or: "in our experience [which testifies that "we are sentient substance"] sensation is given us with more certainty than is substantiality" (*ibid.*, § 91, p. 55), and so on and so forth. Bogdanov (trusting Mach) accepted a reactionary philosophical subterfuge as an "indubitable fact." For, indeed, not a single fact was or could be cited which would refute the view that sensation is an image of the external world—a view which was shared by Bogdanov in 1899 and which is shared by science to this day. In his idealist wanderings the

<sup>1</sup> *The Fundamental Elements*, etc., p. 216; *cf.* with the quotations cited above.

physicist Mach has completely strayed from the path of "modern science." Regarding this important circumstance, which Bogdanov overlooked, we shall have much to say later.

One of the circumstances which helped Bogdanov to jump so quickly from the materialism of the natural scientists to the muddled idealism of Mach was (apart from the influence of Ostwald) Avenarius' doctrine of the dependent and independent series of experience. Bogdanov himself expounds the matter in Book I of his *Empirio-Monism* thus:

"In so far as the data of experience appear in dependence upon the state of the particular nervous system, they form the *psychical world* of the particular person; in so far as the data of experience are taken outside of such a dependence, we have before us the *physical world*. Avenarius therefore characterises these two realms of experience respectively as the *dependent series* and the *independent series* of experience" (p. 18).

That is just the whole trouble, the doctrine of the *independent* (i.e., independent of human sensation) "series" is a surreptitious importation of materialism, which, from the standpoint of a philosophy that maintains that bodies are complexes of sensations, that sensations are "identical" with physical "elements," is illegitimate, arbitrary, and eclectic. For once you have recognised that the source of light and light waves exists *independently* of man and the human consciousness, that colour is dependent on the action of these waves upon the retina, you have in fact adopted the materialist standpoint and have *completely destroyed* all the "indubitable facts" of idealism, together with all "the complexes of sensations," the elements discovered by recent positivism, and similar nonsense.

That is just the whole trouble. Bogdanov (like the rest of the Russian Machians) has never looked into the idealist views originally held by Mach and Avenarius, has never examined their fundamental idealist premises, and has therefore failed to discover the illegitimacy and eclecticism of their subsequent attempts to smuggle in materialism surreptitiously. Yet, just as the initial idealism of Mach and Avenarius is generally acknowledged in philosophical literature, so is it generally acknowledged that subsequently empirio-criticism endeavoured to swing towards materialism. Couwelaert, the French writer quoted above, asserts that Ave-



narius' *Prolegomena* is "monistic idealism," the *Kritik der reinen Erfahrung* (1888-90) is "absolute realism," while *Der menschliche Weltbegriff* (1892) is an attempt "to explain" the change. Let us note that the term "realism" is here employed as the antithesis of idealism. Following Engels, I use *only* the term materialism in this sense, and consider it the sole correct terminology, especially since the term "realism" has been usurped by the positivists and the other muddleheads who vacillate between materialism and idealism. For the present it will suffice to note that Couwelaert had the indisputable fact in mind that in the *Prolegomena* (1876) sensation, according to Avenarius, is the only entity, while "substance"—in accordance with the principle of "the economy of thought"—is eliminated, and that in the *Critique of Pure Experience*<sup>1</sup> the physical is taken as the *independent series*, while the psychical and, consequently, sensations, are taken as the dependent series.

Avenarius' disciple Rudolph Willy likewise admits that Avenarius was a "complete" idealist in 1876, but subsequently "reconciled" (*Ausgleich*) "naïve realism" (i.e., the instinctive, unconscious materialist standpoint adopted by humanity, which regards the external world as existing independently of our minds) with this teaching (*loc. cit.*).

Oskar Ewald, the author of the book *Avenarius as the Founder of Empirio-Criticism*, says that this philosophy combines contradictory idealist and "realist" (he should have said materialist) elements (not in Mach's sense, but in the human sense of the term element). For example:

"The absolute [method of consideration] would perpetuate naïve realism, the relative would declare exclusive idealism as permanent."<sup>2</sup>

Avenarius calls the absolute method of consideration that which corresponds to Mach's connection of "elements" outside our body, and the relative that which corresponds to Mach's connection of "elements" dependent on our body.

But of particular interest to us in this respect is the opinion of

<sup>1</sup> Richard Avenarius, *Kritik der reinen Erfahrung*, Leipzig 1888-90.—*Trans.*

<sup>2</sup> Oskar Ewald, *Richard Avenarius als Begründer des Empiriokritizismus* [*Richard Avenarius as the Founder of Empirio-Criticism*], Berlin 1905, S. 66.

Wundt, who himself, like the majority of the above-mentioned writers, adheres to the confused idealist standpoint, but who has analysed empirio-criticism perhaps more attentively than all the others. P. Yushkevich has the following to say in this connection:

"It is interesting to note that Wundt regards empirio-criticism as the most scientific form of the latest type of materialism,"<sup>1</sup>

i.e., the type of those materialists who regard the spiritual as a function of corporeal processes (and whom—we would add—Wundt defines as standing midway between Spinozism and absolute materialism).<sup>2</sup>

True, this opinion of Wundt's is extremely interesting. But what is even more "interesting" is Mr. Yushkevich's attitude towards the books and articles on philosophy of which he treats. This is a typical example of the attitude of our Machians to such matters. Gogol's *Petrushka*<sup>3</sup> used to read and find it interesting that letters always combined to make words. Mr. Yushkevich read Wundt and found it "interesting" that Wundt accused Avenarius of materialism. If Wundt is wrong, why not refute him? If he is right, why not explain the antithesis between materialism and empirio-criticism? Mr. Yushkevich finds what the idealist Wundt says "interesting," but this Machian regards it as a waste of effort to endeavour to go to the root of the matter (probably on the principle of "the economy of thought").

The point is that by informing the reader that Wundt accuses Avenarius of materialism, and by not informing him that Wundt regards some aspects of empirio-criticism as materialism and others as idealism and holds that the connection between the two is artificial, Yushkevich entirely *distorted the matter*. Either this gentleman absolutely does not understand what he reads, or he was prompted by a desire to indulge in false self-praise with the help of Wundt, as if to say: "You see, the official professors regard us, too, as materialists, and not as muddleheads."

<sup>1</sup> P. Yushkevich, *Materialism and Critical Realism*, St. Petersburg, 1908, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> W. Wundt, "Ueber naiven und kritischen Realismus" ["On Naïve and Critical Realism"], in *Philosophische Studien*, Bd. XIII, 1898, S. 334.

<sup>3</sup> In *Dead Souls*.—*Trans.*

The above-mentioned article by Wundt constitutes a large book (more than 300 pages), devoted to a detailed analysis first of the immanentist school, and then of the empirio-criticists. Why did Wundt connect these two schools? Because he considers them *closely akin*; and this opinion, which is shared by Mach, Avenarius, Petzoldt and the immanentists is, as we shall see later, entirely correct. Wundt shows in the first part of this article that the immanentists are idealists, subjectivists and adherents of fideism. This, too, as we shall see later, is a perfectly correct opinion, although Wundt expounds it with a superfluous ballast of professorial erudition, with superfluous niceties and reservations, which is to be explained by the fact that Wundt himself is an idealist and fideist. He reproaches the immanentists not because they are idealists and adherents of fideism, but because, in his opinion, they arrive at these great principles by incorrect methods. Further, the second and third parts of Wundt's article are devoted to empirio-criticism. There he quite definitely points out that very important theoretical propositions of empirio-criticism (e.g., the interpretation of "experience" and the "principal co-ordination," of which we shall speak later) are *identical* with those held by the immanentists (*die empirio-kritische in Uebereinstimmung mit der immanenten Philosophie annimmt*, S. 382 of Wundt's article.) Other of Avenarius' theoretical propositions are borrowed from materialism, and in general empirio-criticism is a "motley" (*bunte Mischung*, *ibid.*, S. 57), in which the "various component elements are *entirely heterogeneous*" (*an sich cinander völlig heterogen sind*, S. 56).

Wundt regards Avenarius' doctrine of the "*independent vital series*," in particular, as one of the materialist morsels of the Avenarius-Mach hotchpotch. If you start from the "system C" (that is how Avenarius—who was very fond of making erudite play of new terms—designates the human brain or the nervous system in general), and if the psychical is for you a function of the brain, then this "system C" is a "metaphysical substance"—says Wundt (*ibid.*, p. 64), and your doctrine is materialism. It should be said that many idealists and all agnostics (Kantians and Humeans included) call the materialists metaphysicians, because it seems to them that to recognise the existence of an external world inde-

pendent of the human mind is to transcend the bounds of experience. As to this terminology and its utter incorrectness from the point of view of Marxism, we shall speak in its proper place. Here it is important to note that the recognition of the "independent" series by Avenarius (and also by Mach, who expresses the same idea in different words) is, according to the general opinion of philosophers of various parties, *i.e.*, of various trends in philosophy, an *appropriation* from materialism. If you assume that everything that exists is sensation, or that bodies are complexes of sensations, you cannot, without violating all your fundamental premises, all "your" philosophy, arrive at the conclusion that the physical exists independently of our minds, and that sensation is a *function* of matter organised in a definite way. Mach and Avenarius, in their philosophy, combine fundamental idealist premises with individual materialist deductions for the very reason that their theory is an example of that "pauper's broth of eclecticism" of which Engels speaks with just contempt.<sup>1</sup>

This eclecticism is particularly marked in Mach's latest philosophical work, *Erkenntnis und Irrtum*, 2nd edition, 1906. We have already seen that Mach there declared that "there is no difficulty in constructing every physical element out of sensation, *i.e.*, out of psychical elements" (p. 12); and in the same book we read:

"Dependencies outside the boundary of U [= *Umgrenzung*, *i.e.*, "the spatial boundary of our body," p. 8] are *physics in the broadest sense*" (p. 323, § 4). "To obtain those dependencies in a pure state (*rein erhalten*) it is necessary as much as possible to eliminate the influence of the observer, that is, of those elements that lie within U" (*loc. cit.*).

Well, well, the titmouse first promised to set the sea on fire . . . *i.e.*, to construct physical elements from psychical elements, and

<sup>1</sup> The introduction to *Ludwig Feuerbach* is dated February 1888. These words of Engels' refer to German professorial philosophy in general. The Machians who would like to be Marxists, being unable to grasp the significance and meaning of this thought of Engels', sometimes take refuge in a wretched evasion: "Engels did not yet know Mach" (Fritz Adler). On what is this opinion based? On the fact that Engels does not quote Mach and Avenarius? There are no other grounds, and these grounds are worthless, for Engels does not mention *any* of the eclectics by name, and it is hardly likely that Engels did not know Avenarius, who had been editing a quarterly of "scientific" philosophy ever since 1876.

then it turns out that physical elements lie beyond the boundary of psychical elements, "which lie within our body"! A remarkable philosophy!

Another example:

"A perfect (*vollkommenes*) gas, a perfect liquid, a perfect elastic body, does not exist; the physicist knows that his fictions only approximate to the facts and arbitrarily simplify them; he is aware of the divergence, which cannot be eliminated" (p. 418, § 30).

What "divergence" (*Abweichung*) is meant here? The divergence of what from what? Of thought (physical theory) from the facts. And what are thoughts, ideas? Ideas are the "tracks of sensations" (p. 9). And what are facts? Facts are "complexes of sensations." And so, the divergence of the tracks of sensations from complexes of sensations cannot be eliminated.

What does this mean? It means that Mach *forgets* his own theory and, when treating of various problems of physics, speaks plainly, without idealist twists, *i.e.*, materialistically. All the "complexes of sensations" and the entire stock of Berkeleian wisdom vanish. The physicists' theory proves to be a reflection of bodies, liquids, gases existing outside us and independently of us, a reflection which is, of course, approximate; but to call this approximation or simplification "arbitrary" is wrong. *In fact*, sensation is here regarded by Mach just as it is regarded by all science which has not been "purified" by the disciples of Berkeley and Hume, *viz.*, as an *image of the external world*. Mach's own theory is subjective idealism; but when the factor of objectivity is required, Mach unceremoniously inserts into his arguments the premises of the contrary, *i.e.*, the materialist, theory of knowledge. Eduard von Hartmann, a consistent idealist and consistent reactionary in philosophy, *who sympathises with the Machians' fight against materialism*, comes very close to the truth when he says that Mach's philosophical position is a "mixture (*Nichtunterscheidung*) of naïve realism and absolute illusionism."<sup>1</sup> That is true. The doctrine that bodies are complexes of sensations, etc., is absolute illusionism, *i.e.*, solipsism; for from this standpoint the world is nothing but my illusion. On the

<sup>1</sup> Eduard von Hartmann, *Die Weltanschauung der modernen Physik* [*The World Outlook of Modern Physics*], Leipzig 1902, S. 219.

other hand, Mach's aforementioned arguments, as well as many other of his fragmentary arguments, are what is known as "naïve realism," i.e., the materialist theory of knowledge unconsciously and instinctively taken over from the scientists.

Avenarius and the professors who follow in his footsteps attempt to disguise this mixture by the theory of the "principal co-ordination." We shall proceed to examine this theory presently, but let us first finish with the charge that Avenarius is a materialist. Mr. Yushkevich, to whom Wundt's opinion, which he failed to understand, seemed so interesting, was either himself not enough interested to learn, or else did not condescend to inform the reader, how Avenarius' nearest disciples and successors reacted to this charge. Yet this is necessary to clarify the matter if we are interested in the relation of Marx's philosophy, i.e., materialism, to the philosophy of empirio-criticism. Moreover, if Machism is a muddle, a mixture of materialism and idealism, it is important to know whither this current turned—if we may so express it—after the official idealists began to disown it because of its concessions to materialism.

Wundt was answered, among others, by two of Avenarius' most orthodox disciples, J. Petzoldt and Fr. Carstanjen. Petzoldt, with haughty resentment, repudiated the charge of materialism, which is so humiliating to a German professor, and in support referred to—what do you think?—Avenarius' *Prolegomena*, where, forsooth, the concept of substance has been annihilated! A convenient theory, indeed, that can be made to embrace both purely idealist works and arbitrarily assumed materialist premises! Avenarius' *Kritik der reinen Erfahrung*, of course, does not contradict this teaching, i.e., materialism, writes Petzoldt, but neither does it contradict the directly opposite spiritualist doctrine.<sup>1</sup> An excellent defence! This is exactly what Engels called "a pauper's broth of eclecticism." Bogdanov, who refuses to own himself a Machian and who wants to be considered a Marxist (*in philosophy*), follows Petzoldt. He asserts that "empirio-criticism is not . . . concerned with materialism, or with spiritualism, or with metaphysics in

<sup>1</sup> J. Petzoldt, *Einführung in die Philosophie der reinen Erfahrung*, Bd. I, S. 351-52.

general,"<sup>1</sup> that "truth . . . does not lie in the 'golden mean' between the conflicting trends (materialism and spiritualism), but lies outside of both."<sup>2</sup> What appeared to Bogdanov to be truth is, as a matter of fact, confusion, a wavering between materialism and idealism.

Carstanjen, rebutting Wundt, said that he absolutely repudiated this "imputation (*Unterschiebung*) of a materialist element which is utterly foreign to the critique of pure experience."<sup>3</sup> "Empirio-criticism is scepticism *χαρ'εξοχῆν* (pre-eminently) in relation to the content of the concepts." There is a grain of truth in this insistent emphasis on the neutrality of Machism; the amendment made by Mach and Avenarius to their original idealism amounts to an admission of partial concessions to materialism. Instead of the consistent standpoint of Berkeley—the external world is my sensation—we sometimes get the Humean standpoint—I exclude the question whether or not there is anything beyond my sensations. And this agnostic standpoint inevitably condemns one to vacillate between materialism and idealism.

### 3. THE PRINCIPAL CO-ORDINATION AND "NAIVE REALISM"

Avenarius' doctrine of the principal co-ordination is expounded in *Der menschliche Weltbegriff* and in the *Bemerkungen*. The second was written later, and in it Avenarius emphasises that he is expounding, it is true in a somewhat altered form, something that is not different from the *Kritik der reinen Erfahrung* and *Der menschliche Weltbegriff*, but *exactly the same*.<sup>4</sup> The essence of this doctrine is the thesis of "the *indissoluble (unauflösliche)* co-ordination [i.e., the correlative connection] of the *self* and the environment" (p. 146). "Expressed philosophically," Avenarius says here,

<sup>1</sup> Bogdanov, *Empirio-Monism*, Bk. I, 2nd ed., p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>3</sup> Fr. Carstanjen, "*Der Empirio-kritizismus, zugleich eine Erwiderung auf W. Wundts Aufsätze*" ["Empirio-Criticism, With a Reply to W. Wundt's Articles"], *Vierteljahrsschrift für wissenschaftliche Philosophie*, Jg. 22 (1898), S. 73 u. 213.

<sup>4</sup> R. Avenarius, "*Bemerkungen zum Begriff des Gegenstandes der Psychologie*," § 24.

one can say the "self and not-self." "*We always find together*" (*immer ein Zusammenvorgefundenes*) the one and the other, the self and the environment.

"No full description of what we find (*des Vorgefundenen*) can contain an 'environment' without some self (*ohne ein Ich*) whose environment it is, even though it be only the self that is describing what is found (*das Vorgefundene*)" (p. 146).

The self is called the *central term* of the co-ordination, the environment the counter-term (*Gegenglied*). (*Der menschliche Weltbegriff*, 2. Auflage, 1905, S. 83-84, § 148 ff.)

Avenarius claims that by this doctrine he recognises the full value of what is known as *naïve realism*, that is, the ordinary non-philosophical, naïve view which is entertained by all people who do not trouble themselves as to whether they themselves exist and whether the environment, the external world, exists. Expressing his solidarity with Avenarius, Mach also tries to represent himself as a defender of "naïve realism" (*Analyse der Empfindungen*, S. 30). The Russian Machians, without exception, believed Mach's and Avenarius' claim that this was indeed a defence of "naïve realism": the self is acknowledged, the environment is acknowledged—what more do you want?

In order to decide who actually possesses the greatest degree of *naïveté*, let us proceed from a somewhat remote starting point. Here is a popular dialogue between a certain philosopher and his reader:

"*Reader*: The existence of a system of things [according to ordinary philosophy] is required and from this only is consciousness to be derived.

"*Author*: Now you are speaking in the spirit of a professional philosopher . . . and not according to human common sense and actual consciousness. . . . Tell me, and reflect well before you answer: Does a thing appear in you and become present in you and for you otherwise than simultaneously with and through your consciousness of the thing? . . .

"*Reader*: Upon sufficient reflection, I must grant you this.

"*Author*: Now you are speaking from yourself, from your heart. Take care, therefore, not to jump out of yourself and to apprehend anything otherwise than you are able to apprehend it, as consciousness *and* [the italics are the philosopher's] the thing, the thing *and* consciousness; or, more precisely, neither the one nor the other, but that which only subsequently becomes resolved into the two, that which is the absolute subjective-objective and objective-subjective."

Here you have the whole essence of the empirio-critical prin-



cial co-ordination, the latest defence of "naïve realism" by the latest positivism! The idea of "indissoluble" co-ordination is here stated very clearly and as though it were a genuine defence of the point of view of the common man, uncorrupted by the subtleties of "the professional philosophers." But, as a matter of fact, this dialogue is taken from the work of a classical representative of *subjective idealism*, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, published in 1801.<sup>1</sup>

There is nothing but a paraphrase of subjective idealism in the teachings of Mach and Avenarius we are examining. The claim that they have risen above materialism and idealism, that they have eliminated the opposition between the point of view that proceeds from the thing to consciousness and the contrary point of view—is but the empty claim of a renovated Fichteanism. Fichte too imagined that he had "indissolubly" connected the "self" and the "environment," the mind and the thing; that he had "solved" the problem by the assertion that a man cannot jump out of himself. In other words, the Berkeleyan argument is repeated: I perceive only my perceptions, I have no right to assume "objects in themselves" outside of my sensation. The different methods of expression used by Berkeley in 1710, by Fichte in 1801, and by Avenarius in 1892-94 do not in the least change the essence of the matter, viz., the fundamental philosophical line of subjective idealism. The world is my sensation; the non-self is "postulated" (is created, produced) by the self; the thing is indissolubly connected with the consciousness; the indissoluble co-ordination of the self and the environment is the empirio-critical principal co-ordination;—this is all one and the same proposition, the same old trash with a slightly refurbished, or repainted signboard.

The reference to "naïve realism," supposedly defended by this philosophy, is *sophistry* of the cheapest kind. The "naïve realism" of any healthy person who has not been an inmate of a lunatic asylum or a pupil of the idealist philosophers consists in the view

<sup>1</sup> Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Sonnenklarer Bericht an das größere Publikum über das eigentliche Wesen der neuesten Philosophie. Ein Versuch, den Leser zum Verstehen zu zwingen* [A Clear Account to the Broad Public of the True Nature of Recent Philosophy. An Attempt to Get the Reader to Understand], Berlin 1801, S. 178-80.

that things, the environment, the world, exist independently of our sensation, of our consciousness, of our *self* and of man in general. The same *experience* (not in the Machian sense, but in the human sense of the term) that has produced in us the firm conviction that *independently* of us there exist other people, and not mere complexes of my sensations of high, low, yellow, hard, etc.—this same *experience* produces in us the conviction that things, the world, the environment exist independently of us. Our sensation, our consciousness is only *an image* of the external world, and it is obvious that an image cannot exist without the thing imaged, and that the latter exists independently of that which images it. Materialism deliberately makes the “naïve” belief of mankind the foundation of its theory of knowledge.

Is not the foregoing evaluation of the “principal co-ordination” a product of the materialist prejudice against Machism? Not at all. Specialists in philosophy who cannot be accused of partiality towards materialism, who even detest it and who accept one or other of the idealist systems, agree that the principal co-ordination of Avenarius and Co. is subjective idealism. Wundt, for instance, whose interesting opinion was not understood by Mr. Yushkevich, explicitly states that Avenarius’ theory, according to which a full description of the “given” or the “found” is impossible without some *self*, an observer or describer, is “a false confusion of the content of real experience with reflections about it.” Natural science, says Wundt, completely abstracts from every observer.

“Such abstraction is possible only because the attribution (*Hinzudenken*) of an experiencing individual to every content of experience, which the empirio-critical philosophy, in agreement with the immanentist philosophy, assumes, is an entirely empirical and unfounded assumption arising from a false confusion of the content of real experience with reflections about it” (*loc. cit.*, p. 382).

For the immanentists (Schuppe, Rehmke, Leclair, Schubert-Soldern), who themselves voice—as we shall see later—their hearty sympathy with Avenarius, proceed from *this very* idea of the “indissoluble” connection between subject and object. And W. Wundt, before analysing Avenarius, demonstrated in detail that the immanentist philosophy is only a “modification” of Berkeleyanism, that however much the immanentists may deny their

kinship with Berkeley we should not allow verbal differences to conceal from us the "deeper content of these philosophical doctrines," viz., Berkeleianism or Fichteanism.<sup>1</sup>

The English writer Norman Smith, analysing Avenarius' "Philosophy of Pure Experience," puts this criticism in an even more straightforward and emphatic form:

"Most readers of Avenarius' *Der menschliche Weltbegriff* will probably agree that, however convincing as criticism [of idealism], it is tantalisingly illusive in its positive teaching. So long as we seek to interpret his theory of experience in the form in which it is avowedly presented, namely, as genuinely realistic, it eludes all clear comprehension: its whole meaning seems to be exhausted in negation of the subjectivism which it overthrows. It is only when we translate Avenarius' technical terms into more familiar language that we discover where the real source of the mystification lies. Avenarius has diverted attention from the defects of his position by directing his main attack against the very weakness [i.e., of the idealist position] which is fatal to his own theory. . . .<sup>2</sup>

"Throughout the whole discussion the vagueness of the term experience stands him in good stead. Sometimes it means experiencing and at other times the experienced, the latter meaning being emphasised when the nature of the self is in question. These two meanings of the term experience practically coincide with his important distinction between the absolute and the relative standpoints [I have examined above what significance this distinction has for Avenarius]; and these two points of view are not in his philosophy really reconciled. For when he allows as legitimate the demand that experience be ideally completed in thought [the full description of the environment is ideally completed by thinking of an observing self], he makes an admission which he cannot successfully combine with his assertion that nothing exists save in relation to the self. The ideal completion of given reality which results from the analysis of material bodies into elements which no human senses can apprehend [here are meant the material elements discovered by natural science, the atoms, electrons, etc., and not the fictitious elements invented by Mach and Avenarius], or from following the earth back to a time when no human being existed upon it, is, strictly, not a completion of experience but only of what is experienced. It completes only one of the two aspects which Avenarius has asserted to be inseparable. It leads us not only to what has not been experienced but to what can never by any possibility be experienced by beings like ourselves. But here again the ambiguities of the term experience come to Avenarius' rescue. He argues that thought is as genuine a form of experience as sense-perception, and so in the end falls back on the time-worn argument of subjective idealism, that thought and reality are inseparable, because reality can only be conceived in thought, and thought involves the

<sup>1</sup> *Loc. cit.*, § C: *Die immanente Philosophie und der Berkeleysche Idealismus*, S. 373 u. 375; vgl. S. 386 u. 407. *Ueber die Unvermeidlichkeit des Solipsismus von diesem Standpunkt*, S. 381.

<sup>2</sup> Norman Smith. "Avenarius' Philosophy of Pure Experience," *Mind*, Vol. XV, 1906, pp. 27-28.

presence of the thinker. Not, therefore, any original and profound re-establishment of realism, but only the restatement in its crudest form of the familiar position of subjective idealism is the final outcome of Avenarius' positive speculations" (p. 29).

The mystification wrought by Avenarius, who completely duplicates Fichte's error, is here excellently exposed. The much-vaunted elimination of the antithesis between materialism (Norman Smith erroneously uses the term realism) and idealism by means of the term "experience" instantly proves to be a myth as soon as we proceed to definite and concrete problems. Such, for instance, is the problem of the existence of the earth *prior* to man, *prior* to any sentient being. We shall presently speak of this point in detail. Here we will note that not only Norman Smith, an opponent of his theory, but also W. Schuppe, the immanentist, who warmly greeted the appearance of *Der menschliche Weltbegriff* as a *confirmation of naïve realism*,<sup>1</sup> unmasks Avenarius and his fictitious "realism." The fact of the matter is that Schuppe *fully* agrees with *such* "realism," *i.e.*, the mystification of materialism dished out by Avenarius. Such "realism," he wrote to Avenarius, I, the immanentist philosopher who have been slandered as a subjective idealist, have always claimed with as much right as yourself, *hochverehrter Herr Kollege*. "My conception of thought . . . excellently harmonises (*verträgt sich vortrefflich*) with your 'pure experience'" (p. 384). "The connection and inseparability of the two terms of the co-ordination" are provided only by the *self* (*das Ich*, the abstract, Fichtean self-consciousness, a thought divorced from the brain). "That which you desired to eliminate you have tacitly assumed"—so Schuppe wrote to Avenarius (p. 338). And it is difficult to say who more successfully unmasks Avenarius the mystifier—Smith by his straightforward and clear refutation, or Schuppe by his enthusiastic opinion of Avenarius' crowning work. The kiss of Wilhelm Schuppe in philosophy is no better than the kiss of Peter Struve or Menshikov<sup>2</sup> in politics.

<sup>1</sup> See Schuppe's letter to Avenarius in *Vierteljahrsschrift für wissenschaftliche Philosophie*, Bd. XVII, 1893, S. 364-88.

<sup>2</sup> P. B. Struve, originally a Social-Democrat and the author of the Manifesto of the First Congress of the illegal Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, held in 1898. Later became a liberal. After the 1905 Revolution and

O. Ewald, who praises Mach for not succumbing to materialism, speaks of the principal co-ordination in a similar manner:

"If one declares the correlation of central term and counter-term to be an epistemological necessity which cannot be avoided, then, even though the word 'empirio-criticism' be inscribed on the signboard in shrieking letters, one is adopting a standpoint that differs in no way from absolute idealism. [The term is incorrect; he should have said subjective idealism, for Hegel's absolute idealism is reconcilable with the existence of the earth, nature, and the physical universe without man, since nature is regarded as the "otherness" of the absolute idea.] On the other hand, if we do not hold fast to this co-ordination and grant the counter-terms their independence, then the way is at once opened for every metaphysical possibility, especially in the direction of transcendental realism" (*op. cit.*, pp. 56-57).

By metaphysics and transcendental realism, Herr Friedlander, who is disguised under the pseudonym Ewald, means *materialism*. Himself professing one of the varieties of idealism, he fully agrees with the Machians and the Kantians that materialism is metaphysics—"from beginning to end the wildest metaphysics" (p. 134). On the question of the "transcendence" and the metaphysical character of materialism he is in agreement with Bazarov and all our Machians, and of this we shall have occasion to say more later. Here again it is important to note how *in fact* the shallow and pedantic claim to have transcended idealism and materialism vanishes, and how the question arises inexorably and irreconcilably. "To grant the counter-terms their independence" means (if one translates the pretentious language of the affected Avenarius into common parlance) to regard nature and the external world as independent of human consciousness and sensation. And that is materialism. To build a theory of knowledge on the hypothesis of the indissoluble connection between the object and human sensation ("complexes of sensations" as identical with bodies; "world-elements" that are identical both psychically and physically; Avenarius' co-ordination, and so forth) is to land inevitably into idealism. Such is the simple and unavoidable truth that with a little attention may be easily detected beneath the piles

at the time *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* was written, he was the leader of the Right wing of the Russian liberals. After the 1917 Revolution he was a Minister in the White Guard governments of Denikin and Wrangel and later a leader of the monarchist émigrés.

M. O. Menshikov, Russian journalist and extreme reactionary.—*Trans.*

of distorted and quasi-erudite terminology of Avenarius, Schuppe, Ewald and the others, which deliberately obscures matters and frightens the general public away from philosophy.

The "reconciliation" of Avenarius' theory with "naïve realism" in the end aroused misgivings even among his own disciples. For instance, R. Willy says that the common assertion that Avenarius came to adopt "naïve realism" should be taken *cum grano salis*. "As a dogma, naïve realism would be nothing but the belief in things-in-themselves existing outside man (*außerpersönliche*) in *their perceptible form*."<sup>1</sup> In other words, the only theory of knowledge that is really created by an actual and not fictitious agreement with "naïve realism" is, according to Willy, materialism! And Willy, of course, rejects materialism. But he is compelled to admit that Avenarius in *Der menschliche Weltbegriff* restores the unity of "experience," the unity of the "self" and the environment "by means of a series of complicated and extremely artificial subsidiary and intermediary conceptions" (p. 171). *Der menschliche Weltbegriff*, being a reaction against the original idealism of Avenarius, "entirely bears the character of a *reconciliation (eines Ausgleiches)* between the naïve realism of common sense and the epistemological idealism of school philosophy. But that such a reconciliation could restore the unity and integrity of experience [Willy calls it *Grunderfahrung*, that is, a basic experience--another new word!], I would not assert" (p. 170).

A valuable admission! Avenarius' "experience" failed to reconcile idealism and materialism. Willy, it seems, repudiates the *school philosophy* of experience in order to replace it by a philosophy of "basic" experience, which is confusion thrice confounded. . . .

#### 4. DID NATURE EXIST PRIOR TO MAN?

We have already seen that this question is particularly repugnant to the philosophy of Mach and Avenarius. Natural science positively asserts that the earth once existed in such a state that no man or any other creature existed or could have existed on it. Organic matter is a later phenomenon, the fruit of a long evolu-

<sup>1</sup> Rudolph Willy, *Gegen die Schulweisheit*, S. 170.

tion. It follows that there was no sentient matter, no "complexes of sensations," no *self* that was supposedly "indissolubly" connected with the environment in accordance with Avenarius' doctrine. Matter is primary, and thought, consciousness, sensation are products of a very high development. Such is the materialist theory of knowledge, to which natural science instinctively subscribes.

The question arises, have the eminent representatives of empirio-criticism observed this contradiction between their theory and natural science? They have observed it, and they have definitely asked themselves by what arguments this contradiction can be removed. Three attitudes to this question are of particular interest from the point of view of materialism, that of Avenarius himself and those of his disciples J. Petzoldt and R. Willy.

Avenarius tries to eliminate the contradiction to natural science by means of the theory of the "potential" central term in the co-ordination. As we know, co-ordination is the "indissoluble" connection between self and environment. In order to eliminate the obvious absurdity of this theory the concept of the "potential" central term is introduced. For instance, what about man's development from the embryo? Does the environment (the "counter-term") exist if the "central term" is represented by an embryo? The embryonic system C—Avenarius replies—is the "potential central term in relation to the future individual environment" (*Bemerkungen*, S. 140). The potential central term is never equal to zero, even when there are as yet no parents (*elterliche Bestandteile*), but only the "integral parts of the environment" capable of becoming parents (p. 141).

The co-ordination then is indissoluble. It is essential for the empirio-criticist to assert this in order to save the fundamentals of his philosophy—sensations and their complexes. Man is the central term of this co-ordination. But when there is no man, when he has not yet been born, the central term is nevertheless not equal to zero; it has only become a *potential* central term! It is astonishing that there are people who can take seriously a philosopher who advances such arguments! Even Wundt, who stipulates that he is not an enemy of every form of metaphysics (*i.e.*, of fideism), was compelled to admit "the mystical obscuration of

the concept experience" by the word "potential," which destroys co-ordination entirely (*op. cit.*, p. 379).

And, indeed, how can one seriously speak of a co-ordination the indissolubility of which consists in one of its terms being potential?

Is this not mysticism, the very antechamber of fideism? If it is possible to think of the potential central term in relation to a future environment, why not think of it in relation to a *past environment*, that is, *after man's death*? You will say that Avenarius did not draw this conclusion from his theory? Granted, but that absurd and reactionary theory became the more cowardly and not any the better for that. Avenarius, in 1894, did not carry this theory to its logical conclusion, or perhaps feared to do so. But R. Schubert-Soldern, as we shall see, resorted in 1896 to *this very theory* to arrive at theological conclusions, which in 1906 earned the *approval* of Mach, who said that Schubert-Soldern was following "very close paths" (to Machism).<sup>1</sup> Engels was quite right in attacking Dühring, an avowed atheist, for inconsistently leaving *loop-holes* for fideism in his philosophy. Engels several times, and justly, brought this accusation against the materialist Dühring, although the latter had not drawn any theological conclusions, in the 'seventies at least. But we have among us people who would have us regard them as Marxists, yet who bring to the masses a philosophy which comes very close to fideism.

"It would seem," Avenarius wrote in the "*Bemerkungen*," "that from the empirio-critical standpoint natural science is not entitled to inquire about periods of our present environment which in time preceded the existence of man" (p. 144).

Avenarius answers:

"The inquirer cannot avoid mentally projecting himself" (*sich hinzudenken*, i.e., imagining oneself to be present). For—Avenarius continues—"what the scientist wants [although he may not be clearly aware of it] is essentially only this: how is the earth . . . to be defined prior to the appearance of living beings or men if I were mentally to project myself in the role of a spectator?—in much the same way as though it were thinkable that we could from our earth follow the history of another star or of another solar system with the help of perfected instruments."

An object cannot exist independently of our consciousness. "We

<sup>1</sup> *Analyse der Empfindungen*, S. 4.



always mentally project ourselves as the intelligence endeavouring to apprehend the object."

This theory of the necessity of "mentally projecting" the human mind to every object and to nature prior to man is given by me in the first section in the words of the "recent positivist," R. Avenarius, and in the second in the words of the subjective idealist, J. G. Fichte.<sup>1</sup> The sophistry of this theory is so manifest that one feels reluctant to analyse it. If we "mentally project" ourselves, our presence will be *imaginary*—but the existence of the earth prior to man is *real*. Man *could not* in practice be an observer, for instance, of the earth in an incandescent state, and to "imagine" his being present at the time is *obscurantism*, exactly as though I were to endeavour to prove the existence of hell by the argument that if I "mentally projected" myself thither as an observer I could observe hell. The "reconciliation" of empirio-criticism and natural science amounts to this, that Avenarius graciously consents to "mentally project" something the possibility of admitting which is *excluded* by natural science. No man in the least educated or in the least healthy doubts that the earth existed at a time when there could not have been any life on it, any sensation or any "central term," and consequently the whole theory of Mach and Avenarius, from which it follows that the earth is a complex of sensations ("bodies are complexes of sensations") or "a complex of elements in which the psychical and physical are identical," or "a counter-term of which the central term can never be equal to zero," is *philosophical obscurantism*, the reduction of subjective idealism to absurdity.

J. Petzoldt perceived the absurdity of the position into which Avenarius had fallen and felt ashamed. In his *Einführung in die Philosophie der reinen Erfahrung* (Vol. II) he devotes a whole paragraph (§ 65) to the question of the reality of earlier (*frühere*) periods of the earth.

"In the teaching of Avenarius," says Petzoldt, "the self (*das Ich*) plays a role different from that which it plays in the teaching of Schuppe [let us note that Petzoldt openly and repeatedly declares: our philosophy was founded by

<sup>1</sup> J. G. Fichte, "*Recension des Aenesidemus*" ["Review of Aenesidemus"], 1794, *Sämtliche Werke*, Bd. I, S. 19.

three persons—Schuppe, Mach and Avenarius], yet it is a role which, perhaps, possesses too much importance for his theory."

(Petzoldt was evidently influenced by the fact that Schuppe had unmasked Avenarius by showing that with him too everything rests entirely on the self; and Petzoldt wishes to make a correction.)

"Avenarius said on one occasion," Petzoldt continues, "that we can think of a 'region' where no human foot has yet trodden, but to be able to think (italicised by Avenarius) of such an environment there is required 'what we designate by the term self (*Ich-Bezeichnetes*), whose (italicised by Avenarius) thought the thinking is' (*V. f. wiss. Ph.*, 18. Bd., 1894, S. 146, Anm.)" (Vol. II, p. 324).

Petzoldt replies:

"The epistemologically important question, however, is not whether we can think of such a region at all, but whether we are entitled to think of it as existing, or as having existed, independently of any individual mind" (*ibid.*, p. 324).

Right is right! People can think and "mentally project" for themselves any kind of hell and any kind of hobgoblin. Lunacharsky even "mentally projected" for himself—well, to use a mild expression—religious conceptions. But it is precisely the purpose of the theory of knowledge to show the unreal, fantastic and reactionary character of such projections.

"... For, that the system C (i.e., the brain) is necessary for thought is obvious both for Avenarius and for the philosophy which is here presented" (*ibid.*, p. 324).

That is not true. Avenarius' theory of 1876 is a theory of thought without brain. And even in his theory of 1892-94, as we shall presently see, there is a similar element of idealist nonsense.

"... But is this system C a condition of existence [italicised by Petzoldt] of, say, the Mesozoic period of the earth?" (*ibid.*, p. 324).

And Petzoldt, presenting the argument of Avenarius I have already cited on the subject of what science actually wants and how we can "mentally project" the spectator, objects:

"No, we wish to know whether I have the right to think that the earth at that remote epoch existed in the same way as I think of it as having existed yesterday or a minute ago. Or must the existence of the earth be really made conditional, as Willy claimed, on our right at least to assume that at the given period there co-existed some system C, even though at the lowest stage of its development?" (*ibid.*, p. 325).

Of this idea of Willy's we shall speak presently.

"Avenarius evades Willy's strange conclusion by the argument that the person who puts the question cannot mentally remove himself (*sich wegdenken*, i.e., think himself as absent), nor can he avoid mentally projecting himself (*sich hinzuzudenken*, see Avenarius, *Der menschliche Weltbegriff*, S. 130). But then Avenarius makes the individual self of the person who puts the question, or the thought of such a self, the condition not only of the act of thought regarding the uninhabitable earth, but also of the justification for believing in the existence of the earth at that time.

"These false paths are easily avoided if we do not ascribe so much theoretical importance to the self. The only thing the theory of knowledge should demand of the various conceptions of that which is remote in space or time is that it be conceivable and uniquely (*eindeutig*) determined; the rest is the affair of the special sciences" (Vol. II, p. 325).

Petzoldt rechristened the law of causality the law of unique determination and imported into his theory, as we shall see later, the *apriority* of this law. This means that Petzoldt saves himself from Avenarius' subjective idealism and solipsism ("he attributes an exaggerated importance to the self," as the professorial jargon has it) with the help of *Kantian* ideas. The absence of the objective element in Avenarius' doctrine, the impossibility of reconciling it with the demands of natural science, which declares the earth (object) to have existed long before the appearance of living beings (subject), compelled Petzoldt to resort to causality (unique determination). The earth existed, for its existence prior to man is causally connected with the present existence of the earth. Firstly, where does causality come from? *A priori*, says Petzoldt. Secondly, are not the ideas of hell, devils, and Lunacharsky's "mental projections" also connected by causality? Thirdly, the theory "of the complexes of sensations" in any case turns out to be destroyed by Petzoldt. Petzoldt failed to resolve the contradiction he observed in Avenarius, and only entangled himself still more, for only one solution is possible, *viz.*, the recognition that the external world reflected by our mind exists independently of our mind. This materialist solution alone is really compatible with natural science, and it alone eliminates both Petzoldt's and Mach's idealist solution of the question of causality, which we shall speak of separately.

The third empirio-criticist, R. Willy, first raised the question of

this difficulty in Avenarius' philosophy in 1896, in an article entitled "*Der Empiriokritizismus als einzig wissenschaftlicher Standpunkt*" ("Empirio-Criticism as the only Scientific Standpoint"). What about the world prior to man?—Willy asks here,<sup>1</sup> and at first answers according to Avenarius: "We project ourselves *mentally* into the past." But then he goes on to say that we are not necessarily obliged to regard *experience* as human experience.

"For we must simply regard the animal kingdom—be it the most insignificant worm—as primitive fellow-men (*Mitmenschen*) if . . . we regard animal life in connection with general experience" (pp. 73-74).

Thus, prior to man the earth was the "experience" of a worm, which discharged the functions of the "central term" in order to save Avenarius' "co-ordination" and Avenarius' philosophy! No wonder Petzoldt tried to dissociate himself from an argument which is not only the height of absurdity (ideas of the earth corresponding to the theories of the geologists attributed to a worm!), but which does not in any way help our philosopher, for the earth existed not only before man but before any living being generally.

Willy returned to the question in 1905. The worm was now removed.<sup>2</sup> But Petzoldt's "law of unique determination" could not, of course, satisfy Willy, who regarded it merely as "logical formalism." The author says—will not the question of the world prior to man, as Petzoldt puts it, lead us "back again to the things-in-themselves of common sense"? (*i.e.*, to materialism! How terrible indeed!). What does millions of years without life mean?

"Is time perhaps a thing-in-itself? Of course not!<sup>3</sup> And that means that things outside men are only impressions, bits of fantasy fabricated by men with the help of a few fragments we find about us. And why not? Need the philosopher fear the stream of life? . . . And so I say to myself: abandon all this love of systems and grasp the moment (*ergreife den Augenblick*), the moment you are living in, the moment which alone brings happiness" (p. 178).

Well, well! Either materialism or solipsism—this, in spite of his vociferous phrases, is what Willy arrives at when he analyses the question of the existence of nature before man.

To summarise. Three augurs of empirio-criticism have ap-

<sup>1</sup> *Vierteljahrsschrift für wissenschaftliche Philosophie*, Jg. XX, 1896, S. 72.

<sup>2</sup> R. Willy, *Gegen die Schulweisheit*, 1905, S. 173-78.

<sup>3</sup> We shall discuss this point with the Machians later.

peared before us and have laboured in the sweat of their brow to reconcile their philosophy with natural science, to patch up the holes in their solipsism. Avenarius repeated Fichte's argument and substituted an imaginary world for the real world. Petzoldt withdrew from Fichtean idealism and moved towards Kantian idealism. Willy, having suffered a fiasco with the "worm," threw up the sponge and inadvertently blurted out the truth: either materialism or solipsism, or even the recognition of nothing but the present moment.

It only remains for us to show the reader *how* this problem was understood and treated by our own native Machians. Here is Bazarov in the *Studies "in" the Philosophy of Marxism* (p. 11):

"It remains for us now, under the guidance of our faithful *vademecum* [i.e., Plekhanov], to descend into the last and most horrible circle of the solipsist inferno, into that circle where, as Plekhanov assures us, every subjective idealism is menaced with the necessity of conceiving the world as it was contemplated by the ichthyosauruses and archæopteryxes. 'Let us mentally transport ourselves,' writes Plekhanov, 'to that epoch when only very remote ancestors of man existed on the earth, for instance, to the Mesozoic epoch. The question arises, what was the status of space, time and causality *then*? *Whose* subjective forms were they at that time? Were they the subjective forms of the ichthyosauruses? And *whose intelligence* at that time dictated its laws to nature? The intelligence of the archæopteryx? To these queries the Kantian philosophy *can give no answer*. And it must be rejected as absolutely incompatible with modern science' (*L. Feuerbach*, p. 117)."

Here Bazarov breaks the quotation from Plekhanov just before a very important passage—as we shall soon see—namely:

"Idealism says that *without subject there is no object*. The history of the earth shows that *the object existed long before the subject appeared*, i.e., long before the appearance of organisms possessing a perceptible degree of consciousness. . . . The history of development reveals the truth of materialism."

We continue the quotation from Bazarov:

". . . But does Plekhanov's thing-in-itself provide the desired solution? Let us remember that even according to Plekhanov we can have no idea of things as they are in themselves; we know only their *phenomena*, only the results of their actions on our *sense-organs*. Apart from this action they 'possess no' aspect (*L. Feuerbach*, p. 112). What 'sense-organs' existed in the period of the ichthyosauruses? Evidently, only the sense-organs of the ichthyosauruses and their like. Only the ideas of the ichthyosauruses were then the actual, the real manifestations of things-in-themselves. Hence, according to Plekhanov also, if the paleontologist desires to remain on 'real' ground he must write the story of the Mesozoic epoch in the light of the contemplations of the ichthyosaurus.

And, consequently, not a single step forward is made in comparison with solipsism."

Such is the complete argument (the reader must pardon the lengthy quotation—we could not avoid it) of a Machian, an argument worthy of perpetuation as a first-class example of muddle-headedness.

Bazarov imagines that Plekhanov gave himself away. If things-in-themselves, apart from their action on our sense-organs, have no aspect of their own, then in the Mesozoic epoch they did not exist except as the "aspect" of the sense-organs of the ichthyosaurus. And this is the argument of a materialist! If an "aspect" is the result of the action of things-in-themselves on sense-organs—it follows that things *do not exist independently* of sense-organs of one kind or another!

Let us assume for a moment that Bazarov indeed "misunderstood" Plekhanov's words (improbable as such an assumption may seem), that they did appear obscure to him. Be it so. We ask: is Bazarov engaged in a fencing bout with Plekhanov (whom the Machians exalt to the position of the only representative of materialism!), or is he endeavouring to clear up the problem of *materialism*? If Plekhanov seemed obscure to you, or contradictory, and so forth, why did you not turn to other materialists? Is it because you do not know them? But ignorance is no argument.

If Bazarov indeed does not know that the fundamental premise of materialism is the recognition of the external world, of the existence of *things* outside and independent of our mind, this is truly a striking case of crass ignorance. We would remind the reader of Berkeley, who in 1710 rebuked the materialists for their recognition of "objects in themselves" existing independently of our mind and reflected by our mind. Of course, everybody is free to side with Berkeley or anyone else *against* the materialists; that is unquestionable. But it is equally unquestionable that to speak of the materialists and distort or ignore the fundamental premise of *all* materialism is to import unpardonable confusion into the problem.

Was Plekhanov right when he said that for idealism there is

no object without a subject, while for materialism the object exists independently of the subject and is reflected more or less adequately in the subject's mind? If this is *wrong*, then any man who has the slightest respect for Marxism should have pointed out *this* error of Plekhanov's, and should have dealt *not* with him, but with someone else, with Marx, Engels, or Feuerbach, on the question of materialism and the existence of nature prior to man. But if this is right, or, at least, if you are unable to find an error here, then your attempt to shuffle the cards and to confuse in the reader's mind the most elementary conception of materialism, as distinguished from idealism, is a literary indecency.

As for the Marxists who are interested in the question apart from every little word uttered by Plekhanov, we shall quote the opinion of L. Feuerbach, who, as is known (perhaps *not* to Bazarov?), was a materialist, and through whom Marx and Engels, as is well known, came from the idealism of Hegel to their materialist philosophy. In his rejoinder to R. Haym, Feuerbach wrote:

"Nature, which is not an object of man or mind, is for speculative philosophy, or at least for idealism, a Kantian thing-in-itself [we shall speak later in detail of the fact that our Machians confuse the Kantian thing-in-itself with the materialist thing-in-itself], an abstraction without reality, but it is nature that causes the downfall of idealism. Natural science, at least in its present state, necessarily leads us back to a point when the conditions for human existence were still absent, when nature, *i.e.*, the earth, was not yet an object of the human eye and mind, when, consequently, nature was an absolutely non-human entity (*absolut unmenschliches Wesen*). Idealism may retort: but nature also is something thought of by you (*von dir gedachte*). Certainly, but from this it does not follow that this nature did not at one time actually exist, just as from the fact that Socrates and Plato do not exist for me, if I do not think of them, it does not follow that Socrates and Plato did not actually at one time exist without me."<sup>1</sup>

This is how Feuerbach regarded materialism and idealism from the standpoint of the existence of nature prior to the appearance of man. Avenarius' sophistry (the "mental projection of the observer") was refuted by Feuerbach, who did not know the "recent

<sup>1</sup>Ludwig Feuerbach, *Sämtliche Werke* [Collected Works], herausgegeben von W. Bolin und Fr. Jodl, Bd. VII, Stuttgart 1903, S. 510; oder Karl Grün, *L. Feuerbach in seinem Briefwechsel und Nachlaß, sowie in seiner philosophischen Charakterentwicklung* [Ludwig Feuerbach, His Correspondence, Posthumous Works and Philosophical Development], Bd. I, Leipzig 1874, S. 423-35.

positivism" but who thoroughly knew the old idealist sophistry. And Bazarov offers us absolutely nothing new, but merely repeats this sophistry of the idealists: "Had I been there [on earth, prior to man], I would have seen the world so-and-so" (*Studies "in" the Philosophy of Marxism*, p. 29). In other words: if I make an assumption that is obviously absurd and contrary to natural science (that man can be an observer in an epoch before man existed), I shall be able to patch up the breach in my philosophy!

This gives us an idea of the extent of Bazarov's knowledge of the subject and of his literary methods. Bazarov did not even hint at the "difficulty" with which Avenarius, Petzoldt and Willy wrestled; and, moreover, he made such a hash of the whole subject, placed before the reader such an incredible hotchpotch, that there ultimately appears to be no difference between materialism and solipsism. Idealism is represented as "realism," and to materialism is ascribed the denial of the existence of things outside of their action on the sense-organs! Truly, either Feuerbach did not know the elementary difference between materialism and idealism, or else Bazarov and Co. have completely altered the elementary truths of philosophy.

Or let us take Valentinov, a philosopher who, naturally, is delighted with Bazarov:

1. "Berkeley is the founder of the correlativist theory of the relativity of subject and object" (p. 148).

This is not Berkeleian idealism, oh, no! This is a "profound analysis."

2. "In the most realistic aspect, irrespective of the forms [!] of their usual idealist interpretation [only interpretation!], the fundamental premises of the theory are formulated by Avenarius" (p. 148).

Infants, as we see, are taken in by the hocus pocus!

3. "His [Avenarius'] conception of the starting point of knowledge is that each individual finds himself in a definite environment, in other words, the individual and the environment are represented as connected and inseparable [!] terms of one and the same co-ordination" (p. 148).

Delightful! This is not idealism—Bazarov and Valentinov have risen above materialism and idealism—this "inseparability" of the subject and object is "realism" itself.



4. "Is the reverse assertion correct, namely, that there is no counter-term to which there is no corresponding central term—an individual? Naturally [!] not. . . . In the archaic period the woods were verdant . . . yet there was no man" (p. 148).

That means that the inseparable *can* be separated! Is that not "natural"?

5. "Yet from the standpoint of the theory of knowledge, the question of the object in itself is absurd" (p. 148).

Of course! When there were no sentient organisms, objects were nevertheless "complexes of elements" *identical* with sensations!

6. "The immanentist school, in the person of Schubert-Soldern and Schuppe, clad these [!] thoughts in an unsatisfactory form and found itself in the *cul-de-sac* of solipsism" (p. 149).

But "these thoughts" themselves, of course, contain no solipsism, and empirio-criticism, of course, is not a paraphrase of the reactionary theories of the immanentists, who lie when they declare themselves to be in sympathy with Avenarius!

This, Messrs. Machians, is not philosophy, but an incoherent jumble of words!

## 5. DOES MAN THINK WITH THE HELP OF THE BRAIN?

Bazarov emphatically answers this question in the affirmative. He writes:

"If Plekhanov's thesis that 'consciousness is an internal [? Bazarov] state of matter' be given a more satisfactory form, e.g., that 'every psychical process is a function of the cerebral process,' then neither Mach nor Avenarius would dispute it" (*Studies "in" the Philosophy of Marxism*, p. 29).

To the mouse no beast is stronger than the cat. To the Russian Machians there is no materialist stronger than Plekhanov. Was Plekhanov really the *only* one, or the first, to advance the materialist thesis that consciousness is an internal state of matter? And if Bazarov did not like Plekhanov's formulation of materialism, why did he take Plekhanov and not Engels or Feuerbach?

Because the Machians are afraid to admit the truth. They are fighting materialism, but pretend that it is only Plekhanov they are fighting. A cowardly and unprincipled method.

But let us turn to empirio-criticism. Avenarius "would not dis-

pute" the statement that thought is a function of the brain. These words of Bazarov's contain a direct untruth. Not only does Avenarius *dispute* the materialist thesis, but invents a whole "theory" in order to refute it.

"The brain," says Avenarius in *Der menschliche Weltbegriff*, "is not the habitation, the seat, the creator, it is not the instrument or organ, the supporter or substratum, etc., of thought" (p. 76—approvingly quoted by Mach in the *Analyse der Empfindungen*, p. 22, note). "Thought is not an indweller, or commander, or the other half, or side, etc., nor is it a product or even a physiological function, or a state in general of the brain" (*ibid.*).

And Avenarius expresses himself no less emphatically in his "*Bemerkungen*"; "presentations" are "not functions (physiological, psychical, or psycho-physical) of the brain" (*op. cit.*, § 115). Sensations are not "psychical functions of the brain" (§ 116).

Thus, according to Avenarius, the brain is not the organ of thought, and thought is not a function of the brain. Take Engels, and we immediately find directly contrary, frankly materialist formulations.

"Thought and consciousness," says Engels in *Anti-Dühring*, "are products of the human brain."<sup>1</sup>

This idea is often repeated in that work. In *Ludwig Feuerbach* we have the following exposition of the views of Feuerbach and Engels:

"... the material (*stofflich*), sensuously perceptible world to which we ourselves belong is the only reality . . . our consciousness and thinking, however supra-sensuous they may seem, are the product (*Erzeugnis*) of a material, bodily organ, the brain. Matter is not a product of mind, but mind itself is merely the highest product of matter. This is, of course, pure materialism" (4th German ed., p. 18).<sup>2</sup>

Or on p. 4, where he speaks of the reflection of the processes of nature in "the thinking brain," etc., etc.

Avenarius rejects this materialist standpoint and says that "the thinking of the brain" is a "*fetish of natural science*" (*Der menschliche Weltbegriff*, 2. Aufl., S. 70). Hence, Avenarius cherishes no illusions concerning his absolute disagreement with natural science on this point. He admits, as do Mach and all the immanentists,

<sup>1</sup> See *Anti-Dühring*, Eng. ed., 1935.—*Trans.*

<sup>2</sup> F. Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach*, Eng. ed., 1934, p. 35.—*Trans.*

that natural science holds an instinctive and unconscious materialist point of view. He admits and explicitly declares that *he absolutely differs from the "prevailing psychology"* ("*Bermerkungen*," S. 150, etc.). This prevailing psychology is guilty of an inadmissible "introjection"—such is the new term contrived by our philosopher—i.e., the insertion of thought into the brain, or of sensations into us. These "two words" (into us—in *uns*), Avenarius goes on to say, contain the assumption (*Annahme*) that empirio-criticism disputes. "This insertion (*Hineinverlegung*) of the visible, etc., into man is what we call *introjection*" (p. 153, § 45).

Introjection deviates "in principle" from the "natural conception of the world" (*natürlicher Weltbegriff*) by substituting "into me" for "before me" (*vor mir*, p. 154), "by turning a component part of the (real) environment into a component part of (ideal) thought" (*ibid.*).

"Out of the *amechanical* [a new word in place of "psychical"] which manifests itself freely and clearly in the experienced [or, in what is found—in *Vorgefundenen*], introjection makes something which hides itself [*Latitirendes*, says Avenarius—another new word] mysteriously in the central nervous system" (*ibid.*).

Here we have the same *mystification* that we encountered in the famous defence of "naïve realism" by the empirio-criticists and immanentists. Avenarius here acts on the advice of the charlatan in Turgenev: denounce most of all those vices which you yourself possess. Avenarius tries to pretend that he is combating idealism: philosophical idealism, you see, is usually deduced from introjection, the external world is converted into sensation, into ideas, and so forth, while I defend "naïve realism," the equal reality of everything presented, both "self" and environment, without inserting the external world into the human brain.

The sophistry here is the same as that which we observed in the case of the famous co-ordination. While distracting the attention of the reader by attacking idealism, Avenarius is in fact defending idealism, albeit in slightly different words: thought is not a function of the brain; the brain is not the organ of thought; sensations are not functions of the nervous system, oh, no! sensa-

tions are—"elements," psychical only in one connection, while in another connection (although the elements are "identical") they are physical. With his new and muddled terminology, with his new and pompous epithets, supposedly expressing a new "theory," Avenarius merely beat about the bush and returned to his fundamental idealist premise.

And if our Russian Machians (e.g., Bogdanov) failed to notice the "mystification" and discerned a refutation of idealism in the "new" defence of idealism, in the analysis of empirio-criticism given by the philosophical experts we find a sober estimate of the true nature of Avenarius' ideas, which is laid bare when stripped of its pretentious terminology.

In 1903 Bogdanov wrote:

"Richard Avenarius presented a most harmonious and complete philosophical picture of the development of the dualism of spirit and body. The gist of his 'doctrine of introjection' is the following: [we observe only physical bodies directly, and we infer the experiences of others, i.e., the mind of another person, only by hypothesis]. . . . The hypothesis is complicated by the fact that the experiences of the other person are located within his body, are inserted (introjected) into his organism. This is already a superfluous hypothesis and even gives rise to numerous contradictions. Avenarius systematically draws attention to these contradictions by unfolding a series of successive historical facts in the development of dualism and of philosophical idealism. But here we need not follow Avenarius. . . . Introjection serves as an *explanation* of the dualism of mind and body."<sup>1</sup>

Bogdanov swallowed the bait of professorial philosophy in believing that "introjection" was aimed against idealism. He accepted the evaluation of introjection given by Avenarius himself *at its face value* and failed to notice the *barb* directed against materialism. Introjection denies that thought is a function of the brain, that sensations are functions of man's central nervous system: that is, it denies the most elementary truth of physiology in order to destroy materialism. "Dualism," it appears, is refuted *idealistically* (notwithstanding all Avenarius' diplomatic rage against idealism), for sensation and thought prove to be not secondary, not a product of matter, but *primary*. Dualism is here refuted by Avenarius only in so far as he "refutes" the existence of

<sup>1</sup> A. Bogdanov, "Authoritative Thinking," an article in the symposium *From the Psychology of Society*, p. 119 *et seq.*

the object without the subject, matter without thought, the external world independent of our sensations; that is, it is refuted *idealistically*. The absurd denial of the fact that the visual image of a tree is a function of the retina, the nerves and the brain, was required by Avenarius in order to bolster up his theory of the "indissoluble" connection of the "complete" experience, which includes not only the self but also the tree, *i.e.*, the environment.

The doctrine of introjection is a muddle; it smuggles in idealistic rubbish and is contradictory to natural science, which inflexibly holds that thought is a function of the brain, that sensations, *i.e.*, the images of the *external world*, exist *within us*, produced by the action of things on our sense-organs. The materialist elimination of the "dualism of spirit and body" (*i.e.*, materialist monism) consists in the assertion that the spirit does not exist independently of the body, that spirit is secondary, a function of the brain, a reflection of the external world. The idealist elimination of the "dualism of spirit and body" (*i.e.*, idealist monism) consists in the assertion that spirit is *not* a function of the body, that, consequently, spirit is primary, that the "environment" and the "self" exist only in an inseparable connection of one and the same "complexes of elements." Apart from these two diametrically opposed methods of eliminating "the dualism of spirit and body," there can be no third method, unless it be eclecticism, which is a senseless jumble of materialism and idealism. And it was this jumble of Avenarius' that seemed to Bogdanov and Co. "the truth transcending materialism and idealism."

But the professional philosophers are not as naïve and credulous as are the Russian Machians. True, each of these professors-in-ordinary advocates his "*own*" system of refuting materialism, or, at any rate, of "reconciling" materialism and idealism. But when it comes to a competitor they unceremoniously expose the unconnected fragments of materialism and idealism that are contained in all the "recent" and "original" systems. And if a few young intellectuals swallowed Avenarius' bait, that old bird Wundt was not to be enticed so easily. The idealist Wundt tore the mask from the poseur Avenarius very unceremoniously *when he praised him for the anti-materialist tendency of the theory of introjection.*

"If empirio-criticism," Wundt wrote, "reproaches vulgar materialism because by such expressions as: the brain 'has' thought, or the brain 'produces' thought, it expresses a relation which generally cannot be established by factual observation and description [evidently, for Wundt it is a "fact" that a person thinks without the help of a brain!] . . . this reproach, of course, is well founded" (*op. cit.*, pp. 47-48).

Well, of course! The idealists will always join the half-hearted Avenarius and Mach in attacking materialism! It is only a pity, Wundt goes on to say, that this theory of introjection

"does not stand in any relation to the doctrine of the independent vital series, and was, to all appearances, only tacked on to it as an afterthought and in a rather artificial fashion" (p. 365).

Introjection, says O. Ewald,

"is to be regarded as nothing but a fiction of empirio-criticism, which the latter requires in order to shield its own fallacies" (*op. cit.*, p. 44).

"We observe a strange contradiction: on the one hand, the elimination of introjection and the restoration of the natural world conception is intended to restore to the world the character of living reality; on the other hand, in the principal co-ordination empirio-criticism is leading to a purely idealist theory of an absolute correlation of the counter-term and the central term. Avenarius is thus moving in a circle. He set out to do battle against idealism but laid down his arms before it came to an open skirmish. He wanted to liberate the world of objects from the yoke of the subject, but again bound that world to the subject. What he has actually destroyed by his criticism is a caricature of idealism rather than its genuine epistemological expression" (*ibid.*, pp. 64-65).

"In the frequently quoted statement by Avenarius," Norman Smith says, "that the brain is not the seat, organ or supporter of thought, he rejects the only terms which we possess for defining their connection" (*op. cit.*, p. 30).

Nor is it surprising that the theory of introjection approved by Wundt appeals to the sympathy of the outspoken spiritualist, James Ward,<sup>1</sup> who wages systematic war on "naturalism and agnosticism," and especially on Huxley (not because he was an insufficiently outspoken and determined materialist, for which Engels reproached him, but) because his agnosticism served in fact to conceal materialism.

Let us note that Karl Pearson, the English Machian, who avoids all philosophical artifices, and who recognises neither introjection, nor co-ordination, nor yet "the discovery of the world-elements,"

<sup>1</sup> James Ward, *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, London, 1906, Vol. II, pp. 171-72.

arrives at the inevitable outcome of Machism when it is stripped of such "disguises," namely, pure subjective idealism. Pearson knows no "elements"; "sense-impressions" are his alpha and omega. He never doubts that man thinks with the help of the brain. And the contradiction between this thesis (which alone conforms with science) and the basis of his philosophy remains naked and obvious. Pearson spares no effort in combating the concept that matter exists independently of our sense-impressions (*The Grammar of Science*, Chap. VII). Repeating all Berkeley's arguments, Pearson declares that matter is a nonentity. But when he comes to speak of the relation of the brain to thought, Pearson emphatically declares:

"From will and consciousness associated with material machinery we can infer nothing whatever as to will and consciousness without that machinery."<sup>1</sup>

He even advances the following thesis as a summary of his investigations in this field:

"Consciousness has no meaning beyond nervous systems akin to our own; it is illogical to assert that all matter is conscious [but it is logical to assert that all matter possesses a property which is essentially akin to sensation, the property of reflection], still more that consciousness or will can exist outside matter" (*ibid.*, p. 75, 2nd thesis).

Pearson's muddle is glaring! Matter is nothing but groups of sense-impressions. That is his premise, that is his philosophy. Hence, sensation and thought should be primary; matter, secondary. But no, consciousness without matter does not exist, and apparently not even without a nervous system! That is, consciousness and sensation are secondary. The waters rest on the earth, the earth rests on a whale, and the whale rests on the waters. Mach's "elements" and Avenarius' "co-ordination" and "introjection" do not clear up this muddle; all they do is to cover up traces with the help of an erudite philosophical gibberish.

Just such gibberish, and of this a word or two will suffice, is the terminology of Avenarius, who coined a plenitude of diverse "notals," "securals," "fidentials," etc., etc. Our Russian Machians for the most part shamefacedly avoid this professorial nonsense, and only now and again bombard the reader (in order to stun

<sup>1</sup> Karl Pearson, *The Grammar of Science*, 2nd ed., London, 1900, p. 58.

him) with an "existential" and such like. But if naïve people take these words for a special species of bio-mechanics, the German philosophers, who are themselves lovers of "crudite" words, laugh at Avenarius. To say "notal" (*notus*=*known*), or to say that this or the other thing is known to me, is absolutely one and the same, says Wundt in the section entitled "*Scholastischer Charakter des empiriokritischen Systems*." And, indeed, it is the purest and most dreary scholasticism. One of Avenarius' faithful disciples, R. Willy, had the courage to admit it.

"Avenarius dreamed of a bio-mechanics," says he, ". . . but an understanding of the life of the brain can be arrived at only by actual discoveries . . . and not by the way in which Avenarius attempted to arrive at it. Avenarius' bio-mechanics is not grounded on any new observations whatever; its characteristic feature is purely schematic constructions of concepts, and, indeed, constructions which do not even bear nature of hypotheses that open up new vistas, but rather of stereotyped speculations (*bloßen Spekulierschablonen*), which, like a wall, conceal our view."<sup>1</sup>

The Russian Machians will soon be like fashion-lovers who are moved to ecstasy over a hat which has already been discarded by the bourgeois philosophers of Europe.

## 6. THE SOLIPSISM OF MACH AND AVENARIUS

We have seen that the starting point and the fundamental premise of the philosophy of empirio-criticism is subjective idealism. The world is our sensation—this is the fundamental premise, which is obscured but in no wise altered by the word "element" and by the theories of the "independent series," "co-ordination," and "introjection." The absurdity of this philosophy lies in the fact that it leads to solipsism, to the recognition of the existence of the philosophising individual only. But our Russian Machians assure their readers that to "charge" Mach "with idealism and even solipsism" is "extreme subjectivism." So says Bogdanov in the introduction to the Russian translation of *Analyse der Empfindungen* (p. xi), and the whole Machian troop repeat it in a great variety of keys.

<sup>1</sup> R. Willy, *Gegen die Schulweisheit*, p. 169. Of course, the pedant Petzoldt will not make any such admissions. With the smug satisfaction of the philistine he chews the cud of Avenarius' "biological" scholasticism (Vol. I, Chap. II).



Having examined the methods whereby Mach and Avenarius disguise their solipsism, we have now to add only one thing: the "extreme subjectivism" of assertion lies entirely with Bogdanov and Co.; for in philosophical literature writers of the most varied trends have long since disclosed the fundamental sin of Machism beneath all its disguises. We shall confine ourselves to a mere *summary* of opinions which sufficiently indicate the "subjective" *ignorance* of our Machians. Let us note in passing that nearly every professional philosopher sympathises with one or another brand of philosophical idealism: in their eyes idealism is not a reproach, as it is with us Marxists; but they point out Mach's *actual* philosophical trend and oppose one system of idealism by another system, also idealist, but to them more consistent.

O. Ewald, in a book devoted to an analysis of Avenarius' teachings, writes: "The creator of empirio-criticism commits himself *volens nolens* to solipsism" (*loc. cit.*, pp. 61-62).

Hans Kleinpeter, a disciple of Mach with whom Mach in his preface to *Erkenntnis und Irrtum* explicitly declares his solidarity, says:

"It is precisely Mach who is an example of the compatibility of epistemological idealism with the demands of natural science [for the eclectic everything is compatible], and of the fact that the latter can very well start from solipsism without stopping there" (*Archiv für systematische Philosophie*, 1900, Bd. VI, S. 87).

E. Lucka, analysing Mach's *Analyse der Empfindungen*, says:

"Apart from this . . . misunderstanding (*Mißverständnis*) Mach adopts the ground of pure idealism. . . . It is incomprehensible that Mach denies that he is a Berkeleyan" (*Kantstudien*, Bd. VIII, 1903, S. 416-17).

W. Jerusalem, a most reactionary Kantian with whom Mach in the above-mentioned preface expresses his solidarity ("a closer kinship" of thought than Mach had previously suspected—*Vorwort zu "Erkenntnis und Irrtum,"* S. X, 1906), says: "Consistent phenomenalism leads to solipsism." (And therefore one must borrow a little from Kant! See *Der kritische Idealismus und die reine Logik*,<sup>1</sup> Wien 1905, S. 26.)

R. Hönigswald says:

<sup>1</sup> *Critical Idealism and Pure Logic.—Trans.*

"... the immanentists and the empirio-criticists face the alternative of solipsism or metaphysics in the spirit of Fichte, Schelling, or Hegel" (*Ueber die Lehre Humes von der Realität der Außendinge*, 1904, S. 68).

The English physicist Oliver Lodge, in his book denouncing the materialist Haeckel, speaks in passing, as though of something generally known, of "solipsists like Pearson and Mach" (*Life and Matter*, 1906, p. 8).

*Nature*, the organ of the English scientists, through the mouth of the geometrician E. T. Dixon, pronounced a very definite opinion of the Machian Pearson, one worth quoting, not because it is new, but because the Russian Machians have naïvely accepted Mach's philosophical muddle as the "philosophy of natural science" (A. Bogdanov, introduction to *Analyse der Empfindungen*, p. xii, *et seq.*).

"The foundation of the whole book," Dixon writes, "is the proposition that since we cannot directly apprehend anything but sense-impressions, therefore the things we commonly speak of as objective, or external to ourselves, and their variations, are nothing but groups of sense-impressions and sequences of such groups. But Professor Pearson admits the existence of other consciousnesses than his own, not only by implication in addressing his book to them, but explicitly in many passages."

Pearson infers the existence of the consciousness of others by analogy, by observing the bodily motions of other people; but since the consciousness of others is real, the existence of people outside myself must be granted.

"Of course it would be impossible thus to refute a consistent idealist, who maintained that not only external things but all other consciousnesses were unreal and existed only in his imagination; but to recognise the reality of other consciousnesses is to recognise the reality of the means by which we become aware of them, which . . . is the external aspect of men's bodies."

The way out of the difficulty is to recognise the "hypothesis" that to our sense-impressions there corresponds an objective reality outside of us. This hypothesis satisfactorily explains our sense-impressions.

"I cannot seriously doubt that Professor Pearson himself believes in them as much as anyone else. Only, if he were to acknowledge it explicitly, he would have to rewrite almost every page of *The Grammar of Science*."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Nature*, July 21, 1892, pp. 268-69.

Ridicule—that is the response of the thinking scientists to the idealist philosophy over which Mach waxes so enthusiastic.

And here, finally, is the opinion of a German physicist, L. Boltzmann. The Machians will perhaps say, as Friedrich Adler said, that he is a physicist of the old school. But we are concerned *now* not with theories of physics but with a fundamental philosophical problem. Writing against people who “have been carried away by the new epistemological dogmas,” Boltzmann says:

“Mistrust of conceptions which we can derive only from immediate sense-impressions has led to an extreme which is the direct opposite of former naïve belief. Only sense-impressions are given us, and, therefore, it is said, we have no right to go a step beyond. But to be consistent, one must further ask: are our sense-impressions of yesterday also given? What is immediately given is only the one sense-impression, or only the one thought, namely, the one we are thinking of at the present moment. Hence, to be consistent, one would have to deny not only the existence of other people outside one’s self, but also all conceptions we ever had in the past.”<sup>1</sup>

This physicist rightly regards the supposedly “new” “phenomenalist” view of Mach and Co. as the old absurdity of philosophical subjective idealism.

No, it is those who “failed to note” that solipsism is Mach’s fundamental error who are stricken with “subjective” blindness.

<sup>1</sup> Ludwig Boltzmann. *Populäre Schriften* [*Popular Essays*], Leipzig 1905, S. 132. Vgl. S. 168, 177, 187, etc.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE OF EMPIRIO-CRITICISM AND OF DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM—II

#### 1. THE "THING-IN-ITSELF," OR V. CHERNOV REFUTES FREDERICK ENGELS

OUR Machians have written so much about the "thing-in-itself" that were all their writings to be collected they would result in mountains of printed matter. The "thing-in-itself" is a veritable *bête noir* with Bogdanov, Valentinov, Bazarov, Chernov, Berman and Yushkevich. There is no abuse they have not hurled at it, there is no ridicule they have not showered on it. And against whom are they breaking lances because of this luckless "thing-in-itself"? Here a division of the philosophers of Russian Machism according to political parties begins. All the would-be Marxists among the Machians are combating *Plekhanov's* "thing-in-itself"; they accuse Plekhanov of having become entangled and of having strayed into Kantianism, of having forsaken Engels. (We shall discuss the first accusation in the fourth chapter; the second accusation we shall deal with now.) The Machian Mr. Victor Chernov, a *Narodnik* and a sworn enemy of Marxism, opens a direct campaign *against Engels* because of the "thing-in-itself."

One is ashamed to confess it, but it would be a sin to conceal the fact that on this occasion open enmity towards Marxism has made Mr. Victor Chernov a *more* principled literary antagonist than our comrades in party and opponents in philosophy. For only a *guilty conscience* (and in addition, perhaps, ignorance of materialism?) could have been responsible for the fact that the Machian would-be Marxists have diplomatically set Engels aside, have completely ignored Feuerbach and are circling exclusively around Plekhanov. It is indeed circling around one spot, tedious and petty

cavilling at a disciple of Engels, while a frank examination of the views of the teacher himself is cravenly avoided. And since the purpose of these cursory comments is to disclose the reactionary character of Machism and the correctness of the materialism of Marx and Engels, we shall leave aside the fussing of the Machian would-be Marxists with Plekhanov and turn directly to Engels, whom the empirio-criticist Mr. V. Chernov refuted. In his *Philosophical and Sociological Studies* (Moscow, 1907—a collection of articles written, with few exceptions, before 1900) the article “Marxism and Transcendental Philosophy” bluntly begins with an attempt to set up Marx against Engels and accuses the latter of “naïve dogmatic materialism,” of “the crudest materialist dogmatism” (pp. 29 and 32). Mr. V. Chernov states that a “sufficient” example of this is Engels’ argument against the Kantian thing-in-itself and Hume’s philosophical line. We shall begin with this argument.

In his *Ludwig Feuerbach*, Engels declares that the fundamental philosophical trends are materialism and idealism. Materialism regards nature as primary and spirit as secondary; it places being first and thought second. Idealism holds the contrary view. This root distinction between the “two great camps” into which the philosophers of the “various schools” of idealism and materialism are divided Engels takes as the cornerstone, and he directly charges with “confusion” those who use the terms idealism and materialism in any other way.

“The great basic question of all philosophy,” Engels says, “especially of modern philosophy, is that concerning the relation of thinking and being,” of spirit and nature. Having divided the philosophers into “two great camps” on this basic question, Engels shows that there is “yet another side” to this basic philosophical question, *viz.*,

“in what relation do our thoughts about the world surrounding us stand to this world itself? Is our thinking capable of the cognition of the real world? Are we able in our ideas and notions of the real world to produce a correct reflection of reality?”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> F. Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach* (quoted from the English edition, 1934, pp. 30-31—*Trans.*). Mr. V. Chernov translates the word *Spiegelbild* literally

"The overwhelming majority of philosophers give an affirmative answer to this question," says Engels, including under this head not only the materialists but also the most consistent idealists, as, for example, the absolute idealist Hegel, who considered the real world to be the realisation of some pre-mundane "absolute idea," while the human spirit, correctly apprehending the real world, apprehends in it and through it the "absolute idea."

"In addition [i.e., to the materialists and the consistent idealists] there is yet another set of different philosophers—those who question the possibility of any cognition (or at least of an exhaustive cognition) of the world. To them, among the moderns, belong Hume and Kant, and they have played a very important role in philosophical development" (p. 32).

Mr. V. Chernov, quoting these words of Engels', launches into the fray. To the word "Kant" he makes the following annotation:

"In 1888 it was rather strange to term such philosophers as Kant and especially Hume 'modern.' At that time it was more natural to hear mentioned such names as Cohen, Lange, Riehl, Laas, Liebmann, Göring, etc. But Engels, evidently, was not well versed in 'modern' philosophy" (*op. cit.*, p. 33, note 2).

Mr. V. Chernov is true to himself. Equally in economic and in philosophical questions he reminds one of Turgenev's Voroshilov,<sup>1</sup> annihilating both the ignorant Kautsky<sup>2</sup> and the ignorant Engels by merely referring to "scholarly" names! The only trouble is that all the authorities mentioned by Mr. Chernov are the very *Neo-Kantians* whom Engels refers to *on this very same page* of his *Ludwig Feuerbach* as theoretical reactionaries, who were endeavouring to resurrect the corpse of the long since refuted doctrines of Kant and Hume. The good Chernov did not understand that it is *just these authoritative* (for Machism) and muddled professors whom Engels is refuting in his argument!

Having pointed out that Hegel had already presented the "de-

(a mirror reflection), accusing Plekhanov of presenting the theory of Engels "in a very weakened form" by speaking in Russian simply of a "reflection" instead of a "mirror reflection." This is mere cavilling. *Spiegelbild* in German is also used simply in the sense of *Abbild* (reflection, image—*Trans.*).

<sup>1</sup> In the novel *Smoke*.—*Trans.*

<sup>2</sup> V. Ilyin, *The Agrarian Question and the "Critics of Marx,"* Part 1, St. Petersburg, 1908. (See Lenin, *Selected Works*, Eng. ed., Vol. XII. V. Ilyin was a pseudonym used by Lenin.—*Trans.*)

cisive" arguments against Hume and Kant, and that the additions made by Feuerbach are more ingenious than profound, Engels continues:

"The most telling refutation of this as of all other philosophical fancies (*Schrullen*) is practice, *viz.*, experiment and industry. If we are able to prove the correctness of our conception of a natural process by making it ourselves, bringing it into being out of its conditions and using it for our own purposes into the bargain, then there is an end of the Kantian incomprehensible [or ungraspable, *unfaßbaren*—this important word is omitted both in Plekhanov's translation and in Mr. V. Chernov's translation] 'thing-in-itself.' The chemical substances produced in the bodies of plants and animals remained just such 'things-in-themselves' until organic chemistry began to produce them one after another, whereupon the 'thing-in-itself' became a thing for us, as, for instance, alizarin, the colouring matter of the madder, which we no longer trouble to grow in the madder roots in the field, but produce more cheaply and simply from coal tar" (pp. 32-33).

Mr. V. Chernov, quoting this argument, finally loses patience and completely annihilates poor Engels. Listen to this:

"No Neo-Kantian will of course be surprised that from coal tar we can produce alizarin 'more cheaply and simply.' But that together with alizarin it is possible to produce from this coal tar and just as cheaply a refutation of the 'thing-in-itself' will indeed seem a wonderful and unprecedented discovery—and not to the Neo-Kantians alone.

"Engels, apparently, having learned that according to Kant the 'thing-in-itself' is unknowable, turned this theorem into its converse and concluded that everything unknown is the thing-in-itself" (p. 33).

Listen, Mr. Machian: Lie, but don't overdo it! Why, before the very eyes of the public you are distorting the very quotation from Engels you have set out to "tear to pieces," without even having grasped the point under discussion!

In the first place, it is not true that Engels "is producing a refutation of the 'thing-in-itself'" Engels said explicitly and clearly that he was refuting the *Kantian ungraspable* (or unknowable) thing-in-itself. Mr. Chernov confuses Engels' materialist conception of the existence of things independently of our consciousness. In the second place, if Kant's theorem reads that the thing-in-itself is unknowable, the "*converse*" theorem would be: the *unknowable* is the thing-in-itself. Mr. Chernov replaces the unknowable by the *unknown*, without realising that by such a substitution he has again confused and distorted the materialist view of Engels!

Mr. V. Chernov is so bewildered by the reactionaries of official philosophy whom he has taken as his mentors, that he raises an outcry against Engels *without in the least comprehending* the meaning of the example quoted. Let us try to explain to this representative of Machism what it is all about.

Engels clearly and explicitly states that he is objecting to both Hume and Kant. Yet there is no mention whatever in Hume of "unknowable things-in-themselves." What then is there in common between these two philosophers? It is that they both *in principle fence off* "the appearance" from that which appears, the perception from that which is perceived, the thing-for-us from the "thing-in-itself." Furthermore, Hume does not want to hear of the "thing-in-itself," he regards the very thought of it as philosophically inadmissible, as "metaphysics" (as the Humeans and Kantians call it); whereas Kant grants the existence of the "thing-in-itself," but declares it to be "unknowable," fundamentally different from the phenomenon, belonging to a fundamentally different realm, the realm of the "beyond" (*Jenseits*), inaccessible to knowledge, but revealed to faith.

What is the kernel of Engels' objections? Yesterday we did not know that coal tar contained alizarin. Today we learned that it does. The question is, did coal tar contain alizarin yesterday?

Of course it did. To doubt it would be to make a mockery of modern science.

And if that is so, three important epistemological conclusions follow:

(1) Things exist independently of our consciousness, independently of our perceptions, outside of us, for it is beyond doubt that alizarin existed in coal tar yesterday and it is equally beyond doubt that yesterday we knew nothing of the existence of this alizarin and received no sensations from it.

(2) There is definitely no difference in principle between the phenomenon and the thing-in-itself, and there can be no such difference. The only difference is between what is known and what is not yet known. And philosophical inventions of specific boundaries between the one and the other, inventions to the effect that the thing-in-itself is "beyond" phenomena (Kant), or that we



can or must fence ourselves off by some philosophical partition from the problem of a world which in one part or another is still unknown but which exists outside us (Hume)—all this is the sheerest nonsense, *Schrulle*, evasion, invention.

(3) In the theory of knowledge, as in every other branch of science, we must think dialectically, that is, we must not regard our knowledge as ready-made and unalterable, but must determine how *knowledge* emerges from *ignorance*, how incomplete, inexact knowledge becomes more complete and more exact.

Once we accept the point of view that human knowledge develops from ignorance, we shall find millions of examples of it just as simple as the discovery of alizarin in coal tar, millions of observations not only in the history of science and technology but in the everyday life of each and every one of us that illustrate the transformation of "things-in-themselves" into "things-for-us," the appearance of "phenomena" when our sense-organs experience a jolt from external objects, the disappearance of "phenomena" when some obstacle prevents the action upon our sense-organs of an object which we know to exist. The sole and unavoidable deduction to be made from this—a deduction which all of us make in everyday practice and which materialism deliberately places at the foundation of its epistemology—is that outside us, and independently of us, there exist objects, things and bodies and that our perceptions are images of the external world. Mach's converse theory (that bodies are complexes of sensations) is nothing but pitiful idealist nonsense. And Mr. Chernov, in his "analysis" of Engels, once more revealed his Voroshilov qualities; Engels' simple example seemed to him "strange and naïve"! He regards only *gelehrtes* fiction as genuine philosophy and is unable to distinguish professorial eclecticism from the consistent materialist theory of knowledge.

It is both impossible and unnecessary to analyse Chernov's other arguments; they all amount to the same pretentious rigmarole (like the assertion that for the materialists the atom is the thing-in-itself!). We shall note only the argument which is relevant to our discussion (an argument which has apparently led certain people astray), viz., that Marx supposedly differed from Engels.

The question at issue is Marx's *second* Thesis on Feuerbach and Plekhanov's translation of the word *Diesseitigkeit*.

Here is the second Thesis:

"The question whether objective truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory, but is a practical question. In practice man must prove the truth, *i. e.*, the reality and power, the 'this-sidedness' of his thinking. The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking which is isolated from practice is a purely scholastic question."

Instead of "prove . . . the this-sidedness of . . . thinking" (a literal translation), Plekhanov has: prove that thinking "does not stop at this side of phenomena." And Mr. V. Chernov cries:

"The contradiction between Marx and Engels is eliminated very simply. It appears as though Marx, like Engels, asserted the knowability of things-in-themselves and the 'other-sidedness' of thinking" (*loc. cit.*, p. 34, note).

What can be done with a Voroshilov whose every phrase makes confusion worse confounded! It is sheer ignorance, Mr. Victor Chernov, not to know that all materialists assert the knowability of things-in-themselves. It is ignorance, Mr. Victor Chernov, or infinite slovenliness, to skip the very *first* phrase of the thesis and not to realise that the "objective truth" (*gegenständliche Wahrheit*) of thinking *means nothing else* than the *existence* of objects (*i.e.*, "things-in-themselves") *truly* reflected by thinking. It is sheer illiteracy, Mr. Victor Chernov, to assert that from Plekhanov's paraphrase (Plekhanov gave a paraphrase and not a translation) "it appears as though" Marx defended the *other-sidedness* of thought. Because only the Humeans and the Kantians confine thought to "this side of phenomena." But for all materialists, including those of the seventeenth century whom Bishop Berkeley demolished (see Introduction), "phenomena" are "things-for-us" or *copies* of the "objects-in-themselves." Of course, Plekhanov's free paraphrase is not obligatory upon those who desire to know Marx himself, but it is obligatory to try to understand what Marx meant and not to prance about like a Voroshilov.

It is interesting to note that while among people who call themselves Socialists we encounter an unwillingness or inability to grasp the meaning of Marx's "Theses," bourgeois writers, specialists in

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix to Engels' *Ludwig Feuerbach*, p. 73.—*Trans.*

philosophy, sometimes manifest greater scrupulousness. I know of one such writer who studied the philosophy of Feuerbach and in connection with it Marx's "Theses." That writer is Albert Levy, who devoted the third chapter of the second part of his book on Feuerbach to an examination of the influence of Feuerbach on Marx.<sup>1</sup> Without going into the question whether Levy always interprets Feuerbach correctly, or how he criticises Marx from the ordinary bourgeois standpoint, we shall only quote his opinion of the philosophical content of Marx's famous "Theses." Regarding the first Thesis, Levy says:

"Marx, on the one hand, together with all earlier materialism and with Feuerbach, recognises that there are real and distinct objects outside us corresponding to our ideas of things. . . ."

As the reader sees, it was immediately clear to Albert Levy that the basic position not only of Marxian materialism but of *every* materialism, of "*all earlier*" materialism, is the recognition of real objects outside us, to which objects our ideas "correspond." This elementary truth, which holds good for *all* materialism in general, is unknown only to the Russian Machians. Levy continues:

"On the other hand, Marx expresses regret that materialism had left it to idealism to appreciate the importance of the active forces [i.e., human practice], which, according to Marx, must be wrested from idealism in order to integrate them into the materialist system. But it will of course be necessary to give these active forces the real and sensible character which idealism cannot grant them. Marx's idea, then, is the following: just as to our ideas there correspond real objects outside us, so to our phenomenal activity there corresponds a real activity outside us, an activity of things. In this sense humanity partakes of the absolute, not only through theoretical knowledge but also through practical activity; thus all human activity acquires a dignity, a nobility, that permits it to advance hand in hand with theory. Revolutionary activity henceforth acquires a metaphysical significance. . . ." (pp. 290-91).

Albert Levy is a professor. And a proper professor must inveigh against the materialists for being metaphysicians. For the idealist professors of the Humean and Kantian variety every kind of materialism is "metaphysics," because beyond the phenomenon (ap-

<sup>1</sup> Albert Levy, *La philosophie de Feuerbach et son influence sur la littérature allemande* [Feuerbach's Philosophy and His Influence on German Literature]. Paris 1904, pp. 249-338, on the influence of Feuerbach on Marx. and pp. 290-98, an examination of the "Theses."

pearance, the thing-for-us) it discerns a reality outside us. A. Levy is therefore essentially right when he says that in Marx's opinion there corresponds to the "phenomenal activity" of humanity "an activity of things," that is to say, human practice has not only a phenomenal (in the Humean and Kantian sense of the term), but an objectively real significance. The criterion of practice—as we shall show in detail in its proper place (§ 6)—has entirely different meanings for Mach and Marx. "Humanity partakes of the absolute" means that human knowledge reflects absolute truth (see below, § 5); the practice of humanity, by verifying our ideas, corroborates what in those ideas corresponds to absolute truth. A. Levy continues:

"Having reached this point, Marx naturally encounters the objections of the critics. He has admitted the existence of things-in-themselves, of which our theory is the human translation. He cannot evade the usual objection: what assurance have you of the accuracy of the translation? What proof have you that the human mind gives you an objective truth? To this objection Marx replies in his second Thesis" (p. 291).

The reader sees that Levy does not for a moment doubt that Marx recognised the existence of things-in-themselves!

## 2. "TRANSCENDENCE," OR BAZAROV "REVISES" ENGELS

But while the Russian Machian would-be Marxists diplomatically evaded *one* of the most emphatic and explicit statements of Engels, they "revised" *another statement* of his in quite the Chernov manner. However tedious and laborious the task of correcting perversions and mutilations of the meaning of quotations may be, he who wishes to speak of the Russian Machians cannot avoid it.

Here is Bazarov's revision of Engels.

In the article "On Historical Materialism,"<sup>1</sup> Engels speaks of

<sup>1</sup> This article forms the Introduction to the English edition of Engels' *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* and was translated by Engels himself into German in the *Neue Zeit*, XI, I (1892-93, No. 1). The only Russian translation, if I am not mistaken, is to be found in the symposium *Historical Materialism*, p. 162 *et seq.* Bazarov quotes the passage in the *Studies "in" the Philosophy of Marxism*, p. 64.

the English agnostics (philosophers of Hume's trend of thought) as follows:

"... Our agnostic admits that all our knowledge is based upon the information imparted to us by our senses. . ." (*Neue Zeit*, S. 18).

Let us note for the benefit of our Machians that the agnostic (Humean) also starts from *sensations* and recognises no other source of knowledge. The agnostic is a pure "*positivist*," be it said for the benefit of the adherents of the "latest positivism!"

"But, he [the agnostic] adds, how do we know that our senses give us correct representations (*Abbilder*) of the objects we perceive through them? And he proceeds to inform us that whenever he speaks of objects or their qualities he does in reality not mean these objects and qualities, of which he cannot know anything for certain, but merely the impressions which they have produced on his senses. . ." (*ibid.*).

What two lines of philosophical tendency does Engels contrast here? One line is that the senses give us faithful images of things, that we know *the things themselves*, that the outer world acts on our sense-organs. This is materialism—with which the agnostic is not in agreement. What then is the *essence* of the agnostic's line? It is that he *does not go beyond* sensations, that *he stops on this side of phenomena*, refusing to see anything "certain" beyond the boundary of sensations. About *these things themselves* (i.e., about the things-in-themselves, the "objects-in-themselves," as the materialists whom Berkeley opposed called them), we can know nothing certain—so the agnostic categorically insists. Hence, in the controversy of which Engels speaks the materialist affirms the existence and knowability of things-in-themselves. The agnostic does not even admit *the thought* of things-in-themselves and insists that we can know nothing certain about them.

It may be asked in what way the position of the agnostic as outlined by Engels differs from the position of Mach. In the "new" term "element"? But it is sheer childishness to believe that a nomenclature can change a philosophical line, that sensations when called "elements" cease to be sensations! Or does the difference lie in the "new" idea that the very same elements constitute the physical in one connection and the psychical in another? But did you

not observe that Engels' agnostic *also* puts "impressions" in place of the "things themselves"? That means that *in essence* the agnostic too differentiates between physical and psychical "*impressions*"! Here again the difference is *exclusively* one of nomenclature. When Mach says that "objects are complexes of sensations," Mach is a Berkeleian; when Mach "corrects" himself, and says that "elements" (sensations) can be physical in one connection and psychical in another, Mach is an agnostic, a Humean. Mach does not go beyond these two *lines* in his philosophy, and it requires extreme naïveté to take this muddlehead at his word and believe that he has actually "transcended" both materialism and idealism.

Engels deliberately mentions no names in his exposition, and criticises not individual representatives of Humism (professional philosophers are very prone to label as original systems the petty variations one or another of them makes in terminology or argument), but *the whole* Humean line. Engels criticises not particulars but the essential thing; he examines the *fundamental* wherein *all* Humeans *deviate* from materialism, and his criticism therefore embraces Mill, Huxley and Mach alike. Whether we say (with J. S. Mill) that matter is the permanent possibility of sensation, or (with Ernst Mach) that matter is more or less stable complexes of "elements"—sensations—we remain *within the bounds* of agnosticism, or Humism. Both standpoints, or more correctly both formulations, are *covered* by Engels' exposition of agnosticism: the agnostic does not go beyond sensations and asserts that he *cannot* know anything certain about their source, about their original, etc. And if Mach attributes such great importance to his disagreement with Mill on this question, it is because Mach comes under Engels' characterisation of a professor-in-ordinary: *Flohnacker*. Ay, gentlemen, you have only cracked a flea by making petty corrections and by altering terminology instead of entirely abandoning the basic, half-hearted standpoint.

And how does the materialist Engels—at the beginning of the article Engels explicitly and emphatically contrasts his materialism to agnosticism—refute the foregoing arguments?

"Now, this line of reasoning seems undoubtedly hard to beat by mere argumentation. But before there was argumentation there was action. *Im Anfang*

*war die Tat.*<sup>1</sup> And human action had solved the difficulty long before human ingenuity invented it. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. From the moment we turn to our own use these objects, according to the qualities we perceive in them, we put to an infallible test the correctness or otherwise of our sense-perceptions. If these perceptions have been wrong, then our estimate of the use to which an object can be turned must also be wrong, and our attempt must fail. But if we succeed in accomplishing our aim, if we find that the object does agree with our idea of it, and does answer the purpose we intended it for, then that is positive proof that our perceptions of it and of its qualities, so far, agree with reality outside ourselves" (*ibid.*).

Thus, the materialist theory, the theory of the reflection of objects by our mind, is here presented with absolute clarity: things exist outside us. Our perceptions and ideas are their images. Verification of these images, differentiation between true and false images, is given by practice. But let us listen to a little more of Engels (Bazarov at this point ends his quotation from Engels, or rather from Plekhanov, for he deems it unnecessary to deal with Engels himself):

"And whenever we find ourselves face to face with a failure, then we generally are not long in making out the cause that made us fail; we find that the perception upon which we acted was either incomplete and superficial, or combined with the results of other perceptions in a way not warranted by them [the Russian translation in *On Historical Materialism* is incorrect]—what we call defective reasoning. So long as we take care to train and to use our senses properly, and to keep our action within the limits prescribed by perceptions properly made and properly used, so long we shall find that the result of our action proves the conformity (*Uebereinstimmung*) of our perceptions with the objective (*gegenständlich*) nature of the things perceived. Not in one single instance, so far, have we been led to the conclusion that our sense-perceptions, scientifically controlled, induce in our minds ideas respecting the outer world that are, by their very nature, at variance with reality, or that there is an inherent incompatibility between the outer world and our sense-perceptions of it.

"But then come the Neo-Kantian agnostics and say:" (*ibid.*).

We shall leave to another time the examination of the arguments of the Neo-Kantians. Let us remark here that anybody in the least acquainted with the subject, or even the least bit attentive, cannot fail to understand that Engels is here expounding the very same materialism against which the Machians are always and everywhere doing battle. And now just watch the manner in which Bazarov revises Engels:

<sup>1</sup> "In the beginning was the deed," from Goethe's *Faust*, Part I.—*Trans.*

"Here," writes Bazarov in connection with the fragment of the quotation we have given, "Engels is actually attacking Kantian idealism. . . ."

It is not true. Bazarov is muddling things. In the passage which he quoted, and which is quoted by us more fully, there is *not a syllable* either about Kantianism or about idealism. Had Bazarov really read the whole of Engels' article, he could not have avoided seeing that Engels speaks of Neo-Kantianism, and of Kant's whole line, *only in the next* paragraph, just where we broke off our quotation. And had Bazarov attentively read and reflected on the fragment he himself quotes, he could not have avoided seeing that in the arguments of the agnostic which Engels here refutes there is *not a trace* of either idealism or Kantianism; for idealism begins only when the philosopher says that things are our sensations, while Kantianism begins when the philosopher says that the thing-in-itself exists but is unknowable. Bazarov confuses Kantianism with Humism; and he confuses them because, being himself a semi-Berkeleyan, a semi-Humean of the Machian sect, he does not understand (as will be shown in detail below) the distinction between the Humean and the materialist opposition to Kantianism.

"But, alas!" continues Bazarov, "his argument is aimed against Plekhanov's philosophy just as much as it is against Kantian philosophy. In the school of Plekhanov-Orthodox, as Bogdanov has already pointed out, there is a fatal misunderstanding regarding 'consciousness.' To Plekhanov, as to all idealists, it seems that everything perceptually given, i.e., cognised, is 'subjective'; that to proceed only from what is factually given is to be a solipsist; that *real being* can be found only beyond the boundaries of everything that is immediately given. . ." (*op. cit.*, p. 65).

This is entirely in the spirit of Chernov and his assurances that Liebknecht was a true-Russian Narodnik! If Plekhanov is an idealist who has deserted Engels, then why is it that you, who are supposedly an adherent of Engels, are not a materialist? This is nothing but wretched mystification, Comrade Bazarov! By means of the Machian expression "*immediately given*" you begin to confuse the difference between agnosticism, idealism and materialism. Don't you understand that such expressions as the "*immediately given*" and the "*factually given*" are part of the rigmarole of the Machians, the immanentists, and the other reactionaries in philos-



ophy, a masquerade, whereby the agnostic (and sometimes, as in Mach's case, the idealist too) disguises himself in the cloak of the materialist? For the materialist the "factually given" is the outer world, the image of which is our sensations. For the idealist the "factually given" is sensation, and the outer world is declared to be a "complex of sensations." For the agnostic the "immediately given" is also sensation, but the agnostic *does not go on* either to the materialist recognition of the reality of the outer world, or to the idealist recognition of the world as our sensation. Therefore your statement that "real being [according to Plekhanov] can be found only beyond the boundaries of *everything that is immediately given*" is sheer nonsense and inevitably follows from your Machian position. But while you have a perfect right to adopt any position you choose, including a Machian one, you have no right to falsify Engels when you speak of him. And from Engels' words it is perfectly clear that for the materialist real being lies *beyond* the "sense-perceptions," impressions and ideas of man, while for the agnostic it is impossible to go *beyond* these perceptions. Bazarov believed Mach, Avenarius, and Schuppe when they said that the "immediately" (or factually) given "connects" the perceiving self with the perceived environment in the famous "indissoluble" co-ordination, and endeavours, unobserved by the reader, to impute this nonsense to the materialist Engels!

"... It is as though the foregoing passage from Engels was deliberately written by him in a very popular and accessible form in order to dissipate this idealist misunderstanding. . ." (p. 65).

Not for naught was Bazarov a pupil of Avenarius! He continues his mystification: under the pretence of combating idealism (of which Engels is not speaking here), he smuggles in the *idealist* "co-ordination." Not bad, Comrade Bazarov!

"... The agnostic asks, how do we know that our subjective senses give us a correct presentation of objects?" (p. 65).

You are muddling things, Comrade Bazarov! Engels himself does not speak of, and does not even ascribe to his foe the agnostic, such nonsense as "*subjective*" senses. There are no other senses except human, *i.e.*, "*subjective*" senses, for we are speaking from

the standpoint of man and not of a hobgoblin. You are again trying to impute Machism to Engels, to imply that he says: the agnostic regards senses, or, to be more precise, sensations, as *only* subjective (which the agnostic does *not* do!), while we and Avenarius have "co-ordinated" the object into an indissoluble connection with the subject. Not bad, Comrade Bazarov!

"... But what do you term 'correct'?" Engels rejoins. "That is correct which is confirmed by our practice; and consequently, since our sense-perceptions are confirmed by experience, they are not 'subjective,' that is, they are not arbitrary, or illusory, but correct and *real* as such. . . ."

You are muddling things, Comrade Bazarov! You have substituted for the question of the existence of things outside our sensations, perceptions, ideas, the question of the criterion of the correctness of our ideas of "these same" things, or, more precisely, you are *hedging* the former question with the help of the latter. But Engels says explicitly and clearly that what distinguishes him from the agnostic is not only the agnostic's doubt as to whether our images are "correct," but also the agnostic's doubt as to whether we may speak of the *things themselves*, as to whether we may have "certain" knowledge of their existence. Why did Bazarov resort to this juggling? In order to obscure and confound what is the *basic* question for materialism (and for Engels, as a materialist), *viz.*, the question of the existence of things outside our mind, which, by acting on our sense-organs, evoke sensations. It is impossible to be a materialist without answering this question in the affirmative; but one can be a materialist and still differ on what constitutes the criterion of the correctness of the images presented by our senses.

And Bazarov muddles matters still more when he attributes to Engels, in the dispute with the agnostic, the absurd and ignorant expression that our sense-perceptions are confirmed by "*experience*." Engels did not use and could not have used this word *here*, for Engels *was well aware* that the idealist Berkeley, the agnostic Hume and the materialist Diderot all had recourse to experience.

"... Inside the limits within which we have to do with objects in practice, perceptions of the object and of its properties coincide with a reality existing

*outside us.* 'To coincide' is somewhat different from being a 'hieroglyphic.' 'They coincide' means that, within the given limits, the sense-perception is [Bazarov's italics] the reality existing outside us. . . ."

The end crowns the work! Engels has been treated à la Mach. fried and served with a Machian sauce. But take care you do not choke, worthy cooks!

"Sense-perception *is* the reality existing outside us!" This is just the fundamental absurdity, the fundamental muddle and falsity of Machism, from which flows all the rest of the balderdash of this philosophy and for which Mach and Avenarius have been embraced by those arrant reactionaries and preachers of clericalism, the immanentists. However much V. Bazarov wriggled, however cunning and diplomatic he was in evading ticklish points, in the end he gave himself away and betrayed his true Machian character! To say that "sense-perception *is* the reality existing outside us" *is to return to Humism, or even Berkeleianism*, concealing itself in the fog of "co-ordination." This is either an idealist lie or the subterfuge of the agnostic, Comrade Bazarov, for sense-perception *is not* the reality existing outside us, it is only the *image* of that reality. Are you trying to make capital of the ambiguous Russian word *soupadat*?<sup>1</sup> Are you trying to lead the unsophisticated reader to believe that "to coincide" here means "to be identical," and not "to correspond to"? That means basing one's falsification of Engels à la Mach on a perversion of the meaning of a quotation, and nothing more.

Take the German original and you will find there the words *stimmen mit*, which means to correspond with, "to voice with"—the latter translation is literal, for *Stimme* means voice. The words "*stimmen mit*" cannot mean "to coincide" in the sense of "to be identical." And even for the reader who does not know German but who reads Engels with the least bit of attention, it is perfectly clear, it cannot be otherwise than clear, that Engels throughout his whole argument treats the expression "sense-perception" as the *image* (*Abbild*) of the reality existing outside us, and that therefore the word "coincide" can be used in Russian exclusively in the sense of "correspondence," "concurrence," etc. To attribute

<sup>1</sup> *Soupadat*—to coincide.—*Trans.*

to Engels the thought that "sense-perception is the reality existing outside us" is such a pearl of Machian distortion, such a flagrant attempt to palm off agnosticism and idealism as materialism, that one must admit that Bazarov has broken all records!

One asks, how can sane people in sound mind and judgment assert that "sense-perception [within what limits is not important] is the reality existing outside us"? The earth is a reality existing outside us. It cannot "coincide" (in the sense of being identical) with our sense-perception, or be in indissoluble co-ordination with it, or be a "complex of elements" in another connection identical with sensation; for the earth existed at a time when there were no men, no sense-organs, no matter organised in that superior form in which its property of sensation is in any way clearly perceptible.

That is just the point, that the tortuous theories of "co-ordination," "introjection," and the newly-discovered world-elements which we analysed in Chapter I serve to cover up this idealist absurdity. Bazarov's formulation, so inadvertently and incautiously thrown off by him, is excellent in that it patently reveals that crying absurdity, which otherwise it would have been necessary to excavate from the piles of erudite, pseudo-scientific, professorial rigmarole.

All praise to you, Comrade Bazarov! We shall erect a monument to you in your lifetime. On one side we shall engrave your dictum, and on the other: "To the Russian Machian who dug the grave of Machism among the Russian Marxists!"

\* \* \*

We shall speak separately of the two points touched on by Bazarov in the above-mentioned quotation, *viz.*, the criteria of practice of the agnostics (Machians included) and the materialists, and the difference between the theory of reflection and the theory of symbols (or hieroglyphics). For the present we shall continue to quote a little more from Bazarov:

"... But what is beyond these boundaries? Of this Engels does not say a word. He nowhere manifests a desire to perform that 'transcendence,' that stepping beyond the boundaries of the perceptually-given world, which lies at the foundation of Plekhanov's 'theory of knowledge.' . . ."

Beyond what "boundaries"? Does he mean the boundaries of the "co-ordination" of Mach and Avenarius, which supposedly indissolubly merges the self with the environment, the subject with the object? The very question put by Bazarov is devoid of meaning. But if he had put the question in an intelligible way, he would have clearly seen that the external world lies "beyond the boundaries" of man's sensations, perceptions and ideas. But the word "transcendence" once more betrays Bazarov. It is a specifically Kantian and Humean "fancy" to erect *in principle* a boundary between the *appearance* and the *thing-in-itself*. To pass from the appearance, or, if you will, from our sensation, perception, etc., to the thing existing outside of perception is a *transcendence*, Kant says; and we permit this *transcendence* not to knowledge but to faith. We do not permit transcendence at all, Hume objects. And the Kantians, like the Humeans, call the materialists *transcendental* realists, "metaphysicians," who effect an illegitimate *passage* (in Latin, *transcensus*) from one region to another, fundamentally different, region. In the works of the contemporary professors of philosophy who follow the reactionary line of Kant and Hume, you may encounter (take only the names enumerated by Voroshilov-Chernov) innumerable repetitions made in a thousand keys of the charge that materialism is "metaphysical" and "transcendent." Bazarov borrowed from the reactionary professors both the word and the process of thought, and flourishes them in the name of "recent positivism"! As a matter of fact the very idea of the "transcendence," *i.e.*, of a boundary *in principle* between the appearance and the thing-in-itself, is a nonsensical idea of the agnostics (Humeans and Kantians included) and the idealists. We have already explained this in connection with Engels' example of alizarin, and we shall explain it again in the words of Feuerbach and Joseph Dietzgen. But let us first finish with Bazarov's "revision" of Engels:

"... In one place in his *Anti-Dühring*, Engels says that 'being' outside of the realm of sense-perception is an *offene Frage*, *i.e.*, a question for the answer to which, or even for the asking of which we have no data."

Bazarov repeats this argument after the German Machian, Friedrich Adler. This last example is perhaps even worse than the

"sense-perception" which "is the reality existing outside us." In his *Anti-Dühring* Engels says:

"The unity of the world does not consist in its being, although its being is a pre-condition of its unity, as it must certainly first *be*, before it can be *one*. Being, indeed, is always an open question (*offene Frage*) beyond the point where our sphere of observation (*Gesichtskreis*) ends. The real unity of the world consists in its materiality, and this is proved not by a few juggling phrases, but by a long and protracted development of philosophy and natural science."<sup>1</sup>

Behold the new hash our cook has prepared. Engels is speaking of being *beyond* the point where our sphere of observation ends, for instance, the existence of men on Mars. Obviously, such being is indeed an open question. And Bazarov, as though deliberately refraining from giving the full quotation, paraphrases Engels as saying that "*being outside the realm of sense-perception*" is an open question. This is the sheerest nonsense, and Engels is here being saddled with the views of those professors of philosophy whom Bazarov is accustomed to take at their word and whom Dietzgen justly called the graduated flunkies of clericalism or fideism. Indeed, fideism positively asserts that something does exist "*beyond the world of perception*." The materialists, in agreement with natural science, vigorously deny this. An intermediate position is held by those professors, Kantians, Humeans (including the Machians), etc., "who have found the truth outside materialism and idealism" and who "compromise," saying: it is an open question. Had Engels ever said anything like this, it would be a shame and disgrace to call oneself a Marxist. . . .

But enough! Half a page of quotation from Bazarov presents such a complete tangle that we are obliged to content ourselves with what has already been said and not to continue following all the waverings of Machian thought.

### 3. L. FEUERBACH AND J. DIETZGEN ON THE THING-IN-ITSELF

To show how absurd are the assertions of our Machians that the materialists Marx and Engels denied the existence of "things-in-themselves" (i.e., things outside our sensations, perceptions, and so

<sup>1</sup> F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, pp. 52-53.—*Trans.*

forth) and the possibility of their cognition, and that they admitted the existence of an absolute boundary between the appearance and the thing-in-itself, we shall give a few more quotations from Feuerbach. The whole trouble with our Machians is that they set about parroting the words of the reactionary philosophers on dialectical materialism without themselves knowing anything either of dialectics or of materialism.

"Modern philosophical spiritualism," says Feuerbach, "which calls itself idealism, utters the annihilating, in its own opinion, stricture against materialism that it is dogmatism, viz., that it starts from the sensuous (*sinnlichen*) world as though from an undisputed (*ausgemachte*) objective truth, and assumes that it is a world in itself (*an sich*), i.e., as existing without us, while in reality the world is only a product of spirit" (*Sämtliche Werke*, Bd. X, 1866, S. 185).

This seems clear enough. The world in itself is a world that exists *without us*. This materialism of Feuerbach's, like the materialism of the seventeenth century contested by Bishop Berkeley, consisted in the recognition that "objects-in-themselves" exist outside our mind. The *an sich* (of itself, or in itself) of Feuerbach is the absolute contrary of the *an sich* of Kant. Let us recall the excerpt from Feuerbach already quoted, where he rebukes Kant because for the latter the "thing-in-itself" is an "abstraction without reality." For Feuerbach the "thing-in-itself" is an "abstraction *with* reality," that is, a world existing outside us, completely knowable and fundamentally not different from "appearance."

Feuerbach very ingeniously and clearly explains how ridiculous it is to postulate a "transcendence" from the world of phenomena to the world in itself, a sort of impassable gulf created by the priests and taken over from them by the professors of philosophy. Here is one of his explanations:

"Of course, the products of fantasy are also products of nature, for the force of fantasy, like all other human forces, is in the last analysis (*zuletzt*) both in its basis and in its origin a force of nature; nevertheless, a human being is a being distinguished from the sun, moon and stars, from stones, animals and plants, in a word, from those beings (*Wesen*) which he designates by the general name, 'nature'; and consequently, man's presentations (*Bilder*) of the sun, moon and stars and the other beings of nature (*Naturwesen*), although these presentations are products of nature, are yet products *distinct* from their objects in nature" (*Werke*, Bd. VII, Stuttgart, 1903, S. 516).

The objects of our ideas are distinct from our ideas, the thing-in-itself is distinct from the thing-for-us, for the latter is only a part, or only one aspect, of the former, just as man himself is only a fragment of the nature reflected in his ideas.

"... The taste-nerve is just as much a product of nature as salt is, but it does not follow from this that the taste of salt is directly as such an objective property of salt, that what salt is merely as an object of sensation it also is in itself (*an und für sich*), hence that the sensation of salt on the tongue is a property of salt thought of without sensation (*des ohne Empfindung gedachten Salzes*). . ." (p. 516).

And several pages earlier:

"Saltiness, as a taste, is the subjective expression of an objective property of salt" (*ibid.*, p. 514).

Sensation is the result of the action of a thing-in-itself, existing objectively outside us, upon our sense-organs—such is Feuerbach's theory. Sensation is a subjective image of the objective world, of the world *an und für sich*.

"... So is man also a being of nature (*Naturwesen*), like sun, star, plant, animal, and stone; nevertheless, he is distinct from nature, and, consequently, nature in the head and heart of man is distinct from nature outside the human head and heart" (p. 516).

"... However, this object, *viz.*, man, is the only object in which, according to the statement of the idealists themselves, the requirement of the 'identity of object and subject' is realised; for man is an object whose equality and unity with my being are beyond all possible doubt. . . . And is not one man for another, even the most intimate, an object of fantasy, of the imagination? Does not each man comprehend another in his own way, after his own mind (*in und nach seinem Sinne*)? . . . And if even between man and man, between mind and mind, there is a very considerable difference which it is impossible to ignore, how much greater must be the difference between an unthinking, non-human, dissimilar (to us) being in itself (*Wesen an sich*) and the same being as we think of it, perceive it and apprehend it?" (pp. 517-18).

All the mysterious, sage and subtle distinctions between the phenomenon and the thing-in-itself are sheer philosophical balderdash. In practice each one of us has observed time without number the simple and palpable transformation of the "thing-in-itself" into phenomenon, into the "thing-for-us." It is precisely this transformation that is cognition. The "doctrine" of Machism that since we know *only* sensations we cannot know of the *existence* of any-



thing beyond the bounds of sensation is an old sophistry of idealist and agnostic philosophy served up with a new sauce.

Joseph Dietzgen is a dialectical materialist. We shall show below that his mode of expression is often inexact, that he is often not free from confusion, a fact which has been seized upon by various foolish people (Eugene Dietzgen among them) and of course by our Machians. But they did not take the trouble or were unable to analyse the dominant line of his philosophy and to disengage his materialism from alien elements.

"Let us take the world as the thing-in-itself," says Dietzgen in his *Das Wesen der menschlichen Kopfarbeit*.<sup>1</sup> "We shall easily see that the 'world in itself' and the world as it *appears* to us, the phenomena of the world, differ from each other only as the whole differs from its parts" (German ed., 1903, p. 65).

"A phenomenon differs no more and no less from the thing which produces it than the ten-mile stretch of a road differs from the road itself" (pp. 71-72).

There is not, nor can there be, any essential difference here, any "transcendence," or "innate disagreement." But a difference there is, to be sure, *viz.*, the passage *beyond the bounds* of sense-perceptions to the *existence* of things outside us.

"We learn by experience (*wir erfahren*)," says Dietzgen in his "*Streifzügen eines Sozialisten in das Gebiet der Erkenntnistheorie*,"<sup>2</sup> "that each experience is only a *part* of that which, in the words of Kant, passes beyond the bounds of all experience. . . . For a consciousness that has become conscious of its own nature, each particle, be it of dust, or of stone, or of wood, is something *unknowable in its full extent* (*Unauskennliches*), i.e., each particle is inexhaustible material for the human faculty of cognition and, consequently, something which passes beyond experience" (*Kleinere philosophische Schriften*,<sup>3</sup> 1903, S. 199).

You see: *in the words of Kant*, i.e., adopting—exclusively for purposes of popularisation, for purposes of contrast—Kant's *erroneous*, confusing terminology, Dietzgen recognises the passage "beyond experience." This is a good example of what the Machians are grasping at when they pass from materialism to agnosticism:

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Dietzgen, *The Nature of the Workings of the Human Mind*, Stuttgart, 1903.—*Trans.*

<sup>2</sup> "Excursions of a Socialist into the Domain of the Theory of Knowledge."—*Trans.*

<sup>3</sup> *Smaller Philosophical Essays*, Stuttgart, 1903.—*Trans.*

you see, they say, we do not wish to go "beyond experience"; for us "sense-perception is the reality existing outside us."

"Unhealthy mysticism [Dietzgen objects precisely to such a philosophy] unscientifically separates the absolute truth from the relative truth. It makes of the thing as it appears and the 'thing-in-itself,' that is, of the appearance and truth, two categories which differ *toto coelo* [completely, fundamentally] from each other and are not 'contained sublated' in any common category" (p. 200).

We can now judge the knowledge and ingenuity of Bogdanov, the Russian Machian, who does not wish to acknowledge himself a Machian and wishes to be regarded as a Marxist in philosophy.

"A golden mean [between "panpsychism and panmaterialism"] has been adopted by materialists of a more critical shade who have rejected the *absolute* unknowability of the 'thing-in-itself,' but at the same time regard it as being *fundamentally* [Bogdanov's italics] different from the 'phenomenon' and, therefore, always only dimly discernible in it, beyond experience as far as its content is concerned [that is, presumably, as far as the "elements" are concerned, which are not the same as elements of experience], but yet lying within the bounds of what is called the forms of experience, i.e., time, space and causality. Such is approximately the standpoint of the French materialists of the eighteenth century and among the modern philosophers—Engels and his Russian follower, Belov"<sup>1</sup> (*Empirio-Monism*, Bk. II, 2nd ed., 1907, pp. 40-41).

This is a complete muddle.

(1) The materialists of the *seventeenth century*, against whom Berkeley argues, hold that "objects in themselves" are absolutely knowable, for our presentations, ideas, are only copies or reflections of those objects, which exist "outside the mind" (see *Introduction*).

(2) *Feuerbach*, and J. Dietzgen after him, vigorously dispute any "fundamental" difference between the thing-in-itself and the phenomenon, and Engels disposes of this view by his brief example of the transformation of the "thing-in-itself" into the "thing-for-us."

(3) Finally, to maintain that the materialists regard things-in-themselves as "always only dimly discernible in the phenomenon" is sheer nonsense, as we have seen from Engels' refutation of the agnostic.

The reason for Bogdanov's distortion of materialism lies in

<sup>1</sup> A pseudonym of Plekhanov.—*Trans.*

his failure to understand the relation of absolute truth to relative truth (of which we shall speak later). As regards the "outside-of-experience" thing-in-itself and the "elements of experience," these are already the beginnings of the Machian muddle, of which we have already said enough.

Parroting the incredible nonsense uttered by the reactionary professors about the materialists, disavowing Engels in 1907, and attempting to "revise" Engels into agnosticism in 1908—such is the philosophy of the "recent positivism" of the Russian Machians!

#### 4. DOES OBJECTIVE TRUTH EXIST?

Bogdanov declares:

"As I understand it, Marxism contains a denial of the unconditional objectivity of any truth whatsoever, the denial of all eternal truths" (*Empirio-Monism*, Bk. III, pp. iv-v).

What is meant by "unconditional objectivity"? "Truth for all eternity" is "an objective truth in the absolute meaning of the word," says Bogdanov in the same passage, and agrees to recognise "objective truth only within the limits of a given epoch."

Two questions are obviously confused here:

(1) Is there such a thing as objective truth, that is, can human ideas have a content that does not depend on a subject, that does not depend either on a human being or on humanity?

(2) If so, can human ideas, which give expression to objective truth, express it all at one time, as a whole, unconditionally, absolutely, or only approximately, relatively? This second question is a question of the relation of absolute truth to relative truth.

Bogdanov replies to the second question clearly, explicitly and definitely by rejecting even the slightest admission of absolute truth and by accusing Engels of *eclecticism* for making such an admission. Of this discovery of eclecticism in Engels by A. Bogdanov we shall speak separately later on. For the present we shall confine ourselves to the first question, which Bogdanov, without saying so explicitly, likewise answers in the negative—for although it is possible to deny the element of relativity in one or another human idea without denying the existence of objective truth, it is

impossible to deny absolute truth without denying the existence of objective truth.

" . . . The criterion of objective truth," writes Bogdanov a little further on (p. ix), "in Beltov's sense, does not exist: truth is an ideological form, an organising form of human experience. . . ."

Neither "Beltov's sense"—for it is a question of one of the fundamental philosophical problems and not of Beltov—nor the *criterion* of truth—which must be treated separately, without confounding it with the question of whether objective truth *exists*—has anything to do with the case here. Bogdanov's negative answer to the latter question is clear: if truth is *only* an ideological form, then there can be no truth independent of the subject, of humanity, for neither Bogdanov nor we know any other ideology but human ideology. And Bogdanov's negative answer emerges still more clearly from the second half of his statement: if truth is a form of human experience, then there can be no truth independent of humanity; there can be no objective truth.

Bogdanov's denial of objective truth is agnosticism and subjectivism. The absurdity of this denial is evident even from the single example of a scientific historical truth quoted above. Natural science leaves no room for doubt that its assertion that the earth existed prior to man is a truth. This is entirely compatible with the materialist theory of knowledge: the existence of the thing reflected independent of the reflector (the independence of the external world from the mind) is a fundamental tenet of materialism. The assertion made by science that the earth existed prior to man is an objective truth. This proposition of natural science is incompatible with the philosophy of the Machians and with their doctrine of truth: if truth is an organising form of human experience, then the assertion of the earth's existence *outside* human experience cannot be true.

But that is not all. If truth is only an organising form of human experience, then the teaching, say, of Catholicism is also true. For there is not the slightest doubt that Catholicism is an "organising form of human experience." Bogdanov himself senses the crying falsity of his theory and it is extremely interesting to watch how

he attempts to extricate himself from the swamp into which he has fallen.

"The basis of objectivity," we read in Book I of *Empirio-Monism*, "must lie in the sphere of *collective* experience. We term those data of experience objective which have the same vital meaning for us and for other people, those data upon which not only we construct our activities without contradiction, but upon which, we are convinced, other people must also base themselves in order to avoid contradiction. The objective character of the physical world consists in the fact that it exists not for me personally, but for everybody [that is not true! It exists independently of everybody!], and has a definite meaning for everybody, the same, I am convinced, as for me. The objectivity of the physical series is its *universal significance*" [p. 25, Bogdanov's italics]. "The objectivity of the physical bodies we encounter in our experience is in the last analysis established by the mutual verification and co-ordination of the utterances of various people. In general, the physical world is socially-co-ordinated, socially-harmonised, in a word, *socially-organised experience*" (p. 36, Bogdanov's italics).

We shall not repeat that this is a fundamentally untrue, idealist definition, that the physical world exists independently of humanity and of human experience, that the physical world existed at a time when no "sociality" and no "organisation" of human experience was possible, and so forth. We shall now stop to expose the Machian philosophy from another aspect. Objectivity is so defined that religious doctrines, which undoubtedly possess a "universal significance," acceptance, and so forth, come under the definition. But listen to Bogdanov again:

"We remind the reader once more that 'objective' experience is by no means the same as 'social' experience. . . . Social experience is far from being altogether socially organised and contains various contradictions, so that certain of its parts do not agree with others. Sprites and hobgoblins may exist in the sphere of social experience of a given people or of a given group of people—for example, the peasantry; but they need not therefore be included under socially-organised or objective experience, for they do not harmonise with the rest of collective experience and do not fit in with its organising forms, for example, with the chain of causality" (p. 45).

Of course it is very gratifying that Bogdanov himself "does not include" the social experience in respect to sprites and hobgoblins under objective experience. But this well-meant amendment in the spirit of anti-fideism by no means corrects the fundamental error of Bogdanov's whole position. Bogdanov's definition of objectivity and of the physical world completely falls to the ground, since the

religious doctrine has "universal significance" to a greater degree than the scientific doctrine; the greater part of mankind cling to the former doctrine to this day. Catholicism has been "socially organised, harmonised and co-ordinated" by centuries of development; it "*fits in*" with the "chain of causality" in the most indisputable manner; for religious did not originate without cause, it is not by accident that they retain their hold over the masses under modern conditions, and that professors of philosophy adapt themselves to them quite "lawfully." If this undoubtedly "universally significant" and undoubtedly highly-organised social and religious experience does "not harmonise" with the "experience" of science, it is because there is a fundamental difference between the two, which Bogdanov obliterated when he rejected objective truth. And however much Bogdanov tries to "correct" himself by saying that fideism, or clericalism, does not harmonise with science, the undeniable fact remains that Bogdanov's denial of objective truth completely "harmonises" with fideism. Contemporary fideism does not reject science; all it rejects is the "exaggerated claims" of science, to wit, its claim to objective truth. If objective truth exists (as the materialists think), if natural science, reflecting the outer world in human "experience," is alone capable of giving us objective truth, then all fideism is absolutely refuted. But if there is no objective truth, if truth (including scientific truth) is only an organising form of human experience, then this in itself is an admission of the fundamental premise of clericalism, the door is thrown open for it, and a place is cleared for the "organising forms" of religious experience.

The question arises, does this denial of objective truth belong personally to Bogdanov, who refuses to own himself a Machian, or does it follow from the fundamental teachings of Mach and Avenarius? The second is the only possible answer to the question. If only sensation exists in the world (Avenarius in 1876), if bodies are complexes of sensations (Mach, in the *Analyse der Empfindungen*), then we are obviously confronted with a philosophical subjectivism which inevitably leads to the denial of objective truth. And if sensations are called "elements" which in one connection give rise to the physical and in another to the psychical, this, as

we have seen, only confuses but does not reject the fundamental point of departure of empirio-criticism. Avenarius and Mach recognise sensations as the source of our knowledge. Consequently, they adopt the standpoint of empiricism (all knowledge derives from experience) or sensationalism (all knowledge derives from sensations). But this standpoint gives rise to the difference between the fundamental philosophical trends, idealism and materialism, and does not eliminate that difference, no matter in what "new" verbal garb ("elements") you clothe it. Both the solipsist, that is, the subjective idealist, and the materialist may regard sensations as the source of our knowledge. Both Berkeley and Diderot started from Locke. The first premise of the theory of knowledge undoubtedly is that the sole source of our knowledge is sensation. Having recognised the first premise, Mach confuses the second important premise, *i.e.*, regarding the objective reality that is given to man in his sensations, or that forms the source of man's sensations. Starting from sensations, one may follow the line of subjectivism, which leads to solipsism ("bodies are complexes or combinations of sensations"), or the line of objectivism, which leads to materialism (sensations are images of objects, of the external world). For the first point of view, *i.e.*, agnosticism, or, pushed a little further, subjective idealism, there can be no objective truth. For the second point of view, *i.e.*, materialism, the recognition of objective truth is essential. This old philosophical question of the two trends, or rather, of the two possible deductions from the premises of empiricism and sensationalism, is not solved by Mach, it is not eliminated or overcome by him, but is *muddled* by verbal trickery with the word "element," and the like. Bogdanov's denial of objective truth is an inevitable consequence of Machism as a whole, and not a deviation from it.

Engels in his *Ludwig Feuerbach* calls Hume and Kant philosophers "who question the possibility of any cognition (or at least of an exhaustive cognition) of the world."<sup>1</sup> Engels, therefore, lays stress on what is common both to Hume and Kant, and not on what divides them. Engels states further that "what is decisive in the

<sup>1</sup> *Ludwig Feuerbach*, p. 32.—*Trans.*

refutation of this [Humean and Kantian] view has already been said by Hegel.”<sup>1</sup> In this connection it seems to me not uninteresting to note that Hegel, declaring *materialism* to be “a consistent system of empiricism,” wrote:

“For empiricism the external (*das Aeüßerliche*) in general is the truth, and if then a supersensible too be admitted, nevertheless knowledge of it cannot occur (*soll doch eine Erkenntnis desselben [d. h. des Uebersinnlichen] nicht stattfinden können*) and one must keep exclusively to what belongs to perception (*das der Wahrnehmung Angehörige*). However, this principle in its realisation (*Durchführung*) produced what was subsequently termed *materialism*. This materialism regards matter, as such, as the truly objective (*das wahrhaft Objektive*).”<sup>2</sup>

All knowledge comes from experience, from sensation, from perception. That is true. But the question arises, does *objective reality* “belong to perception,” i.e., is it the source of perception? If you answer yes, you are a materialist. If you answer no, you are inconsistent and will inevitably arrive at subjectivism, or agnosticism, irrespective of whether you deny the knowability of the thing-in-itself, or the objectivity of time, space and causality (with Kant), or whether you do not even permit the thought of a thing-in-itself (with Hume). The inconsistency of your empiricism, of your philosophy of experience, will in that case lie in the fact that you deny the objective content of experience, the objective truth of experimental knowledge.

Those who hold to the line of Kant and Hume (Mach and Avenarius included, in so far as they are not pure Berkeleians) call us, the materialists, “metaphysicians” because we recognise objective reality which is given us in experience, because we recognise an objective source of our sensations independent of man. We materialists follow Engels in calling the Kantians and Humeans *agnostics*, because they deny objective reality as the source of our sensations. Agnostic is a Greek word: *a* in Greek means “no,” *gnosis* “knowledge.” The agnostic says: *I do not know* if there is an objective reality which is reflected, imaged by our sensations;

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> Hegel, “*Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*” [“Encyclopædia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline”], *Werke*, 1840, Bd. VI, S. 83. Vgl. S. 122.



I declare there is no way of knowing this (see the words of Engels above quoted setting forth the position of the agnostic). Hence the denial of objective truth by the agnostic, and the tolerance—the philistine, cowardly tolerance—of the dogmas regarding sprites, hobgoblins, Catholic saints, and the like. Mach and Avenarius, pretentiously resorting to a “new” terminology, a supposedly “new” point of view, repeat, in fact, although in a confused and muddled way, the reply of the agnostic: on the one hand, bodies are complexes of sensations (pure subjectivism, pure Berkeleianism); on the other hand, if we rechristen our sensations “elements,” we may think of them as existing independently of our sense-organs!

The Machians love to assert that they are philosophers who completely trust the evidence of our sense-organs, who regard the world as actually being what it seems to us to be, full of sounds, colours, etc., whereas to the materialists, they say, the world is dead, devoid of sound and colour, and in its reality different from what it seems to be, and so forth. Such assertions are indulged in by J. Petzoldt, both in his *Einführung in die Philosophie der reinen Erfahrung* and in his *Weltproblem von positivistischem Standpunkte aus*<sup>1</sup> (1906). Petzoldt is parroted by Mr. Victor Chernov, who waxes enthusiastic over the “new” idea. But, in fact, the Machians are subjectivists and agnostics, for they *do not sufficiently* trust the evidence of our sense-organs and are inconsistent in their sensationalism. They do not recognise objective reality, independent of humanity, as the source of our sensations. They do not regard sensations as the true copy of this objective reality, thereby directly conflicting with natural science and throwing the door open for fideism. On the contrary, for the materialist the world is richer, livelier, more varied than it actually seems, for with each step in the development of science new aspects are discovered. For the materialist, sensations are images of the ultimate and sole objective reality, ultimate not in the sense that it has already been explored to the end, but in the sense that there is not and cannot be any other. This view irrevocably closes the door not only to

<sup>1</sup> J. Petzoldt, *The World Problem From the Positivist Standpoint*, Leipzig, 1906.—*Trans.*

every species of fideism, but also to that professorial scholasticism which, while not regarding objective reality as the source of our sensations, "deduces" the concept of the objective by means of such artificial verbal constructions as universal significance, socially-organised, and so on and so forth, and which is unable, and frequently unwilling, to separate objective truth from belief in sprites and hobgoblins.

The Machians contemptuously shrug their shoulders at the "antiquated" views of the "dogmatists," the materialists, who still cling to the concept *matter*, which supposedly has been refuted by "recent science" and "recent positivism." We shall speak separately of the new theories of physics on the structure of matter. But it is absolutely unpardonable to confound, as the Machians do, any particular theory of the structure of matter with the epistemological category, to confound the problem of the new properties of new aspects of matter (electrons for example) with the old problem of the theory of knowledge, with the problem of the sources of our knowledge, the existence of objective truth, etc. We are told that Mach "discovered the world-elements": red, green, hard, soft, loud, long, etc. We ask, is a man given objective reality when he sees something red or feels something hard, etc., or not? This hoary philosophical query is confused by Mach. If you hold that it is not given, you, together with Mach, inevitably sink to subjectivism and agnosticism and deservedly fall into the embrace of the immanentists, *i.e.*, the philosophical Menshikovs. If you hold that it is given, a philosophical concept is needed for this objective reality, and this concept has been worked out long, long ago. This concept is *matter*. Matter is a philosophical category designating the objective reality which is given to man by his sensations, and which is copied, photographed and reflected by our sensations, while existing independently of them. Therefore, to say that such a concept can become antiquated is *childish talk*, a senseless repetition of the arguments of fashionable *reactionary* philosophy. Could the struggle between materialism and idealism, the struggle between the tendencies or lines of Plato and Democritus in philosophy, the struggle between religion and science, the denial of objective truth and its assertion, the struggle between the adherents of supersensible

knowledge and its adversaries have become antiquated during the two thousand years of the development of philosophy?

Acceptance or rejection of the concept matter is a question of the confidence man places in the evidence of his sense-organs, a question of the source of our knowledge, a question which has been asked and debated from the very inception of philosophy, which may be disguised in a thousand different garbs by professorial clowns, but which can no more become antiquated than the question whether the source of human cognition is sight and touch, hearing and smell. To regard our sensations as images of the external world, to recognise objective truth, to hold the materialist theory of knowledge—these are all one and the same thing. To illustrate this, I shall only quote from Feuerbach and from two textbooks of philosophy, in order that the reader may judge how elementary this question is.

"How banal," wrote Feuerbach, "to deny that sensation is the evangel, the gospel (*Verkündigung*) of an objective saviour."<sup>1</sup>

A strange, a preposterous terminology, as you see, but a perfectly clear philosophical line: sensation reveals objective truth to man.

"My sensation is subjective, but its foundation [or ground—*Grund*] is objective" (p. 195).

Compare this with the quotation given above where Feuerbach says that materialism regards the perceptual world as the ultimate (*ausgemachte*) objective truth.

"Sensationalism," we read in Franck's dictionary of philosophy,<sup>2</sup> is a doctrine which deduces all our ideas "from the experience of sense-organs, reducing all knowledge to sensations." There is subjective sensationalism (scepticism and Berkeleianism), moral sensationalism (Epicureanism), and objective sensationalism.

"Objective sensationalism is nothing but materialism, for matter or bodies are, in the opinion of the materialists, the only objects that can affect our senses (*atteindre nos sens*)."

<sup>1</sup> Feuerbach, *Sämtliche Werke*, Bd. X, 1866, S. 194-95.

<sup>2</sup> *Dictionnaire des sciences philosophiques* [*Dictionary of the Philosophical Sciences*], Paris, 1875.

"If sensationalism," says Schwegler in his history of philosophy,<sup>1</sup> "asserted that truth or being can be apprehended exclusively by means of the senses, one had only [Schwegler is speaking of philosophy at the end of the eighteenth century in France] to formulate this proposition objectively and one had the thesis of materialism: only the perceptual exists; there is no other being save material being."

These elementary truths, which have managed to find their way even into the textbooks, have been forgotten by our Machians.

## 5. ABSOLUTE AND RELATIVE TRUTH, OR THE ECLECTICISM OF ENGELS AS DISCOVERED BY BOGDANOV

Bogdanov made his discovery in 1906, in the preface to Book III of his *Empirio-Monism*.

"Engels in *Anti-Dühring*," writes Bogdanov, "expresses himself *almost* in the same sense in which I have just described the relativity of truth . . ." (p. v) (that is, in the sense of denying all eternal truth, "denying the unconditional objectivity of all truth whatsoever"). "Engels is wrong in his indecision, in the fact that in spite of his irony he recognises certain eternal truths, wretched though they may be. . ." (p. viii). "Only inconsistency can here permit such eclectic reservations as those of Engels. . ." (p. ix).

Let us cite one instance of Bogdanov's refutation of Engels' eclecticism. "Napoleon died on May 5, 1821," says Engels in *Anti-Dühring*, in the chapter "Eternal Truths," where he reminds Dühring of the platitudes (*Plattheiten*) to which he who claims to discover eternal truths in the historical sciences has to confine himself. Bogdanov thus answers Engels:

"What sort of 'truth' is that? And what is there 'eternal' about it? The recording of a single correlation, which perhaps even has no longer any real significance for our generation, cannot serve as a basis for any activity, and leads nowhere" (p. ix).

And on page viii:

"Can *Plattheiten* be called *Wahrheiten*? Are 'platitudes' truths? Truth is a vital organising form of experience; it *leads* us somewhere in our activity and provides a point of support in the struggle of life."

It is quite clear from these two quotations that Bogdanov, instead of refuting Engels, makes a mere *declamation*. If you cannot assert

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Albert Schwegler, *Geschichte der Philosophie im Umriß* [Outline History of Philosophy], 15 Aufl., S. 194.

that the proposition "Napoleon died on May 5, 1821," is false or *inexact*, you acknowledge that it is true. If you do not assert that it may be refuted in the future, you acknowledge this truth to be eternal. But to call phrases such as: the truth is a "vital organising form of experience" an answer, is to palm off a mere *jumble of words* as philosophy. Did the earth have the history which is expounded in geology, or was the earth created in seven days? Is one to be allowed to dodge this question by talking about "vital" (what does that mean?) truth which "leads" somewhere, and the like? Can it be that knowledge of the history of the earth and of the history of humanity "has no real significance"? That is just turgid nonsense, used by Bogdanov to cover his *retreat*. For it is a retreat, when, having taken it upon himself to prove that the admission of eternal truths by Engels is eclecticism, he dodges the issue by a noise and clash of words and leaves unrefuted the fact that Napoleon did die on May 5, 1821, and that to regard this *truth* as refutable in the future is absurd.

The example given by Engels is elementary, and anybody without the slightest difficulty can think of scores of similar *truths* that are eternal and absolute and that only insane people can doubt (as Engels says, citing another example: "Paris is in France"). Why does Engels speak here of "platitudes"? Because he refutes and ridicules the dogmatic, metaphysical materialist Dühring, who was incapable of applying dialectics to the relation between absolute and relative truth. To be a materialist is to acknowledge that objective truth is revealed by our sense-organs. To acknowledge objective truth, *i.e.*, truth not dependent upon man and mankind, is, in one way or another, to recognise absolute truth. And it is this "one way or another" which distinguishes the metaphysical materialist Dühring from the dialectical materialist Engels. On the most complex questions of science in general, and of historical science in particular, Dühring scattered words right and left: ultimate, final and eternal truth. Engels jeered at him. Of course there are eternal truths, Engels said, but it is unwise to use "high-sounding" words (*gewaltige Worte*) in connection with simple things. If we want to advance materialism, we must drop this trite play with the words "eternal truth"; we must learn to put, and

answer, the question of the relation between absolute and relative truth dialectically. It was on this issue that the fight between Dühring and Engels was waged thirty years ago. And Bogdanov, who managed "not to notice" Engels' explanation of the problem of absolute and relative truth given in *the very same chapter*, and who managed to accuse Engels of "eclecticism" for his admission of a proposition which is a truism for *all* forms of materialism, only once again betrays his utter ignorance of both materialism and dialectics.

"... Now we come to the question," Engels writes in *Anti-Dühring*, in the chapter mentioned (Part I, Chap. IX), "whether any, and if so which, products of human knowledge ever can have sovereign validity and an unconditional claim (*Anspruch*) to truth" (*op. cit.*, p. 99).

And Engels answers the question thus:

"... The sovereignty of thought is realised in a number of extremely unsovereignly-thinking human beings; the knowledge which has an unconditional claim to truth is realised in a number of relative errors; neither the one nor the other [i.e., neither the absolute truth of knowledge nor the sovereignty of thought] can be fully realised except through an endless eternity of human existence.

"Here once again we find the same contradiction as we found above, between the character of human thought, necessarily conceived as absolute, and its reality in individual human beings with their extremely limited thought. This is a contradiction which can only be solved in the infinite progression, or what is for us, at least from a practical standpoint, the endless succession, of generations of mankind. In this sense human thought is just as much sovereign as not sovereign, and its capacity for knowledge just as much unlimited as limited. It is sovereign and unlimited in its disposition (*Anlage*), its vocation, its possibilities and its historical goal; it is not sovereign and it is limited in its individual expression and in its realisation at each particular moment."<sup>1</sup>

"It is just the same," Engels continues, "with eternal truths" (p. 100).

This argument is extremely important for the question of *relativism*, i.e., the principle of the relativity of our knowledge, which is stressed by all Machians. The Machians *one and all* insist that they are relativists, but the Russian Machians, while repeating the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. V. Chernov, *loc. cit.*, p. 64 *et seq.* Chernov, the Machian, fully shares the position of Bogdanov, who does not wish to own himself a Machian. The difference is that Bogdanov *tries to cover up* his disagreement with Engels, to present it as a casual matter, etc., while Chernov feels that it is a question of a struggle against both materialism and dialectics.

words of the Germans, are afraid, or unable, to propound the question of the relation of relativism to dialectics clearly and straightforwardly. For Bogdanov (as for all the Machians) the recognition of the relativity of our knowledge *excludes* even the least admission of absolute truth. For Engels absolute truth is compounded from relative truths. Bogdanov is a relativist; Engels is a dialectician. Here is another, no less important, argument of Engels from the chapter of *Anti-Dühring* already quoted:

"... Truth and error, like all concepts which are expressed in polar opposites, have absolute validity only in an extremely limited field, as we have just seen, and as even Herr Dühring would realise if he had any acquaintance with the first elements of dialectics, which deal precisely with the inadequacy of all polar opposites. As soon as we apply the antithesis between truth and error outside of that narrow field which has been referred to above it becomes relative and therefore unserviceable for exact scientific modes of expression; and if we attempt to apply it as absolutely valid outside that field we then really find ourselves beaten: both poles of the antithesis become transformed into their opposites, truth becomes error and error truth" (p. 104).

Here follows the example of Boyle's law (the volume of a gas is inversely proportional to its pressure). The "grain of truth" contained in this law is only absolute law within certain limits. The law, it appears, is a truth "only approximately."

Human thought then by its nature is capable of giving, and does give, absolute truth, which is compounded of a sum-total of relative truths. Each step in the development of science adds new grains to the sum of absolute truth, but the limits of the truth of each scientific proposition are relative, now expanding, now shrinking with the growth of knowledge.

"Absolute truth," says Dietzgen in his *"Streifzügen eines Sozialisten,"* "can be seen, heard, smelt, touched and, of course, also be known; but it is not entirely absorbed (*geht nicht auf*) into knowledge" (p. 195). "It goes without saying that a picture does not exhaust its object and the artist remains behind his model. . . . How can a picture 'coincide' with its model? Approximately it can" (p. 197).

"Hence, we can know nature and her parts only relatively; since even a part, though only a relation of nature, possesses nevertheless the nature of the absolute, the nature of nature as a whole (*des Naturganzen an sich*), which cannot be exhausted by knowledge. . . . How, then, do we know that behind the phenomena of nature, behind the relative truths, there is a universal, unlimited, absolute nature which does not reveal itself to man completely? . . . Whence this knowledge? It is innate! it is given us with consciousness" (p. 198).

This last statement is one of the inexactitudes of Dietzgen's which led Marx, in one of his letters to Kugelmann, to speak of the confusion in Dietzgen's views. Only by seizing upon such incorrect passages can one speak of a specific philosophy of Dietzgen differing from dialectical materialism. But Dietzgen corrects himself *on the same page*:

"When I say that the consciousness of eternal, absolute truth is innate in us, that it is the one and only *a priori* knowledge, experience also confirms this innate consciousness" (p. 198).

From all these statements by Engels and Dietzgen it is obvious that for dialectical materialism there is no impassable boundary between relative and absolute truth. Bogdanov entirely failed to grasp this if he could write:

"It [the world outlook of the old materialism] sets itself up as the absolute *objective knowledge of the essence of things* [Bogdanov's italics] and is incompatible with the historically conditional nature of all ideologies" (*Empirio-Monism*, Bk. III, p. iv).

From the standpoint of modern materialism, *i.e.*, Marxism, the *limits* of approximation of our knowledge to the objective, absolute truth are historically conditional, but the existence of such truth is *unconditional*, and the fact that we are approaching nearer to it is also unconditional. The contours of the picture are historically conditional, but the fact that this picture depicts an objectively existing model is unconditional. When and under what circumstances we reached, in our knowledge of the essential nature of things, the discovery of alizarin in coal tar or the discovery of electrons in the atom is historically conditional; but that every such discovery is an advance of "absolutely objective knowledge" is unconditional. In a word, every ideology is historically conditional, but it is unconditionally true that to every scientific ideology (as distinct, for instance, from religious ideology), there corresponds an objective truth, absolute nature. You will say that this distinction between relative and absolute truth is indefinite. And I shall reply: yes, it is sufficiently "indefinite" to prevent science from becoming a dogma in the bad sense of the term, from becoming something dead, frozen, ossified; but it is at the same



time sufficiently "definite" to enable us to dissociate ourselves in the most emphatic and irrevocable manner from fideism and agnosticism, from philosophical idealism and the sophistry of the followers of Hume and Kant. Here is a boundary which you have not noticed, and not having noticed it, you have fallen into the swamp of reactionary philosophy. It is the boundary between dialectical materialism and relativism.

We are relativists, proclaim Mach, Avenarius and Petzoldt. We are relativists, echo Mr. Chernov and certain Russian Machians, would-be Marxists. Yes, Mr. Chernov and Comrades Machians—and therein lies your error. For to make relativism the basis of the theory of knowledge is inevitably to condemn oneself either to absolute scepticism, agnosticism and sophistry, or to subjectivism. Relativism as the basis of the theory of knowledge is not only the recognition of the relativity of our knowledge, but also a denial of any objective measure or model existing independently of humanity to which our relative knowledge approximates. From the standpoint of naked relativism one can justify any sophistry; one may regard as "conditional" whether Napoleon died on May 5, 1821, or not; one may declare the admission, alongside of scientific ideology ("convenient" in one respect), of religious ideology (very "convenient" in another respect) a mere "convenience" for man or humanity, and so forth.

Dialectics—as Hegel in his time explained—*contains* an element of relativism, of negation, of scepticism, but *is not reducible* to relativism. The materialist dialectics of Marx and Engels certainly does contain relativism, but is not reducible to relativism, that is, it recognises the relativity of all our knowledge, not in the sense of the denial of objective truth, but in the sense of the historically conditional nature of the limits of the approximation of our knowledge of this truth.

Bogdanov writes in italics: "*Consistent Marxism does not admit such dogmatism and such static concepts*" as eternal truths (*Empirio-Monism*, Bk. III, p. ix). This is a muddle. If the world is eternally moving and developing matter (as the Marxists think), reflected by the developing human consciousness, what is there "static" here? The point at issue is not the immutable essence of

things, or an immutable consciousness, but the *correspondence* between the consciousness which reflects nature and the nature which is reflected by consciousness. In connection with this question, and this question alone, the term "dogmatism" has a specific, characteristic, philosophical flavour: it is a favourite word used by the idealists and the agnostics *against* the materialists, as we have already seen in the case of the fairly "old" materialist, Feuerbach. The objections brought against materialism from the standpoint of the celebrated "recent positivism" are just such ancient trash.

## 6. THE CRITERION OF PRACTICE IN THE THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

We have seen that Marx in 1845 and Engels in 1888 and 1892 placed the criterion of practice at the basis of the materialist theory of knowledge.

"The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking which is isolated from practice is a purely scholastic question,"

says Marx in his second Thesis on Feuerbach. The best refutation of Kantian and Humean agnosticism as well as of other philosophical fancies (*Schrullen*) is practice, repeats Engels. "The success of our actions proves the correspondence (*Uebereinstimmung*) of our perceptions with the objective nature of the things perceived," he says in reply to the agnostics.

Compare this with Mach's argument about the criterion of practice:

"In the common way of thinking and speaking 'appearance' is usually contrasted with 'reality.' A pencil held in front of us in the air is seen as straight; when we dip it slantwise into water we see it as crooked. In the latter case we say that the pencil *appears* crooked, but in reality it is straight. But what entitles us to declare one fact to be the reality, and to degrade the other to an appearance? . . . Our expectation is deceived when . . . we fall into the natural error of expecting what we are accustomed to although the case is unusual. The facts are not to blame for that. In these cases, to speak of 'appearance' may have a practical significance, but not a scientific significance. Similarly, the question which is often asked, whether the world is real or whether we merely dream it, is devoid of all scientific significance. Even the wildest dream is a fact as much as any other" (*Analyse der Empfindungen*, S. 8 und 9).

It is true that not only is the wildest dream a fact, but also the wildest philosophy. No doubt of this is possible after an acquaintance with the philosophy of Ernst Mach. Egregious sophist that he is, he confounds the natural-historical and psychological investigation of human errors, of every "wild dream" of humanity, such as belief in sprites, hobgoblins, and so forth, with the epistemological distinction between truth and "wildness." It is as if an economist were to say that Senior's theory that the whole profit of the capitalist is obtained from the "last hour" of the worker's labour and Marx's theory are both facts, and that from the standpoint of science there is no point in asking which theory expresses objective truth and which—the prejudice of the bourgeoisie and the venality of its professors. The tanner Joseph Dietzgen regarded the scientific, *i.e.*, the materialist, theory of knowledge as a "universal weapon against religious belief" (*Kleinere philosophische Schriften*, S. 55), but for the professor-in-ordinary Ernst Mach a distinction between the materialist and the subjective-idealist theories of knowledge "is devoid of all scientific significance"! That science is non-partisan in the struggle of materialism against idealism and religion is a favourite idea not only of Mach but of all modern bourgeois professors, who are, as Dietzgen justly expresses it, "graduated flunkys who stupefy the people by their twisted idealism" (*op. cit.*, p. 53).

And a twisted professorial idealism it is, indeed, when the criterion of practice, which for every one of us distinguishes illusion from reality, is removed by Mach from the realm of science, from the realm of the theory of knowledge. Human practice proves the correctness of the materialist theory of knowledge, said Marx and Engels, who dubbed all attempts to solve the fundamental question of epistemology without the aid of practice "scholastic" and "philosophical fancies." But for Mach practice is one thing and the theory of knowledge another. They can be placed side by side without making the latter conditional on the former. In his last work, *Erkenntnis und Irrtum*, Mach says:

"Knowledge is . . . a biologically useful (*forderndes*) psychical experience" (p. 115 of the second German edition). "Only success can separate knowledge from error . . ." (p. 116). "The concept is a physical working hypothesis" (p. 143).

In their astonishing naïveté our Russian Machian would-be Marxists regard such phrases of Mach as proof that he *comes close* to Marxism. But Mach here comes just as close to Marxism as Bismarck to the labour movement, or Bishop Eulogius<sup>1</sup> to democracy. With Mach such propositions *stand side by side* with his idealist theory of knowledge and do not determine the choice of one or another definite line of epistemology. Knowledge can be useful biologically, useful in human practice, useful for the preservation of life, for the preservation of the species, only when it reflects an objective truth independent of man. For the materialist the "success" of human practice proves the correspondence between our ideas and the objective nature of the things we perceive. For the solipsist "success" is everything needed *by me in practice*, which can be regarded separately from the theory of knowledge. If we include the criterion of practice in the foundation of the theory of knowledge we inevitably arrive at materialism, says the Marxist. Let practice be materialist, says Mach, but theory is another matter.

"In practice," Mach writes in the *Analyse der Empfindungen*, "we can as little do without the idea of the self when we perform any act, as we can do without the idea of a body when we grasp at a thing. Physiologically we remain egoists and materialists with the same constancy as we forever see the sun rising again. But theoretically this view cannot be adhered to" (p. 291).

Egoism is beside the point here, for egoism is not an epistemological category. The question of the apparent movement of the sun around the earth is also beside the point, for in practice, which serves us as a criterion in the theory of knowledge, we must include also the practice of astronomical observations, discoveries, etc. There remains only Mach's valuable admission that in their practical life men are entirely and exclusively guided by the materialist theory of knowledge; the attempt to obviate it "theoretically" is characteristic of Mach's *gelehrte* scholastic and twisted idealistic endeavours.

To what extent these efforts to eliminate practice—as something unsusceptible to epistemological treatment—in order to make room for agnosticism and idealism are not new is shown by the following example from the history of German classical philosophy. Between

<sup>1</sup> An extreme reactionary monarchist and leader of the Black Hundreds. Member of the Second Duma.—*Trans.*

Kant and Fichte stands G. E. Schulze (known in the history of philosophy as Schulze-Aenesidemus). He openly advocates the sceptical trend in philosophy and calls himself a follower of Hume (and of the ancients Pyrrho and Sextus). He emphatically rejects every thing-in-itself and the possibility of objective knowledge, and emphatically insists that we should not go beyond "experience," beyond sensations, in which connection he anticipates the following objection from the other camp:

"Since . . . the sceptic . . . when he . . . takes part in the affairs of life assumes as indubitable the reality of objective things, behaves accordingly, and thus admits a criterion of truth, his own behaviour is the best and clearest refutation of his scepticism."<sup>1</sup>

"Such proofs," Schulze indignantly retorts, "are only valid for the mob" (p. 254). For "my scepticism does not concern the requirements of practical life, but remains within the bounds of philosophy" (p. 225).

In similar manner, the subjective idealist Fichte also hopes to find room within the bounds of idealism for that

"realism which is inevitable (*sich aufdringt*) for all of us, and even for the most determined idealist, when it comes to action, i.e., the assumption that objects exist quite independently of us and outside us" (*Werke*, I, S. 455).

Mach's recent positivism has not travelled far from Schulze and Fichte! Let us note as a curiosity that on this question too for Bazarov there is no one but Plekhanov—there is no beast stronger than the cat. Bazarov ridicules the "*salto-vitale* philosophy of Plekhanov" (*Studies, etc.*, p. 69), who indeed made the absurd remark that "belief" in the existence of the outer world "is an inevitable *salto-vitale*" (vital leap) of philosophy (*Notes on Ludwig Feuerbach*, p. 111). The word "belief," although put in quotation marks (taken from Hume), discloses a confusion of terms on Plekhanov's part. There can be no question about that. But what has Plekhanov got to do with it? Why did not Bazarov take some other materialist, Feuerbach, for instance? Is it only because he does not know him? But ignorance is no argument. Feuerbach also, like Marx and Engels,

<sup>1</sup> G. E. Schulze, *Aenesidemus oder über die Fundamente der von dem Herrn Professor Reinhold in Jena gelieferten Elementarphilosophie* [*Aenesidemus, or the Fundamentals of the Elementary Philosophy Propounded by Professor Reinhold in Jena*], 1792, S. 253.

makes an impermissible—from the point of view of Schulze, Fichte and Mach—"leap" to practice in the fundamental problem of epistemology. Criticising idealism, Feuerbach explains its essential nature by the following striking quotation from Fichte, which superbly demolishes Machism:

"'You assume,' writes Fichte, 'that things are real, that they exist outside of you, only because you see them, hear them and touch them. But vision, touch and hearing are only sensations. . . . You perceive, not the objects, but only your sensations'" (Feuerbach, *Werke*, Bd. X, S. 185).

To which Feuerbach replies that a human being is not an abstract ego, but either a man or a woman, and the question whether the world is sensation can be compared to the question: is the man or woman my sensation, or do our relations in practical life prove the contrary?

"That is the fundamental defect of idealism: it asks and answers the question of objectivity and subjectivity, of the reality or unreality of the world, only from the standpoint of theory" (*ibid.*, p. 189).

Feuerbach makes the sum-total of human practice the basis of the theory of knowledge. He says that idealists of course also recognise the reality of the *I* and the *Thou* in practical life. For the idealists

"this point of view is valid only for practical life and not for speculation. But a speculation which contradicts life, which makes the standpoint of death, of a soul separated from the body, the standpoint of truth, is a dead and false speculation" (p. 192).

Before we *perceive*, we breathe; we cannot exist without air, food and drink.

"Does this mean that we must deal with questions of food and drink when examining the problem of the ideality or reality of the world?—exclaims the indignant idealist. How vile! What an offence against good manners soundly to berate materialism in the scientific sense from the chair of philosophy and the pulpit of theology, only to practice materialism with all one's heart and soul in the crudest form at the table d'hôte" (p. 196).

And Feuerbach exclaims that to identify subjective sensation with the objective world "is to identify pollution with procreation" (p. 198).

A comment not of the politest order, but it hits the vital spot of those philosophers who teach that sense-perception is the reality existing outside us.

The standpoint of life, of practice, should be first and fundamental in the theory of knowledge. And it inevitably leads to materialism, brushing aside the endless fabrications of professorial scholasticism. Of course, we must not forget that the criterion of practice can never, in the nature of things, either confirm or refute any human idea *completely*. This criterion also is sufficiently "indefinite" not to allow human knowledge to become "absolute," but at the same time it is sufficiently definite to wage a ruthless fight on all varieties of idealism and agnosticism. If what our practice confirms is the sole, ultimate and objective truth, then from this must follow the recognition that the only path to this truth is the path of science, which holds the materialist point of view. For instance, Bogdanov is prepared to recognise Marx's theory of the circulation of money as an objective truth only for "our time," and calls it "dogmatism" to attribute to this theory a "super-historically objective" truth (*Empirio-Monism*, Bk. III, p. vii). This is again a muddle. The correspondence of this theory to practice cannot be altered by any future circumstances, for the same simple reason that makes it an *eternal* truth that Napoleon died on May 5, 1821. But inasmuch as the criterion of practice, *i.e.*, the course of development of *all* capitalist countries in the last few decades, proves only the objective truth of Marx's *whole* social and economic theory in general, and not merely of one or other of its parts, formulations, etc., it is clear that to talk of the "dogmatism" of the Marxists is to make an unpardonable concession to bourgeois economics. The sole conclusion to be drawn from the opinion of the Marxists that Marx's theory is an objective truth is that by following the *path* of Marxian theory we shall draw closer and closer to objective truth (without ever exhausting it); but by following *any other path* we shall arrive at nothing but confusion and lies.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE OF DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM AND EMPIRIO-CRITICISM—III

#### 1. WHAT IS MATTER? WHAT IS EXPERIENCE?

THE first of these questions is constantly being put by the idealists and agnostics, including the Machians, to the materialists; the second question by the materialists to the Machians. Let us try to make the point at issue clear.

Avenarius says on the subject of matter:

"Within the purified, 'complete experience' there is nothing 'physical'—'matter' in the metaphysical absolute conception—for 'matter' according to this conception is only an abstraction; it would be the total of the counter-terms abstracted from every central term. Just as in the 'principal co-ordination,' that is, 'complete experience,' a counter-term is inconceivable (*undenkbar*) without a central term, so matter in the absolute metaphysical conception is a complete chimera (*Unding*)" (*Bemerkungen*," § 119).

In all this gibberish one thing is evident, namely, that Avenarius designates the physical or matter by the terms absolute and metaphysics, for according to his theory of the principal co-ordination (or, in the new way, "complete experience"), the counter-term is inseparable from the central term, the environment from the self; the non-self is inseparable from the self (as J. G. Fichte said). That this theory is disguised subjective idealism we have already shown, and the nature of Avenarius' attacks on "matter" is quite obvious: the idealist denies physical being that is independent of the psychical and therefore rejects the concept elaborated by philosophy for such being. That matter is "physical" (i.e., that which is most familiar and immediately given to man, and the existence of which no one save an inmate of a lunatic asylum can doubt) is not denied by Avenarius; he only insists on the acceptance of "his" theory of the indissoluble connection between the environment and the self.



Mach expresses the same thought more simply, without philosophical flourishes:

"What we call matter is a certain systematic combination of the *elements* (sensations)" (*Analyse der Empfindungen*, S. 270).

Mach thinks that by this assertion he is effecting a "radical change" in the usual world outlook. In reality this is the old, old subjective idealism, the nakedness of which is concealed by the word "element."

And lastly, the English Machian, Pearson, a rabid antagonist of materialism, says:

"Now there can be no scientific objection to our classifying certain more or less permanent groups of sense-impressions together and terming them matter—to do so indeed leads us very near to John Stuart Mill's definition of matter as a 'permanent possibility of sensation'—but this definition of matter then leads us entirely away from matter as the thing which moves" (*The Grammar of Science*, 2nd ed., 1900, p. 249).

Here there is not even the fig-leaf of the "elements," and the idealist openly stretches out a hand to the agnostic.

As the reader sees, all these arguments of the founders of empirio-criticism entirely and exclusively revolve around the old epistemological question of the relation of thinking to being, of sensation to the physical. It required the extreme naïveté of the Russian Machians to discern anything here that is even remotely related to "recent science," or "recent positivism." All the philosophers mentioned by us, some frankly, others surreptitiously, replace the fundamental philosophical line of materialism (from being to thinking, from matter to sensation) by the reverse line of idealism. Their denial of matter is the old answer to epistemological problems, which consists in denying the existence of an external, objective source of our sensations, of an objective reality corresponding to our sensations. On the other hand, the recognition of the philosophical line denied by the idealists and agnostics is expressed in the definitions: matter is that which, acting upon our sense-organs, produces sensation; matter is the objective reality given to us in sensation, and so forth.

Bogdanov, pretending to argue only against Belov and, cravenly ignoring Engels, is indignant at such definitions, which, don't you

see, "prove to be simple repetitions" (*Empirio-Monism*, Bk. III, p. xvi) of the "formula" (of Engels, our "Marxist" forgets to add) that for one trend in philosophy matter is primary and spirit secondary, while for the other trend the reverse is the case. All the Russian Machians exultantly echo Bogdanov's "refutation"! But the slightest reflection could have shown these people that it is impossible, in the very nature of the case, to give any definition of these two latter concepts of epistemology save one that indicates which of them is taken as primary. What is meant by giving a "definition"? It means essentially to bring a given concept within a more comprehensive concept. For example, when I give the definition "an ass is an animal," I am bringing the concept "ass" within a more comprehensive concept. The question then is, are there more comprehensive concepts, with which the theory of knowledge could operate, than those of being and thinking, matter and sensation, physical and psychical? No. These are the ultimate concepts, the most comprehensive concepts, which epistemology has in point of fact so far not surpassed (apart from changes in *nomenclature*, which are *always* possible). One must be a charlatan or an utter blockhead to demand a "definition" of these two "series" of concepts of ultimate comprehensiveness which would not be a "mere repetition": one or the other must be taken as the primary. Take the three aforementioned arguments on matter. What do they all amount to? To this, that these philosophers proceed from the psychical, or self, to the physical, or environment, as from the central term to the counter-term—or from sensation to matter, or from sense-perception to matter. Could Avenarius, Mach and Pearson in fact have given any other "definition" of these fundamental concepts, save by pointing to the *trend* of their philosophical line? Could they have defined in any other way, in any specific way, what the self is, what sensation is, what sense-perception is? One has only to formulate the question clearly to realise what utter nonsense the Machians are talking when they demand that the materialists give a definition of matter which would not amount to a repetition of the proposition that matter, nature, being, the physical—is primary, and spirit, consciousness, sensation, the psychical—is secondary.

One expression of the genius of Marx and Engels was that they

despised pedantic playing with new words, erudite terms, and subtle "isms," and that they said simply and plainly: there is a materialist line and an idealist line in philosophy, and between them there are various shades of agnosticism. The painful quest for a "new" point of view in philosophy betrays the same poverty of spirit that is revealed in the painful effort to create a "new" theory of value, or a "new" theory of rent, and so forth.

Of Avenarius, his disciple Carstanjen says that he once expressed himself in private conversation as follows: "I know neither the physical nor the psychical, but only some third." To the remark of one writer that the concept of this third was not given by Avenarius, Petzoldt replied:

"We know why he could not advance such a concept. The third lacks a counter-concept (*Gegenbegriff*). . . . The question, what is the third? is illogically put."<sup>1</sup>

Petzoldt understands that the latter concept cannot be defined. But he does not understand that the resort to a "third" is a mere subterfuge, for every one of us knows what is physical and what is psychical, but none of us knows at present what that "third" is. Avenarius was merely covering up his tracks by this subterfuge and *actually* was declaring that the self is the primary (central term) and nature (environment) the secondary (counter-term).

Of course, even the antithesis of matter and mind has absolute significance only within the bounds of a very limited field—in this case exclusively within the bounds of the fundamental epistemological problem of what is to be regarded as primary and what as secondary. Beyond these bounds the relative character of this antithesis is indubitable.

Let us now examine how the word "experience" is used in empirio-critical philosophy. The first paragraph of the *Kritik der reinen Erfahrung* expounds the following "assumption":

"Any part of our environment stands in relation to human individuals in such a way that, the former having been given, the latter speak of their experience as follows: 'this is experienced,' 'this is an experience'; or 'it followed from experience,' or 'it depends upon experience.'"

<sup>1</sup> *Einführung in die Philosophie der reinen Erfahrung*. Bd. II, S. 329.

Thus experience is defined in terms of these same concepts: self and environment; while the "doctrine" of their "indissoluble" connection is for the time being kept out of the way. Further: "The synthetic concept of pure experience"—namely, experience "as a predication, *for which, in all its components, only parts of the environment serve as a premise*" (pp. 3 and 4). If we assume that the environment exists independently of "declarations" and "predications" of man, then it becomes possible to interpret experience in a materialist way! "The analytical concept of pure experience"—"namely, as a predication *to which nothing is admixed that would not be in its turn experience and which, therefore, in itself is nothing but experience*" (p. 5). Experience is experience. And there are people who take this quasi-erudite rigmarole for true wisdom!

It is essential to add that in the second volume of the *Kritik der reinen Erfahrung* Avenarius regards "experience" as a "special case" of the *psychical*; that he divides experience into *sachhafte Werte* (thing-values) and *gedankenhafte Werte* (thought-values); that "experience in the broad sense" includes the latter; that "complete experience" is identified with the principal co-ordination ("*Bemerkungen*," etc.). In short, you pay your money and take your choice. "Experience" embraces both the materialist and the idealist trend in philosophy and sanctifies the muddling of them. But while our Machians confidently accept "pure experience" as pure coin of the realm, in philosophical literature the representatives of the various trends are alike in pointing to Avenarius' abuse of this concept.

"What pure experience is," Riehl writes, "remains vague with Avenarius, and his explanation that 'pure experience is experience to which nothing is admixed that is not in its turn experience' is obviously a vicious circle" (*Systematische Philosophie*,<sup>1</sup> Leipzig 1907, S. 102).

Pure experience for Avenarius, writes Wundt, is at times any kind of fantasy, and at others, a predication with the character of "corporeality" (*Philosophische Studien*, Bd. XIII, S. 92-93). Avenarius stretches the concept experience (S. 382).

"On the precise definition of the terms 'experience' and 'pure experience,'" writes Couwelaert, "depends the meaning of the whole of this philosophy. Avenarius does not give these precise definitions" (*Revue néo-scholastique*, février 1907, p. 61).

<sup>1</sup> A. Riehl, *Systematic Philosophy*, Leipzig, 1907.—*Trans.*

"The vagueness of the term 'experience' stands him in good stead, and so at the end Avenarius falls back on the timeworn argument of subjective idealism" (under the pretence of combating it), says Norman Smith (*Mind*, Vol. XV, p. 29).

"I openly declare that the inner sense, the soul of my philosophy consists in this, that a human being possesses nothing save experience; a human being comes to everything to which he comes only through experience. . . ."

A zealous philosopher of pure experience, is he not? The author of these words is the subjective idealist Fichte (*Sonnenklarer Bericht, usw.*, S. 15). We know from the history of philosophy that the interpretation of the concept experience divided the classical materialists from the idealists. Today professorial philosophy of all shades disguises its reactionary nature by declaiming on the subject of "experience." All the immanentists fall back on experience. In the preface to the second edition of his *Erkenntnis und Irrtum*, Mach praises a book by Professor Wilhelm Jerusalem in which we read:

"The acceptance of a divine original being is not contradictory to experience" (*Der kritische Idealismus und die reine Logik*, S. 222).

One can only commiserate with people who believed Avenarius and Co.—who believed that the "obsolete" distinction between materialism and idealism can be surmounted by the word "experience." When Valentinov and Yushkevich accuse Bogdanov, who departed somewhat from pure Machism, of abusing the word experience, these gentlemen are only betraying their ignorance. Bogdanov is "not guilty" in this case; he *only* slavishly borrowed the muddle of Mach and Avenarius. When Bogdanov says that "consciousness and immediate psychical experience are identical concepts . . ." (*Empirio-Monism*, Bk. II, p. 53) while matter is "not experience" but "the unknown which evokes everything known" (*Empirio-Monism*, Bk. III, p. viii), he is interpreting experience *idealistically*. And, of course, he is not the first<sup>1</sup> nor the last to build petty idealist systems on the word experience. When he replies to the reactionary philosophers by declaring that attempts to transcend the boundaries

<sup>1</sup> In England Comrade Belfort Bax has been exercising himself in this way for a long time. A French reviewer of his book, *The Roots of Reality*, rather bitingly remarked: "Experience is only another word for consciousness; then come forth as an open idealist!" (*Revue de philosophie*, 1907, p. 399).

of experience lead in fact only to "empty abstractions and contradictory images, all the elements of which have nevertheless been taken from experience" (Bk. I, p. 48), he is distinguishing between the empty abstractions of the human mind and something which exists outside of man and independently of his mind, in other words, he is interpreting experience as a materialist.

Similarly, even Mach, although he makes idealism his starting point (bodies are complexes of sensations or "elements") frequently strays into a materialist interpretation of the word experience. "We must not philosophise out of ourselves (*nicht aus uns herausphilosophieren*), but must take from experience," he says in the *Mechanik* (3. Aufl., 1897, S. 14). Here a contrast is drawn between experience and "philosophising out of ourselves," in other words, experience is regarded as something objective, something given to man from the outside; it is interpreted materialistically. Here is another example:

"What we observe in nature is imprinted, although *uncomprehended* and *unanalysed*, upon our ideas, which, then, in their most general and strongest features imitate (*nachahmen*) the processes of nature. In these experiences we possess a treasure store (*Schatz*) which is ever to hand. . ." (*op. cit.*, p. 27).

Here nature is taken as primary and sensation and experience as products. Had Mach consistently adhered to this point of view in the fundamental questions of epistemology, he would have spared humanity many foolish idealist "complexes." A third example:

"The close connection of thought and experience creates modern natural science. Experience gives rise to a thought. The latter is further elaborated and is again compared with experience. . ." (*Erkenntnis und Irrtum*, S. 200).

Mach's special "philosophy" is here thrown overboard, and the author instinctively accepts the customary standpoint of the scientists, who regard experience materialistically.

To summarise: the word "experience," on which the Machians build their systems, has long been serving as a shield for idealist systems, and is now serving Avenarius and Co. in eclectically passing to and fro between the idealist position and the materialist position. The various "definitions" of this concept are only expressions of those two fundamental lines in philosophy which were so strikingly revealed by Engels.

## 2. PLEKHANOV'S ERROR CONCERNING THE CONCEPT "EXPERIENCE"

On pages x-xi of his introduction to *L. Feuerbach* (1905 ed.) Plekhanov says:

"One German writer has remarked that for empirio-criticism *experience* is only an object of investigation, and not a means of knowledge. If that is so, then the distinction between empirio-criticism and materialism loses all meaning, and the discussion of the question whether or not empirio-criticism is destined to replace materialism is absolutely shallow and idle."

This is one complete muddle.

Fr. Carstanjen, one of the most "orthodox" followers of Avenarius, says in his article on empirio-criticism (a reply to Wundt), that "for the *Kritik der reinen Erfahrung* experience is not a means of knowledge but only an object of investigation."<sup>1</sup> It follows that according to Plekhanov any distinction between the views of Fr. Carstanjen and materialism is meaningless!

Fr. Carstanjen is almost literally paraphrasing Avenarius, who in his "*Bemerkungen*" emphatically contrasts his conception of experience as that which is given us, that which we find (*das Vorgefundene*), with the conception of experience as a "means of knowledge" in "the sense of the prevailing theories of knowledge, which essentially are fully metaphysical" (*op. cit.*, p. 401). Petzoldt, following Avenarius, says the same thing in his *Einführung in die Philosophie der reinen Erfahrung* (Bd. I, S. 170). Thus, according to Plekhanov, the distinction between the views of Carstanjen, Avenarius, Petzoldt and materialism is meaningless! Either Plekhanov has not read Carstanjen and Co. as thoroughly as he should, or he has taken his reference to "a German writer" at fifth hand.

What then does this statement, uttered by some of the most prominent empirio-criticists and not understood by Plekhanov, mean? Carstanjen wishes to say that Avenarius in his *Kritik der reinen Erfahrung* takes experience, i.e., all "human predications," as the *object* of investigation. Avenarius does not investigate here, says Carstanjen (*op. cit.*, p. 50), whether these predications are real, or whether they relate, for example, to *ghosts*; he merely arranges,

<sup>1</sup> *Vierteljahrsschrift für wissenschaftliche Philosophie*, Jg. 22, 1898, S. 45.

systematises, formally classifies all possible human predications, both idealist and materialist (p. 53), without going into the essence of the question. Carstanjen is absolutely right when he characterises this point of view as "*scepticism par excellence*" (p. 213). In this article, by the way, Carstanjen defends his beloved master from the ignominious (for a German professor) charge of materialism levelled against him by Wundt. Why are we materialists, pray?—such is the burden of Carstanjen's objections;—when we speak of "experience" we do not mean it in the ordinary current sense, which leads or might lead to materialism, but in the sense that we investigate everything that men "predicate" as experience. Carstanjen and Avenarius regard the view that experience is a means of knowledge as materialistic (that, perhaps, is the most common opinion, but nevertheless untrue, as we have seen in the case of Fichte). Avenarius entrenches himself against the "prevailing" "metaphysics," which persists in regarding the brain as the organ of thought and which ignores the theories of introjection and co-ordination. By the given or the found (*das Vorgefundene*), Avenarius means the indissoluble connection between the self and the environment, which leads to a confused idealist interpretation of "experience."

Hence, both the materialist and the idealist, as well as the Humean and the Kantian, lines in philosophy may unquestionably be concealed beneath the word "experience"; but neither the definition of experience as an object of investigation<sup>1</sup> nor its definition as a means of knowledge is decisive in this respect. Carstanjen's remarks about Wundt especially have no relation whatever to the question of the distinction between empirio-criticism and materialism.

As a curiosity let us note that on this point Bogdanov and Valentinov, in their reply to Plekhanov, revealed no greater knowledge of the subject. Bogdanov declared: "It is not quite clear"

<sup>1</sup> Plekhanov perhaps thought that Carstanjen had said, "an object of knowledge independent of knowledge," and not "an object of investigation"? This would indeed be materialism. But neither Carstanjen, nor anybody else acquainted with empirio-criticism, said, or could have said, any such thing.



(Bk. III, p. xi). "It is the task of empirio-criticists to examine this formulation and to accept or reject the condition." A very convenient position: I, forsooth, am not a Machian and am not therefore obliged to find out in what sense a certain Avenarius or Carstanjen speaks of experience! Bogdanov wants to make use of Machism (and of the Machian confusion regarding "experience"), but he does not want to be held responsible for it.

The "pure" empirio-criticist Valentinov transcribed Plekhanov's remark and publicly danced the *cancan*; he sneered at Plekhanov for not naming the author and for not explaining what the matter was all about (*op. cit.*, pp. 108-09). But at the same time this empirio-critical philosopher in his answer said *not a single word* on the substance of the matter, acknowledging that he had read Plekhanov's remark "three times or more" (and had apparently not understood it). Oh, those Machians!

### 3. CAUSALITY AND NECESSITY IN NATURE

The question of causality is particularly important in determining the philosophical line of any new "ism," and we must therefore dwell on it in some detail.

Let us begin with an exposition of the materialist theory of knowledge on this point. L. Feuerbach's views are expounded with particular clarity in his reply to R. Haym already referred to.

"'Nature and human reason,' says Haym, 'are for him (Feuerbach) completely divorced, and between them a gulf is formed which cannot be spanned from one side or the other.'

"Haym grounds this reproach on § 48 of my *Essence of Religion*, where it is said that 'nature may be conceived only through nature itself, that its necessity is neither human nor logical, neither metaphysical nor mathematical, that nature alone is the being to which it is impossible to apply any human measure, although we compare and give names to its phenomena, in order to make them comprehensible to us, and in general apply human expressions and conceptions to them, as for example: order, purpose, law; and are obliged to do so because of the character of our language.'

"What does this mean? Does it mean that there is no order in nature, so that, for example, autumn may be succeeded by summer, spring by winter, winter by autumn? That there is no purpose, so that, for example, there is no co-ordination between the lungs and the air, between light and the eye, between sound and the ear? That there is no law, so that, for example, the

earth may move now in an ellipse, now in a circle, that it may revolve around the sun now in a year, now in a quarter of an hour? What nonsense! What then is meant by this passage? Nothing more than to distinguish between that which belongs to nature and that which belongs to man; it does not assert that there is actually nothing in nature corresponding to the words or ideas of order, purpose, law. All that it does is to deny the identity between thought and being; it denies that they exist in nature exactly as they do in the head or mind of man. Order, purpose, law are words used by man to translate the acts of nature into *his own* language in order that he may understand them. These words are not devoid of meaning or of objective content (*nicht-sinn-, d. h. gegenstandslose Worte*); nevertheless, a distinction must be made between the original and the translation. Order, purpose, law in the human sense express something arbitrary.

"From the contingency of order, purpose and law in nature, theism expressly infers their arbitrary origin; it infers the existence of a being distinct from nature which brings order, purpose, law into a nature that is in itself (*an sich*) chaotic (*dissolute*) and indifferent to all determination. The reason of the theists . . . is reason contradictory to nature, reason absolutely devoid of understanding of the essence of nature. The reason of the theists splits nature into two beings—one material, and the other formal or spiritual" (*Werke*, Bd. VII, 1903, S. 518-520).

Thus Feuerbach recognises objective law in nature and objective causality, which are reflected only with approximate fidelity by human ideas of order, law and so forth. With Feuerbach the recognition of objective law in nature is inseparably connected with the recognition of the objective reality of the external world, of objects, bodies, things, reflected by our mind. Feuerbach's views are consistently materialistic. All other views, or rather, any other philosophical line on the question of causality, the denial of objective law, causality and necessity in nature, are justly regarded by Feuerbach as belonging to the fideist trend. For it is, indeed, clear that the subjectivist line on the question of causality, the deduction of the order and necessity of nature not from the external objective world, but from consciousness, reason, logic, and so forth, not only cuts human reason off from nature, not only opposes the former to the latter, but makes nature a *part* of reason, instead of regarding reason as a part of nature. The subjectivist line in the question of causality is philosophical idealism (varieties of which are the theories of causality of Hume and Kant), *i.e.*, fideism, more or less weakened and diluted. The recognition of objective law in nature and the recognition that this law is reflected with approximate fidelity in the mind of man is materialism.

As regards Engels, he had, if I am not mistaken, no occasion to contrast his materialist view with other trends on the particular question of causality. He had no need to do so, since he had definitely dissociated himself from all the agnostics on the more fundamental question of the objective reality of the external world in general. But to anyone who has read his philosophical works at all attentively it must be clear that Engels does not admit even the shadow of a doubt as to the existence of objective law, order, causality and necessity in nature. We shall confine ourselves to a few examples. In the first section of *Anti-Dühring* Engels says:

"In order to understand these details [of the general picture of the world phenomena], we must detach them from their natural or historical connections, and examine each one separately, as to its nature, its special causes and effects, etc." (p. 27).

That this natural connection, the connection between natural phenomena, exists objectively, is obvious. Engels particularly emphasises the dialectical view of cause and effect:

"It is just the same with cause and effect; these are conceptions which only have validity in their application to a particular case as such, but when we consider the particular case in its general connection with the world as a whole they merge and dissolve in the conception of universal action and interaction, in which causes and effects are constantly changing places, and what is now or here an effect becomes there or then a cause, and *vice versa*" (p. 29).

Hence, the human conception of cause and effect always somewhat simplifies the objective connection of the phenomena of nature, reflecting it only approximately, artificially isolating one or another aspect of a single world process. If we find that the laws of thought correspond with the laws of nature, says Engels, this becomes quite conceivable when we take into account that reason and consciousness are "products of the human brain and man himself a product of nature." Of course, "the products of the human brain, being in the last analysis also products of nature, do not contradict the rest of nature but are in correspondence with it" (p. 45). There is no doubt that there exists a natural, objective relation between the phenomena of the world. Engels constantly speaks of the "laws of nature," of the "necessities of

nature" (*Naturnotwendigkeiten*), without considering it necessary to explain the generally known propositions of materialism.

In *Ludwig Feuerbach* also we read that

"the general laws of motion—both of the external world and of human thought—[are] two sets of laws which are identical in substance but differ in their expression in so far as the human mind can apply them consciously, while in nature and also up to now for the most part in human history, these laws assert themselves unconsciously in the form of external necessity in the midst of an endless series of seeming accidents" (*op. cit.*, p. 54).

And Engels reproaches the old natural philosophy for having replaced "the real but as yet unknown inter-connections" (of the phenomena of nature) by "ideal and imaginary ones" (p. 57). Engels' recognition of objective law, causality and necessity in nature is absolutely clear, as is his emphasis on the relative character of our, *i.e.*, man's, approximate reflections of this law in various concepts.

Passing to Joseph Dietzgen, we must first note one of the innumerable distortions committed by our Machians. One of the authors of *Studies "in" the Philosophy of Marxism*, Mr. Helfond, tells us:

"The basic points of Dietzgen's world outlook may be summarised in the following propositions: . . . (9) The causal dependence which we ascribe to things is in reality not contained in the things themselves" (p. 248).

*This is sheer nonsense.* Mr. Helfond, whose own views represent a veritable hash of materialism and agnosticism, *has outrageously falsified* J. Dietzgen. Of course, we can find plenty of confusion, inexactnesses and errors in Dietzgen, such as gladden the hearts of the Machians and oblige materialists to regard Dietzgen as a philosopher who is not entirely consistent. But to attribute to the materialist J. Dietzgen a direct denial of the materialist view of causality—only a Helfond or the Russian Machians are capable of that.

"Objective scientific knowledge," says Dietzgen in his *Wesen der menschlichen Kopfarbeit* (German ed., 1903), "seeks for causes not by faith or speculation, but by experience and induction, not *a priori*, but *a posteriori*. Natural science looks for causes not outside or back of phenomena, but within or by means of them" (pp. 94-95). "Causes are the products of the faculty of thought. They are, however, not its pure products, but are produced by it

in conjunction with sense material. This sense material gives the causes thus derived their objective existence. Just as we demand that a truth should be the truth of an objective phenomenon, so we demand that a cause should be real, that it should be the cause of some objective effect" (pp. 98-99). "The cause of the thing is its connection" (p. 100).

It is clear from this that Mr. Helfond has made a statement which is *directly contrary to fact*. The world outlook of materialism expounded by J. Dietzgen recognises that "the causal dependence" is contained "in the things themselves." It was necessary for the Machian hash that Mr. Helfond should confuse the materialist line with the idealist line on the question of causality.

Let us now proceed to the latter line.

A clear statement of the starting point of Avenarius' philosophy on this question is to be found in his first work, *Philosophie als Denken der Welt gemäß dem Prinzip des kleinsten Kraftmaßes*. In § 81 we read:

"Just as we do not experience (*erfahren*) force as causing motion, so we do not experience the necessity for any motion. . . . All we experience (*erfahren*) is that the one follows the other."

This is the Humean standpoint in its purest form: sensation, experience, tell us nothing of any necessity. A philosopher who asserts (on the principle of "the economy of thought") that only sensation exists could not have come to any other conclusion.

"Since the idea of causality demands force and necessity or constraint as integral parts of the effect, so it falls together with the latter" (§ 82).

"Necessity . . . therefore expresses a particular degree of probability . . . with which the effect is, or may be, expected" (§ 83, thesis).

This is outspoken subjectivism on the question of causality. And if one is at all consistent one cannot come to any other conclusion without recognising objective reality as the source of our sensations.

Let us turn to Mach. In a special chapter, "Causality and Explanation" (*Die Prinzipien der Wärmelehre*,<sup>1</sup> 2. Auflage, 1900, S. 432-439), we read: "The Humean criticism (of the conception of causality) nevertheless retains its validity" (p. 433). Kunt and Hume (Mach does not trouble to deal with other philosophers)

<sup>1</sup> E. Mach, *Principles of the Theory of Heat*, 2nd. ed., Leipzig, 1900.—*Trans.*

solve the problem of causality differently. "We prefer" Hume's solution (p. 435). "Apart from *logical* necessity [Mach's italics] no other necessity, for instance, physical necessity, exists" (p. 437). This is exactly the view which was so vigorously combated by Feuerbach. It never even occurs to Mach to deny his kinship with Hume. Only the Russian Machians could go so far as to assert that Hume's agnosticism could be "combined" with Marx's and Engels' materialism. In Mach's *Mechanik*, we read:

"In nature there is neither cause nor effect" (p. 474). "I have repeatedly demonstrated that all forms of the law of causality spring from subjective motives (*Trieben*) and that there is no necessity for nature to correspond with them" (p. 495).

We must here note that our Russian Machians with amazing naïveté replace the question of the materialist or idealist trend of all arguments on the law of causality by the question of one or another formulation of this law. They believed the German empirio-critical professors that merely to say "functional correlation" was to make a discovery in "recent positivism" and to release one from the "fetishism" of expressions like "necessity," "law," and so forth. This of course is utterly absurd, and Wundt was fully justified in ridiculing such a *change of words* (*Philosophische Studien*, S. 383, 388), which in fact changes nothing. Mach himself speaks of "all forms" of the law of causality and in his *Erkenntnis und Irrtum* (2. Auflage, S. 278) makes the self-evident reservation that the concept function can express the "dependence of elements" more precisely only when the possibility is achieved of expressing the results of investigation in *measurable* quantities, which even in sciences like chemistry has only partly been achieved. Apparently, in the opinion of our Machians, who are so credulous as to professorial discoveries, Feuerbach (not to mention Engels) did not know that the concepts order, law, and so forth, can under certain conditions be expressed as a mathematically defined functional relation!

The really important epistemological question that divides the philosophical trends is not the degree of precision attained by our descriptions of causal connections, or whether these descriptions can be expressed in exact mathematical formulae, but whether the source of our knowledge of these connections is objective

natural law or properties of our mind, its innate faculty of apprehending certain *a priori* truths, and so forth. This is what so irrevocably divides the materialists Feuerbach, Marx and Engels from the agnostics (Humeans) Avenarius and Mach.

In certain parts of his works, Mach, whom it would be a sin to accuse of consistency, frequently "forgets" his agreement with Hume and his own subjectivist theory of causality and argues "simply" as a scientist, *i.e.*, from the instinctive materialist standpoint. For instance, in his *Mechanik*, we read of "the uniformity . . . which nature teaches us to find in its phenomena" (French edition, p. 182). But if *we find* uniformity in the phenomena of nature, does this mean that uniformity exists objectively outside our mind? No. On the question of the uniformity of nature Mach also delivers himself thus:

"The power that prompts us to complete in thought facts only partially observed is the power of association. It is greatly strengthened by repetition. It then appears to us to be a power which is independent of our will and of individual facts, a power which directs thoughts *and* [Mach's italics] facts, which keeps both in mutual correspondence as a *law* governing both. That we consider ourselves capable of making predictions with the help of such a law only [!] proves that there is sufficient uniformity in our environment, but it does not prove the *necessity* of the success of our predictions" (*Wärmelehre*, S. 383).

It follows that we may and ought to look for a necessity *apart from* the uniformity of our environment, *i.e.*, of nature! Where to look for it is the secret of idealist philosophy, which is afraid to recognise man's perceptive faculty as a simple reflection of nature. In his last work, *Erkenntnis und Irrtum*, Mach even defines a law of nature as a "limitation of expectation" (2. Auflage, S. 450 ff.)! Solipsism claims its own.

Let us examine the position of other writers of the same philosophical trend. The Englishman, Karl Pearson, expresses himself with characteristic precision (*The Grammar of Science*, 2nd ed.):

"The laws of science are products of the human mind rather than factors of the external world" (p. 36). "Those, whether poets or materialists, who do homage to nature, as the sovereign of man, too often forget that the order and complexity they admire are at least as much a product of man's perceptive and reasoning faculties as are their own memories and thoughts" (p. 185). "The comprehensive character of natural law is due to the ingenuity of the human mind" (*ibid.*).

"*Man is the creator of natural law,*" it is stated in Chapter II, § 4. "There is more meaning in the statement that man gives laws to nature than in its converse that nature gives laws to man," although, the worthy professor is regretfully obliged to admit, the latter (materialist) view is "unfortunately far too common today" (p. 87). In the fourth chapter, which is devoted to the question of causality, Pearson formulates the following thesis (§ 11):

*"The necessity lies in the world of conceptions and is only unconsciously and illogically transferred to the world of perceptions."*

It should be noted that for Pearson perceptions or sense-impressions are the reality existing outside us.

"In the uniformity with which sequences of perception are repeated (the routine of perceptions) there is also no inherent necessity, but it is a necessary condition for the existence of thinking beings that there should be a routine in the perceptions. The necessity thus lies in the nature of the thinking being and not in the perceptions themselves; thus it is conceivably a product of the *perceptive faculty*" (p. 139).

Our Machian, with whom Mach himself frequently expresses complete solidarity, thus arrives safely and soundly at pure Kantian idealism: it is man who dictates laws to nature and not nature that dictates laws to man! The important thing is not the repetition of Kant's doctrine of apriorism—which does not define the idealist line in philosophy as such, but only a particular formulation of this line—but the fact that reason, mind, consciousness are here primary, and nature secondary. It is not reason that is a part of nature, one of its highest products, the reflection of its processes, but nature that is a part of reason, which thereby is stretched from the ordinary, simple human reason known to us all to a "stupendous," as Dietzgen puts it, mysterious, divine reason. The Kantian-Machian formula, that "man gives laws to nature," is a fideist formula. If our Machians stare wide-eyed on reading Engels' statement that the fundamental characteristic of materialism is the acceptance of nature and not spirit as primary, it only shows how incapable they are of distinguishing the really important philosophical trends from the mock erudition and sage jargon of the philosophers.



J. Petzoldt, who in his two-volume work analysed and developed Avenarius, may serve as an excellent example of reactionary Machian scholasticism.

"Even to this day," says he, "one hundred and fifty years after Hume, substantiality and causality paralyse the daring of the thinker" (*Einführung in die Philosophie der reinen Erfahrung*, Bd. I, S. 31).

It goes without saying that those who are most "daring" are the solipsists who discovered sensation without organic matter, thought without brain, nature without objective law!

"And the last formulation of causality, which we have not yet mentioned, necessity, or *necessity in nature*, contains something vague and mystical" (the idea of "fetishism," "anthropomorphism," etc.) (pp. 32, 34).

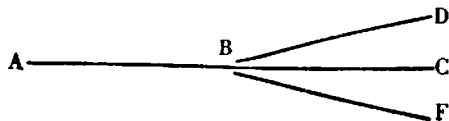
Oh, the poor mystics. Feuerbach. Marx and Engels! They have been talking all the time of necessity in nature, yes, and have even been calling those who hold the Humean position theoretical reactionaries! Petzoldt is above all "anthropomorphism." He has discovered the great "*law of unique determination*," which eliminates every obscurity, every trace of "fetishism," etc., etc., etc. For example, the parallelogram of forces (p. 35). This cannot be "proven"; it must be accepted as a "fact of experience." It cannot be conceded that a body under like impulses will move in different ways.

"We cannot concede nature such indefiniteness and arbitrariness; we must demand from it definiteness and law" (p. 35).

Well, well! We demand obedience to law of nature. The bourgeoisie demands reaction of its professors.

"Our thought demands definiteness from nature, and nature always conforms to this demand; we shall even see that in a certain sense it is compelled to conform to it" (p. 36).

Why, having received an impulse in the direction of the line AB, does a body move towards C and not towards D or F. etc.?



"Why does nature not choose any of the countless other directions?" (p. 37). Because that would be "multiple determination," and the great empirio-critical discovery of Joseph Petzoldt demands *unique determination*.

The empirio-criticists fill scores of pages with such unutterable trash!

"... We have remarked more than once that our thesis does not derive its force from a sum of separate experiences, but that, on the contrary, we demand that nature should recognise its validity (*seine Geltung*). Indeed, even before it becomes a law it has already become for us a principle with which we approach reality, a postulate. It is valid, so to speak, *a priori*, independently of all separate experiences. It would, indeed, be unbecoming for a philosophy of pure experience to preach *a priori* truths and thus relapse into the most sterile metaphysics. Its apriorism can only be a logical one, never a psychological, or metaphysical one" (p. 40).

Of course, if we call apriorism logical, then the reactionary nature of the idea disappears and it becomes elevated to the level of "recent positivism"!

There can be no unique determination of psychical phenomena. Petzoldt further teaches us; the role of imagination, the significance of great inventions, etc., here create exceptions, while the law of nature, or the law of spirit, tolerates "no exceptions" (p. 65). We have before us a pure metaphysician, who has not the slightest inkling of the relativity of the difference between the contingent and the necessary.

I may, perhaps, be reminded—continues Petzoldt—of the motivation of historical events or of the development of character in poetry.

"If we examine the matter carefully we shall find that there is no such unique determination. There is not a single historical event or a single drama in which we could not imagine the participants acting differently under similar psychical conditions. . ." (p. 73). "Unique determination is not only absent in the realm of the psychical, but we are also entitled to demand its absence from reality [Petzoldt's italics]. Our doctrine is thus elevated to the rank of a *postulate*, i.e., to the rank of a fact, which we regard as a necessary condition of a much earlier experience, as its *logical a priori*" (Petzoldt's italics, p. 76).

And Petzoldt continues to operate with this "logical *a priori*" in both volumes of his *Einführung*, and in the booklet issued in

1906.<sup>1</sup> Here is a second instance of a noted empirio-criticist who has imperceptibly slipped into Kantianism and who serves up the most reactionary doctrines with a somewhat different sauce. And this is not fortuitous, for at the very foundations of Mach's and Avenarius' teachings on causality there lies an idealist falsehood, which no high-flown talk of "positivism" can cover up. The distinction between the Humean and the Kantian theories of causality is only a secondary difference of opinion between agnostics who are basically at one, *viz.*, in their denial of objective law in nature, and who thus inevitably condemn themselves to idealist conclusions of one kind or another. A rather more "scrupulous" empirio-criticist than J. Petzoldt, Rudolph Willy, who is ashamed of his kinship with the immanentists, rejects, for example, Petzoldt's whole theory of "unique determination" as leading to nothing but "logical formalism." But does Willy improve his position by disavowing Petzoldt? Not in the least, for he disavows Kantian agnosticism solely for the sake of Humean agnosticism.

"We have known from the time of Hume," he writes, "that 'necessity' is a purely logical (not a 'transcendental') characteristic (*Merkmal*), or, as I would rather say and have already said, a purely verbal (*sprachlich*) characteristic." (R. Willy, *Gegen die Schulweisheit*. München 1905, S. 91: *vgl.* S. 173, 175.)

The agnostic calls our materialist view of necessity "transcendental," for from the standpoint of Kantian and Humean "school wisdom," which Willy does not reject but only furbishes up, any recognition of objective reality given us in experience is an illicit "transcendence."

Among the French writers of the philosophical trend we are analysing, we find Henri Poincaré constantly straying into this same path of agnosticism. Henri Poincaré is a great physicist but a poor philosopher, whose errors Yushkevich, of course, declared to be the last word of recent positivism, so "recent," indeed, that it even required a new "ism," *viz.*, "empirio-symbolism." For Poin-

<sup>1</sup> J. Petzoldt, *Das Weltproblem vom positivistischen Standpunkte aus*, Leipzig 1906, S. 130: "Also from the empirical standpoint there can be a logical *a priori*; causality is the logical *a priori* of the experienced (*erfahrungsmäßige*) permanence of our environment."

caré (with whose views as a whole we shall deal in the chapter on the new physics), the laws of nature are symbols, conventions, which man creates for the sake of "convenience." "The only true objective reality is the internal harmony of the world." By "objective," Poincaré means that which is generally regarded as valid, that which is accepted by the majority of men, or by all;<sup>1</sup> that is to say, in a purely subjectivist manner he destroys objective truth, as do all the Machians. And as regards "harmony," he categorically declares in answer to the question whether it exists *outside of us*—"undoubtedly, no." It is perfectly obvious that the new terms do not in the least change the ancient philosophical position of agnosticism, for the essence of Poincaré's "original" theory amounts to a denial (although he is far from consistent) of objective reality and of objective law in nature. It is, therefore, perfectly natural that in contradistinction to the Russian Machians, who accept new formulations of old errors as the latest discoveries, the German Kantians greeted such views as a conversion to their own views, *i.e.*, to agnosticism, on a fundamental question of philosophy.

"The French mathematician Henri Poincaré," we read in the work of the Kantian, Philipp Frank, "holds the point of view that many of the most general laws of science (*e.g.*, the law of inertia, the law of the conversion of energy, etc.), of which it is so often difficult to say whether they are of empirical or of *a priori* origin, are, in fact, neither one nor the other, but are purely conventional propositions depending upon human discretion. . ." (p. 443). "Thus [exults the Kantian] the latest *Naturphilosophie* unexpectedly renews the fundamental idea of critical idealism, namely, that experience merely fills in a framework which man brings with him from nature. . . ."<sup>2</sup>

We quote this example in order to give the reader a clear idea of the degree of naïveté of our Yushkeviches, who take a "theory of symbolism" for something genuinely *new*, whereas philosophers in the least versed in their subject say plainly and explicitly: he has become converted to the standpoint of critical idealism! For the essence of this point of view does not necessarily lie in the repetition of Kant's formulations, but in the recognition of the fundamental idea *common* to both Hume and Kant, *viz.*, the denial

<sup>1</sup> Henri Poincaré, *La valeur de la science*, Paris, 1905, pp. 7, 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Annalen der Naturphilosophie*, Bd. VI, 1907, S. 443, 447.

of objective law in nature and the deduction of particular "conditions of experience," particular principles, postulates and propositions *from the subject*, from human consciousness, and not from nature. Engels was right when he said that it is not important to which of the numerous schools of materialism or idealism a particular philosopher belongs, but rather whether he takes nature, the external world, matter in motion, or spirit, reason, consciousness, etc., as primary.

Another characterisation of Machism on this question, in contrast to the other philosophical lines, is given by the expert Kantian, E. Lucka. On the question of causality "Mach entirely agrees with Hume."<sup>1</sup>

"P. Volkmann derives the necessity of thought from the necessity of the processes of nature—a standpoint that, in contradistinction to Mach and in agreement with Kant, recognises the *fact* of necessity; but contrary to Kant, it seeks the *source* of necessity not in thought, but in the processes of nature" (p. 424).

Volkmann is a physicist who writes fairly extensively on epistemological questions, and who tends, as do the vast majority of scientists, to materialism, albeit an inconsistent, timid, and incomplete materialism. The recognition of necessity in nature and the derivation from it of necessity in thought is materialism. The derivation of necessity, causality, law, etc., from thought is idealism. The only inaccuracy in the passage quoted is that a total denial of all necessity is attributed to Mach. We have already seen that this is not true either of Mach or of the empirio-critical trend generally, which, having definitely departed from materialism, is inevitably sliding into idealism.

It remains for us to say a few words about the Russian Machians in particular. They would like to be Marxists; they have all "read" Engels' decisive demarcation of materialism from the Humean trend; they could not have failed to learn both from Mach himself and from everybody in the least acquainted with his philosophy that Mach and Avenarius follow the line of

<sup>1</sup> E. Lucka, "*Das Erkenntnisproblem und Machs 'Analyse der Empfindungen'*" ["The Problem of Knowledge and Mach's *Analysis of Sensations*"], in *Kantstudien*, Bd. VIII, S. 409.

Hume. Yet they are all careful *not to say a single word* about Humism and materialism on the question of causality! Their confusion is utter. Let us give a few examples. Mr. P. Yushkevich preaches the "new" empirio-symbolism. The "sensations of blue, hard, etc.—these supposed data of pure experience" and "the creations supposedly of pure reason, such as a chimera or a chess game"—all these are "empirio-symbols" (*Studies, etc.*).

"Knowledge is empirio-symbolic, and as it develops leads to empirio-symbols of a greater degree of symbolisation. . . . The so-called laws of nature . . . are these empirio-symbols. . ." (p. 179). "The so-called true reality, being 'in itself,' is that infinite [a terribly learned fellow, this Mr. Yushkevich!]<sup>1</sup> ultimate system of symbols to which all our knowledge is striving. . ." (p. 188). "The stream of experience . . . which lies at the foundation of our knowledge is . . . irrational . . . illogical. . ." (pp. 187, 194). "Energy is just as little a thing, a substance, as time, space, mass and the other fundamental concepts of science: energy is a constancy, an empirio-symbol, like other empirio-symbols that for a time satisfy the fundamental human need of introducing reason, Logos, into the irrational stream of experience" (p. 209).

Clad like a harlequin in a garish motley of shreds of the "latest" terminology, there stands before us a subjective idealist, for whom the external world, nature and its laws are all symbols of our knowledge. The stream of experience is devoid of reason, order and law: our knowledge brings reason into 'it. The celestial bodies are symbols of human knowledge, and so is the earth. If science teaches us that the earth existed long before it was possible for man and organic matter to have appeared, we, you see, have changed all that! The order of the motion of the planets is brought about *by us*, it is a product of our knowledge. And sensing that human reason is being transformed by such a philosophy into the author and founder of nature, Mr. Yushkevich puts alongside of reason the word *Logos*, that is, reason in the abstract, not reason, but Reason, not a function of the human brain, but something existing prior to any brain, something divine. The last word of "recent positivism" is that old formula of fideism which Feuerbach has already exposed.

Let us take A. Bogdanov. In 1899, when he was still a semi-

<sup>1</sup> The exclamation is provoked by the fact that Yushkevich here uses the foreign word *infinite* with a Russian ending.—*Trans.*

materialist and had only just begun to go astray under the influence of a very great chemist and very muddled philosopher, Wilhelm Ostwald, he wrote:

"The general causal connection of phenomena is the last and best child of human knowledge: it is the universal law, the highest of those laws which, to express it in the words of a philosopher, human reason dictates to nature" (*Fundamental Elements, etc.*, p. 41).

Allah alone knows from what source Bogdanov took this reference. But the fact is that "the words of a philosopher" trustingly repeated by the "Marxist"—are the words of *Kant*. An unpleasant event! And all the more unpleasant in that it cannot even be explained by the "mere" influence of Ostwald.

In 1904, having already managed to discard both natural-historical materialism and Ostwald, Bogdanov wrote:

"... Modern positivism regards the law of causality only as a means of cognitively connecting phenomena into a continuous series, only as a form of co-ordinating experience" (*From the Psychology of Society*, p. 207).

Bogdanov either did not know, or would not admit, that this modern positivism is agnosticism and that it denies the objective necessity of nature, which existed prior to, and outside of, "knowledge" and man. He accepted on faith what the German professors called "modern positivism." Finally, in 1905, having passed through all the previous stages and the stage of empirio-criticism, and being already in the stage of "empirio-monism," Bogdanov wrote:

"Laws do not belong to the sphere of experience... they are not given in it, but are created by thought as a means of organising experience, of harmoniously co-ordinating it into a symmetrical whole" (*Empirio-Monism*, I, p. 40). "Laws are *abstractions of knowledge*; and physical laws possess physical properties just as little as psychological laws possess psychical properties" (*ibid.*).

And so, the law that winter succeeds autumn is not given us in experience but is created by thought as a means of organising, harmonising, co-ordinating . . . what with what, Comrade Bogdanov?

"Empirio-monism is possible only because knowledge actively harmonises experience, eliminating its infinite contradictions, creating for it universal organising forms, replacing the primeval chaotic world of elements by a derivative, ordered world of relations" (p. 57).

That is not true. The idea that knowledge can "create" universal forms, replace the primeval chaos by order, etc., is the idea of idealist philosophy. The world is matter moving in conformity to law, and our knowledge, being the highest product of nature, is in a position only to *reflect* this conformity to law.

In brief, our Machians, blindly believing the "recent" reactionary professors, repeat the mistakes of Kantian and Humean agnosticism on the question of causality and fail to notice either that these doctrines are in absolute contradiction to Marxism, i.e., materialism, or that they themselves are rolling down an inclined plane towards idealism.

#### 4. THE "PRINCIPLE OF ECONOMY OF THOUGHT" AND THE PROBLEM OF THE "UNITY OF THE WORLD"

"The principle of 'the least expenditure of energy,' which Mach, Avenarius and many others made the basis of the theory of knowledge, is unquestionably a 'Marxist' tendency in epistemology."

So Bazarov asserts in the *Studies, etc.*, page 69.

There is "economy" in Marx; there is "economy" in Mach. But is it indeed "unquestionable" that there is even a shadow of resemblance between the two?

Avenarius' work, *Philosophie als Denken der Welt gemäß dem Prinzip des kleinsten Kraftmaßes* (1876), as we have seen, applies this "principle" in such a way that in the name of "economy of thought" *sensation alone* is declared to exist. Both causality and "substance" (a word which the professorial gentlemen, "for the sake of importance," prefer to the clearer and more exact word: matter) are declared "eliminated" on the same plea of economy. Thus we get sensation without matter and thought without brain. This utter nonsense is an attempt to smuggle in *subjective idealism* under a new guise. That *such* precisely is the character of this *basic* work on the celebrated "economy of thought" is, as we have seen, *generally acknowledged* in philosophical literature. That our Machians did not notice the subjective idealism under the "new" flag is a fact belonging to the realm of curiosities.

In the *Analyse der Empfindungen*, Mach refers incidentally to



his work of 1872 on this question. And this work, as we have seen, also propounds the standpoint of *pure* subjectivism and reduces the world to sensations. Thus, both the fundamental works which introduce this famous "principle" into philosophy expound idealism! What is the reason for this? The reason is that if the principle of economy of thought is really made "*the basis of the theory of knowledge*," it can lead to *nothing but* subjective idealism. That it is more "economical" to "think" that only I and my sensations exist is unquestionable, provided we want to introduce such an absurd conception into *epistemology*.

Is it "more economical" to "think" of the atom as indivisible, or as composed of positive and negative electrons? Is it "more economical" to think of the Russian bourgeois revolution as being conducted by the liberals or as being conducted against the liberals? One has only to put the question in order to see the absurdity, the subjectivism of applying the category of "the economy of thought" *here*. Human thought is "economical" only when it *correctly* reflects objective truth, and the criterion of this correctness is practice, experiment and industry. Only by denying objective reality, that is, by denying the *foundations* of Marxism, can one seriously speak of economy of thought in the theory of knowledge.

If we turn to Mach's later works, we shall find in them an *interpretation* of the celebrated principle which frequently amounts to its complete denial. For instance, in the *Wärmelehre* Mach returns to his favourite idea of "the economical nature" of science (2nd German ed., p. 366). But there he adds that we engage in an activity not for the sake of the activity (p. 366; repeated on p. 391): "the purpose of scientific activity is to present the fullest . . . most tranquil . . . picture possible of the world" (p. 366). If this is the case, the "principle of economy" is banished not only from the basis of epistemology, but virtually from epistemology generally. When one says that the purpose of science is to present a true picture of the world (tranquillity is entirely beside the point here), one is repeating the materialist point of view. When one says this, one is admitting the objective reality of the world in relation to our knowledge, of the model in relation to the picture. To talk of *economy* of thought in *such* a connection is merely to use a clumsy and pretentious word in place

of the word "correctness." Mach is muddled here, as usual, and the Machians behold the muddler and worship him!

In *Erkenntnis und Irrtum*, in the chapter entitled "Illustrations of Methods of Investigation," we read the following:

"The 'complete and simplest description' (Kirchhoff, 1874), the 'economical presentation of the factual' (Mach, 1872), the 'concordance of thinking and being and the mutual concordance of the processes of thought' (Grassmann, 1844)—all these, with slight variations, express one and the same thought."

Is this not a model of confusion? "Economy of thought," from which Mach in 1872 inferred that sensations *alone* exist (a point of view which he himself subsequently was obliged to acknowledge an idealist one), is declared to be *equivalent* to the purely materialist dictum of the mathematician Grassmann regarding the necessity of co-ordinating thinking and *being*, equivalent to the simplest *description* (of an *objective reality*, the existence of which it never occurred to Kirchhoff to doubt!).

Such an application of the principle of "economy of thought" is but an example of Mach's curious philosophical waverings. And if all curiosities and lapses are eliminated, the idealist character of "the principle of the economy of thought" becomes unquestionable. For example, the Kantian Hönigswald, controverting the philosophy of Mach, *greet*s his "principle of economy" as an *approach* to the "Kantian circle of ideas" (Dr. Richard Hönigswald, *Zur Kritik der Machschen Philosophie*,<sup>1</sup> Berlin 1903, S. 27). And, in truth, if we do not recognise the objective reality given us in our sensations, whence are we to derive the "principle of economy" if not *from the subject*? Sensations, of course, do not contain any "economy." Hence, thought gives us something which is not contained in sensations! Hence, the "principle of economy" is not taken from experience (*i.e.*, sensations), but precedes all experience and, like a Kantian category, constitutes a logical condition of experience. Hönigswald quotes the following passage from the *Analyse der Empfindungen*:

"We can . . . from our bodily and spiritual stability infer the stability, the uniqueness of determination and the uniformity of the processes of nature" (p. 288).

<sup>1</sup> *A Critique of Mach's Philosophy.—Trans.*

And, indeed, the subjective-idealist character of such propositions and the kinship of Mach to Petzoldt, who has gone to the length of apriorism, are beyond all shadow of doubt.

In connection with "the principle of the economy of thought," the idealist Wundt very aptly characterised Mach as "Kant turned inside out" (*Systematische Philosophie*,<sup>1</sup> Leipzig 1907, S. 128). Kant has *a priori* and experience, Mach has experience and *a priori*, for Mach's principle of the economy of thought is essentially apriorism (p. 130). The connection (*Verknüpfung*) is either in things, as an "objective law of nature [and this Mach emphatically rejects], or else it is a subjective principle of description" (p. 130). The principle of economy with Mach is subjective and *kommt wie aus der Pistole geschossen*—appears nobody knows whence—as a teleological principle which may have a diversity of meanings (p. 131). As you see, experts in philosophical terminology are not as naïve as our Machians, who are blindly prepared to believe that a "new" term can eliminate the contrast between subjectivism and objectivism, between idealism and materialism.

Finally, let us turn to the English philosopher James Ward, who without circumlocution calls himself a spiritualist monist. He does not controvert Mach, but, as we shall see later, utilises the entire Machian trend in physics in his fight against materialism. And he definitely declares that in Mach "the criterion of simplicity is mainly subjective, and not objective" (*Naturalism and Agnosticism*, Vol. I, 3rd ed., p. 82).

That the principle of the economy of thought as the basis of epistemology pleased the German Kantians and English spiritualists will not seem strange after all that has been said above. That people who are desirous of being Marxists should link the political economy of the materialist Marx with the epistemological economy of Mach is simply ludicrous.

It would be appropriate here to say a few words about "the unity of the world." On this question Mr. P. Yushkevich strikingly exemplifies—for the thousandth time perhaps—the abysmal confusion created by our Machians. Engels, in his *Anti-Dühring*, replies to

<sup>1</sup> W. Wundt, *Systematic Philosophy*, Leipzig, 1907.—*Trans.*

Dühring, who had deduced the unity of the world from the unity of thought, as follows:

"The real unity of the world consists in its materiality, and this is proved not by a few juggling phrases, but by a long and protracted development of philosophy and natural science" (p. 53).

Mr. Yushkevich cites this passage and retorts:

"First of all it is not clear what is meant here by the assertion that 'the unity of the world consists in its materiality'" (*op. cit.*, p. 52).

Charming, is it not? This individual undertakes publicly to prate about the philosophy of Marxism, and then declares that the most elementary propositions of materialism are "not clear" to him! Engels showed, using Dühring as an example, that any philosophy that pretends to be consistent can deduce the unity of the world either from thought—in which case it is helpless against spiritualism and fideism (*Anti-Dühring*, p. 53), and its arguments become mere phrase-juggling—or from the objective reality which exists outside us, which in the theory of knowledge has long gone under the name of matter, and which is studied by natural science. It is useless to speak seriously to an individual to whom such a thing is "not clear," for he says it is "not clear" in order fraudulently to evade giving a genuine answer to Engels' clear materialist position. And, doing so, he talks pure Dühringian nonsense about "the cardinal *postulate* of the fundamental homogeneity and connection of being" (Yushkevich, *op. cit.*, p. 51), about postulates being "propositions" of which "it would not be exact to say that they have been deduced from experience, since scientific experience is possible only because they are made the basis of investigation (*op. cit.*). This is nothing but twaddle, for if this individual had the slightest respect for the printed word he would detect the *idealist* character in general, and the *Kantian* character in particular of the idea that there can be postulates which are not taken from experience and without which experience is impossible. A jumble of words culled from diverse books and coupled with the obvious errors of the materialist Dietzgen—such is the "philosophy" of Mr. Yushkevich and his like.

Let us rather examine the argument for the unity of the world expounded by a serious empirio-criticist, Joseph Petzoldt. Section

29, Vol. II, of his *Einführung* is termed: "The Tendency to a Uniform (*einheitlich*) Conception of the Realm of Knowledge; the Postulate of the Unique Determination of All That Happens." And here are a few samples of his line of reasoning:

"Only in *unity*, can one find that natural end beyond which no thought can go and in which, consequently, thought, if it takes into consideration all the facts of the given sphere, can reach quiescence" (p. 79). "It is beyond doubt that nature does not always respond to the demand for *unity*, but it is equally beyond doubt that in many cases it already satisfies the demand for *quiescence* and it must be held, in accordance with all our previous investigations, that nature in all probability will satisfy this demand in the future in all cases. Hence, it would be more correct to describe the actual soul behaviour as a striving for states of stability rather than as a striving for unity. . . . The principle of the states of stability goes farther and deeper. . . . Haeckel's proposal to put the kingdom of the protista alongside the plant and animal kingdom is an untenable solution, for it creates two new difficulties in place of the former one difficulty: while formerly the boundary between the plants and animals was doubtful, now it becomes impossible to demarcate the protista from both plants and animals. . . . Obviously, such a state is not final (*endgültig*). Such *ambiguity* of concepts must in one way or another be eliminated, if only, should there be no other means, by an agreement between the specialists, or by a majority vote" (pp. 80-81).

Enough. I think? It is evident that the empirio-criticist Petzoldt is *not one whit* better than Dühring. But we must be fair even to an adversary; Petzoldt has sufficient scientific integrity to reject materialism as a philosophical trend *unflinchingly and decisively* in all his works. At least, he does not humiliate himself to the extent of posing as a materialist and declaring that the most elementary distinction between the fundamental philosophical trends is "not clear."

## 5. SPACE AND TIME

Recognising the existence of objective reality, *i.e.*, matter in motion independently of our mind, materialism must also inevitably recognise the objective reality of time and space, in contrast above all to Kantianism, which in this question sides with idealism and regards time and space not as objective realities but as forms of human understanding. The basic difference between the two fundamental philosophical lines on this question is also quite clearly recognised by writers of the most diverse trends who are in any way consistent thinkers. Let us begin with the materialists.

"Space and time," says Feuerbach, "are not mere forms of phenomena but essential conditions (*Wesensbedingungen*) . . . of being" (*Werke*, II, S. 332).

Regarding the sensible world we know through sensations as objective reality, Feuerbach naturally also rejects the phenomenalist (as Mach would call his own conception) or agnostic (as Engels calls it) conception of space and time. Just as things or bodies are not mere phenomena, not complexes of sensations, but objective realities acting on our senses, so space and time are not mere forms of phenomena, but objectively real forms of being. There is nothing in the world but matter in motion, and matter in motion cannot move otherwise than in space and time. Human conceptions of space and time are relative, but these relative conceptions go to compound absolute truth. These relative conceptions, in their development, move towards absolute truth and approach nearer and nearer to it. The mutability of human conceptions of space and time no more refutes the objective reality of space and time than the mutability of scientific knowledge of the structure and forms of matter in motion refutes the objective reality of the external world.

Engels, exposing the inconsistent and muddled materialist Dühring, catches him on the very point where he speaks of the change in the *conception* of time (a question beyond controversy for contemporary philosophers of any importance even of the *most diverse* philosophical trends) but *evades* a direct answer to the question: are space and time real or ideal, and are our relative conceptions of space and time *approximations* to objectively real forms of being; or are they only products of the developing, organising and harmonising human mind? This and this alone is the basic epistemological problem on which the truly fundamental philosophical trends are divided. Engels, in *Anti-Dühring*, says:

"We are here not in the least concerned as to what ideas change in Herr Dühring's head. The subject at issue is not the *idea* of time, but *real* time, which Herr Dühring cannot rid himself of so cheaply [*i.e.*, by the use of such phrases as: the mutability of our conceptions]" (*op. cit.*, p. 62).

This would seem so clear that even the Yushkeviches should be able to grasp the essence of the matter! Engels sets up against Dühring the proposition of *reality* which is generally accepted by and

obvious to every materialist, *viz.*, the objective reality of time, and says that *one cannot escape* a direct affirmation or denial of this proposition merely by talking of the change in the *conceptions* of space and time. The point is not that Engels denies the necessity and scientific value of investigations into the change and development of our conceptions of time and space, but that we should give a consistent answer to the epistemological question, *viz.*, the question of the source and significance of human knowledge in general. Any moderately intelligent philosophical idealist—and Engels when he speaks of idealists has in mind the great consistent idealists of classical philosophy—will readily admit the development of our conceptions of time and space; he would not cease to be an idealist for thinking, for example, that our developing ideas of time and space are approaching towards the absolute idea of time and space, and so forth. It is impossible to hold consistently to a standpoint in philosophy which is inimical to all forms of fideism and idealism if we do not definitely and resolutely recognise that our developing conceptions of time and space *reflect* an objectively real time and space; that here, too, as in general, they are approaching objective truth.

"The basic forms of all being," Engels admonishes Dühring, "are space and time, and existence out of time is just as gross an absurdity as existence out of space" (*op. cit.*).

Why was it necessary for Engels, in the first half of the quotation, to repeat Feuerbach almost literally and, in the second, to recall the struggle which Feuerbach fought so successfully against the utter absurdities of theism? Because Dühring, as one sees from this same chapter of Engels', could not get the ends of his philosophy to meet without resorting now to the "final cause" of the world, now to the "initial impulse" (which is another expression for the concept "God," Engels says). Dühring no doubt wanted to be a materialist and atheist no less sincerely than our Machians want to be Marxists, but he *was unable* consistently to develop the philosophical point of view that would really cut the ground from under the idealist and theist absurdity. Since he did not recognise, or, at least, did not recognise clearly and distinctly (for he wavered and was muddled on this question), the objective reality of time and space, it was not accidental but inevitable that Dühring should slide down

an inclined plane to "final causes" and "initial impulses"; for he had deprived himself of the objective criterion which prevents one going beyond the bounds of time and space. If time and space are *only* conceptions, man, who created them, is justified in *going beyond their bounds*, and bourgeois professors are justified in receiving salaries from reactionary governments for defending the right to go beyond these bounds, for directly or indirectly defending mediæval "absurdity."

Engels pointed out to Dühring that the denial of the objective reality of time and space is theoretically philosophical confusion, while practically it is capitulation to, or impotence in face of, fideism.

Behold now the teachings of "recent positivism" on this subject. We read in Mach: "Space and time are well-ordered (*wohlgeordnete*) systems of series of sensations" (*Mechanik*, 3. Auflage, S. 498). This is palpable idealist nonsense, such as inevitably follows from the doctrine that bodies are complexes of sensations. According to Mach, it is not man with his sensations that exists in space and time, but space and time that exist in man, that depend upon man and are generated by man. He feels that he is falling into idealism, and "resists" by making a host of reservations and, like Dühring, burying the question under lengthy disquisitions (see especially *Erkenntnis und Irrtum*) on the mutability of our conceptions of space and time, their relativity, and so forth. But this does not save him, and cannot save him, for one can really overcome the idealist position on this question only by recognising the objective reality of space and time. And this Mach will not do at any price. He constructs his epistemological theory of time and space on the principle of relativism, and that is all. In the very nature of things such a construction can lead to nothing but subjective idealism, as we have already made clear when speaking of absolute and relative truth.

Resisting the idealist conclusions which inevitably follow from his premises, Mach argues against Kant and insists that our conception of space is derived from experience (*Erkenntnis und Irrtum*, 2. Auflage, S. 350, 385). But if objective reality is *not* given us in experience (as Mach teaches), such an objection to Kant does not in the least destroy the general position of agnosticism in the case



either of Kant or of Mach. If our conception of space is taken from experience and is *not* a reflection of objective reality outside us, Mach's theory is idealistic. The existence of nature *in time*, measured in millions of years, *prior to* the appearance of man and human experience, shows how absurd this idealist theory is.

"In a physiological respect," writes Mach, "time and space are systems of sensations of orientation which together with sense-perceptions determine the discharge (*Auslösung*) of biologically purposive reactions of adaptation. In a physical respect, *time and space are interdependencies of physical elements*" (*ibid.*, p. 434).

The relativist Mach confines himself to an examination of the *concept* of time in its various aspects! And like Dühring he gets nowhere. If "elements" are sensations, then the dependence of physical elements upon each other cannot exist outside of man, and could not have existed prior to man and prior to organic matter. If the sensations of time and space can give man a biologically purposive orientation, this can only be so on the condition that these sensations reflect an *objective reality* outside man: man could never have adapted himself biologically to the environment if his sensations had not given him an *objectively correct* presentation of that environment. The theory of space and time is inseparably connected with the answer to the fundamental question of epistemology: are our sensations images of bodies and things, or are bodies complexes of our sensations? Mach merely blunders about between the two answers.

In modern physics, he says, Newton's idea of absolute time and space prevails (pp. 442-44), of time and space as such. This idea seems "to us" senseless, Mach continues—apparently not suspecting the existence of materialists and of a materialist theory of knowledge. But *in practice*, he claims, this view was *harmless* (*unschädlich*, p. 442) and therefore for a long time escaped criticism.

This naïve remark regarding the harmlessness of the materialist view betrays Mach completely. Firstly, it is not true that for a "long time" the idealists did not criticise this view. Mach simply ignores the struggle between the idealist and materialist theories of knowledge on this question; he evades giving a plain and direct statement of these two views. Secondly, by recognising "the harmlessness" of the

materialist views he contests, Mach thereby in fact admits their correctness. For if they were incorrect, how could they have remained harmless throughout the course of centuries? What has become of the criterion of practice with which Mach attempted to flirt? The materialist view of the objective reality of time and space can be "harmless" only because natural science *does not transcend* the bounds of time and space, the bounds of the material world, leaving this occupation to the professors of reactionary philosophy. Such "harmlessness" is equivalent to correctness. It is Mach's idealist view of space and time that is "harmful," for, in the first place, it opens the door wide for fideism and, in the second place, *seduces* Mach himself into drawing reactionary conclusions. For instance, in 1872 Mach wrote that "one does not have to conceive of the chemical elements in a space of three dimensions" (*Erhaltung der Arbeit*, S. 29, 55). To do so would show us

"what an unnecessary restriction we impose upon ourselves. There is no more necessity to think of what is mere thought (*das bloß Gedachte*) spatially, that is to say, in relation to the visible and tangible, than there is to think of it in a definite pitch" (p. 27). "The reason why a satisfactory theory of electricity has not yet been established is perhaps because we have insisted on explaining electrical phenomena in terms of molecular processes in a three-dimensional space" (p. 30).

From the standpoint of the straightforward and unmuddled Machism which Mach openly advocated in 1872, it is indisputable that if molecules, atoms, in a word, chemical elements, cannot be perceived, they are "mere thought" (*das bloß Gedachte*). If so, and if space and time have no objective reality, it is obvious that it is not essential to think of atoms *spatially*! Let physics and chemistry "restrict themselves" to a three-dimensional space in which matter moves; for the explanation of electricity, however, we may seek its elements in a space which is *not* three-dimensional!

That our Machians should circumspectly avoid all reference to this absurdity of Mach's, although he repeats it in 1906 (*Erkenntnis und Irrtum*, 2. Auflage, S. 418), is understandable, for otherwise they would have to raise the question of the idealist and materialist views of space point-blank, without evasions and without attempting to "reconcile" these antagonistic positions. It is likewise understandable that in the 'seventies, when Mach was still entirely

unknown and when even "orthodox physicists" refused to publish his articles, one of the chiefs of the immanentist school, Anton von Leclair, should *eagerly* have seized upon *precisely this argument* of Mach's as a noteworthy renunciation of materialism and a recognition of idealism! For at that time Leclair had not yet invented, or had not yet borrowed from Schuppe and Schubert-Soldern, or J. Rehmke, the "new" sobriquet, "immanentist school," but *plainly* called himself a *critical idealist*.<sup>1</sup> This unequivocal advocate of fideism, who openly preached it in his philosophical works, immediately proclaimed Mach a great philosopher because of these statements, a "revolutionary in the best sense of the word" (p. 252); and he was absolutely right. Mach's argument amounts to deserting science for fideism. Science was seeking, both in 1872 and in 1906, is now seeking, and is discovering—at least *it is groping its way towards*—the atom of electricity, the electron, in three-dimensional space. Science does not doubt that the substance it is investigating exists in three-dimensional space and, hence, that the particles of that substance, although they be so small that we cannot see them, must also "necessarily" exist in this three-dimensional space. Since 1872, during the course of three decades of stupendous and dazzling scientific successes in the problem of the structure of matter, the materialist view of space and time has remained "harmless," i.e., compatible, as heretofore, with science, while the contrary view of Mach and Co. was a "harmful" capitulation to the position of fideism.

In his *Mechanik*, Mach defends the mathematicians who are investigating the problem of conceivable spaces with  $n$  dimensions; he defends them against the charge of drawing "preposterous" conclusions from their investigations. The defence is absolutely and undoubtedly just, but see the *epistemological* position Mach takes up in this defence. Recent mathematics, Mach says, has raised the very important and useful question of a space of  $n$  dimensions as a conceivable space; nevertheless, three-dimensional space remains

<sup>1</sup> Anton von Leclair, *Der Realismus der modernen Naturwissenschaft im Lichte der von Berkeley und Kant angebahnten Erkenntniskritik* [The Realism of Modern Science in the Light of Berkeley's and Kant's Critique of Knowledge], Prag 1879.

the only "real case" (*ein wirklicher Fall*) (3rd German ed., pp. 183-85). In vain, therefore, "have many theologians, who experience difficulty in deciding where to place hell," as well as the spiritualists, sought to derive advantage from the fourth dimension (*ibid.*).

Very good! Mach refuses to join company with the theologians and the spiritualists. But how does he dissociate himself from them in his *theory of knowledge*? By stating that three-dimensional space alone is *real*! But what sort of defence is it against the theologians and their like when you deny objective reality to space and time? Why, it comes to this, that when you have to dissociate yourself from the spiritualists you resort to tacit borrowings from the materialists. For the materialists, by recognising the real world, the matter we perceive, as an *objective* reality, have the right to conclude therefrom that *no* human thought, whatever its purpose, is valid if it goes beyond the bounds of time and space. But you Machian gentlemen deny the objective validity of "reality" when you combat materialism, yet secretly introduce it again when you have to combat an idealism that is consistent, fearless and frank throughout. If in the *relative* conception of time and space there is nothing but relativity, if there is no objective reality (*i.e.*, reality independent of man and mankind) reflected by these relative concepts, why should mankind, why should the majority of mankind, not be entitled to conceive of beings outside time and space? If Mach is entitled to seek atoms of electricity, or atoms in general, *outside* three-dimensional space, why should the majority of mankind not be entitled to seek the atoms, or the foundations of morals, *outside* three-dimensional space?

"There has never been an accoucheur who has helped a delivery by means of the fourth dimension," Mach goes on to say.

An excellent argument—but only for those who regard the criterion of practice as a confirmation of the *objective* truth and *objective* reality of our perceptual world. If our sensations give us an objectively true image of the external world, existing independently of us, the argument based on the accoucheur, on human practice generally, is valid. But if so, Machism as a philosophical trend is not valid.

"I hope, however," Mach continues, referring to his work of 1872, "that nobody will defend ghost-stories (*die Kosten einer Spukgeschichte bestreiten*) with the help of what I have said and written on this subject."

One cannot hope that Napoleon did not die on May 5, 1821. One cannot hope that Machism will not be used in the service of "ghost-stories" when it has already served and continues to serve the immanentists!

And not only the immanentists, as we shall see later. Philosophical idealism is nothing but a disguised and embellished ghost-story. Look at the French and English representatives of empirio-criticism, who are less flowery than the German representatives of this philosophical trend. Poincaré says that the concepts space and time are relative and that it follows (for non-materialists "it follows" indeed) that "nature does not impose them upon us, but we impose them upon nature. for we find them convenient" (*op. cit.*, p. 6.). Does this not justify the exultation of the German Kantians? Does this not confirm Engels' statement that consistent philosophical doctrines must take either nature or human thought as primary?

The views of Karl Pearson are quite definite. He says:

"Of time as of space we cannot assert a real existence: it is not in things but in our mode of perceiving them" (*op. cit.*, p. 184).

This is idealism, pure and simple.

"Like space, it [time] appears to us as one of the planes on which that great sorting-machine, the human perceptive faculty, arranges its material" (*ibid.*).

Pearson's final conclusion, expounded as usual in clear and precise theses, is as follows:

"Space and time are not realities of the phenomenal world, but the modes under which we perceive things apart. They are not infinitely large nor infinitely divisible, but are essentially limited by the contents of our perception" (p. 191, summary of Chapter V on Space and Time).

This conscientious and scrupulous foe of materialism, with whom, we repeat, Mach frequently expresses his complete agreement and who in his turn explicitly expresses his agreement with Mach, invents no special signboard for his philosophy, and without the least ambiguity names Hume and Kant as the classics from whom he derives his philosophical trend! (p. 192).

And while in Russia there are naïve people who believe that Machism has provided a "new" solution of the problem of space and time, in English writings we find that scientists, on the one hand, and idealist philosophers, on the other, at once took up a definite position in regard to Karl Pearson. Here, for example, is the opinion of Lloyd Morgan, the biologist:

"Physics as such accepts the phenomenal world as external to, and for its purposes independent of, the mind of the investigator. . . . He [Professor Pearson] is forced to go to a position which is largely idealistic. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

"Physics, as a science, is wise, I take it, in dealing with space and time in frankly objective terms, and I think the biologist may still discuss the distribution of organisms in space and the geologist their distribution in time, without pausing to remind their readers that after all they are only dealing with sense-impressions and stored sense-impressions and certain forms of perceptions. . . . All this may be true enough, but it is out of place either in physics or biology" (p. 304).

Lloyd Morgan is a representative of the kind of agnosticism that Engels calls "shamefaced materialism," and however "conciliatory" the tendencies of such a philosophy are, nevertheless it proved impossible to reconcile Pearson's views with science. With Pearson "at first the mind is in space, and afterwards, space in the mind," says another critic.<sup>2</sup>

"There can be no doubt," remarked a defender of Pearson, R. J. Ryle, "that the doctrine as to the nature of space and time which is associated with the name of Kant is the most important positive addition which has been made to the idealistic theory of human knowledge since the days of Bishop Berkeley; and it is one of the noteworthy features of the *Grammar of Science* that here, perhaps for the first time in the writings of English men of science, we find at once a full recognition of the general truth of Kant's doctrine, a short but clear exposition of it. . . ."<sup>3</sup>

Thus we find that in England the Machians themselves, their adversaries among the scientists, and their adherents among the professional philosophers do not entertain even a *shadow of doubt* as to the idealist character of Mach's doctrine of time and space. Only a few Russian writers, would-be Marxists, failed "to notice" it.

<sup>1</sup> *Natural Science*, Vol. I, 1892, p. 300.

<sup>2</sup> J. M. Bentley, *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. VI, 1897, p. 523.

<sup>3</sup> R. J. Ryle, *Natural Science*, August 1892, p. 454.

"Many of Engels' particular views," V. Bazarov, for instance, writes, in the *Studies* (p. 67), "as for example his conception of 'pure' time and space, are now obsolete."

Yes, indeed! The views of the materialist Engels are now obsolete, but the views of the idealist Pearson and the muddled idealist Mach are very modern! The most curious thing of all is that Bazarov does not even doubt that the views of space and time, *viz.*, the recognition or denial of their objective reality, can be classed among "*particular views*," in contradistinction to the "*starting point of the world outlook*" spoken of by this author in his next sentence. Here is an example of that "eclectic pauper's broth" of which Engels was wont to speak in reference to German philosophy of the 'eighties. For to contrast the "starting point" of Marx's and Engels' materialist world outlook with their "particular view" of the objective reality of time and space is as utterly nonsensical as though you were to contrast the "starting point" of Marx's economic theory with his "particular view" of surplus value. To sever Engels' doctrine of the objective reality of time and space from his doctrine of the transformation of "things-in-themselves" into things-for-us," from his recognition of objective and absolute truth, *viz.*, the objective reality given us in our sensations, and from his recognition of objective law, causality and necessity in nature—is to reduce an integral philosophy to an utter jumble. Like all the Machians, Bazarov erred in confounding the mutability of human conceptions of time and space, their exclusively relative character, with the immutability of the fact that man and nature exist only in time and space, and that beings outside time and space, as invented by the priests and maintained by the imagination of the ignorant and downtrodden mass of humanity, are disordered fantasies, the artifices of philosophical idealism—useless products of a useless social system. The teachings of science on the structure of matter, on the chemical composition of food, on the atom and the electron, may and do become obsolete, but the truth that man is unable to subsist on ideas and to beget children by platonic love alone never becomes obsolete. And a philosophy that denies the objective reality of time and space is as absurd, as intrinsically rotten and false as is the denial of these latter truths. The artifices of the idealists and the agnostics are on the whole as

hypocritical as the sermons on platonic love of the pharisees!

In order to illustrate this distinction between the relativity of our concepts of time and space and the *absolute* opposition, within the bounds of epistemology, between the materialist and idealist lines on this question, I shall further quote a characteristic passage from a very old and very pure "empirio-criticist," namely, the Humean Schulze-Aenesidemus, who wrote in 1792:

"If we infer 'things outside us' from ideas and thoughts within us, [then] space and time are something real and actually existing outside us, for the existence of bodies can be conceived only in an existing (*vorhandenen*) space, and the existence of changes only in an existing time" (*op. cit.*, p. 100).

Exactly! While firmly rejecting materialism, and even the slightest concession to materialism, Schulze, the follower of Hume, described in 1792 the relation between the question of space and time and the question of an objective reality outside us just as the materialist Engels described it in 1894 (the last preface to *Anti-Dühring* is dated May 23, 1894). This does not mean that during these hundred years our ideas of time and space have undergone no change, or that a vast amount of new material has not been gathered on the *development* of these ideas (material to which both Voroshilov-Chernov and Voroshilov-Valentinov refer as supposedly refuting Engels). This does mean that the *relation between* materialism and agnosticism, as fundamental trends in philosophy, could not have changed, in spite of all the "new" names paraded by our Machians.

And Bogdanov too contributes absolutely nothing but "new" names to the old philosophy of idealism and agnosticism. When he repeats the arguments of Hering and Mach on the difference between physiological and geometrical space, or between perceptual and abstract space (*Empirio-Monism*, Bk. I, p. 26), he is fully repeating the mistake of Dühring. It is one thing, how, with the help of various sense-organs, man perceives space, and how, in the course of a long historical development, abstract ideas of space are derived from these perceptions; it is an entirely different thing whether there is an objective reality independent of mankind which corresponds to these perceptions and conceptions of mankind. This latter question, although it is the only philosophical question, Bogdanov



"did not notice" beneath the mass of detailed investigations on the former question, and he was therefore unable clearly to distinguish between Engels' materialism and Mach's confusion.

Time, like space, is "a form of social co-ordination of the experiences of different people"; their "objectivity" lies in their "general significance" (*ibid.*, p. 34).

This is absolutely false. Religion also has general significance as expressing the social co-ordination of the experience of a large section of humanity. But there is no objective reality that corresponds to the teachings of religion, for example, on the past of the earth and the creation of the world. There is an objective reality that *corresponds* to the teaching of science (although it is as relative at every stage in the development of science as every stage in the development of religion is relative) that the earth existed *prior to any society, prior to man, prior to organic matter*, and that it has existed for a *definite* time and in a *definite* space in relation to the other planets. According to Bogdanov, various forms of space and time adapt themselves to man's experience and his perceptive faculty. As a matter of fact, just the reverse is true: our "experience" and our perceptions adapt themselves more and more to *objective* space and time, and reflect them ever more correctly and profoundly.

## 6. FREEDOM AND NECESSITY

On pages 140-41 of the *Studies*, A. Lunacharsky quotes the argument given by Engels in *Anti-Dühring* on this question and fully endorses the "remarkably precise and apt" statement of the problem made by Engels in that "wonderful page" of the work mentioned.<sup>1</sup>

There is, indeed, much that is wonderful here. And even more "wonderful" is the fact that neither Lunacharsky, nor the whole crowd of other Machian would-be Marxists, "noticed" the epistemological significance of Engels' discussion of freedom and necessity. They read it and they copied it, but they did not make head or tail of it.

<sup>1</sup> Lunacharsky says: "... a wonderful page of 'religious economics.' I say this at the risk of provoking a smile from the 'irreligious' reader." However good your intentions may be, Comrade Lunacharsky, your flirtation with religion provokes not smiles, but disgust.

Engels says:

"Hegel was the first to state correctly the relation between freedom and necessity. To him, freedom is the appreciation of necessity. 'Necessity is *blind only in so far as it is not understood*.' Freedom does not consist in the dream of independence of natural laws, but in the knowledge of these laws, and in the possibility this gives of systematically making them work towards definite ends. This holds good in relation both to the laws of external nature and to those which govern the bodily and mental existence of men themselves—two classes of laws which we can separate from each other at most only in thought but not in reality. Freedom of the will therefore means nothing but the capacity to make decisions with real knowledge of the subject. Therefore the *freer* a man's judgment is in relation to a definite question, with so much the greater *necessity* is the content of this judgment determined. . . . Freedom therefore consists in the control over ourselves and over external nature which is founded on knowledge of natural necessity."<sup>1</sup>

Let us examine the epistemological premises upon which this argument is based.

Firstly, Engels at the very outset of his argument recognises laws of nature, laws of external nature, the necessity of nature—*i.e.*, all that Mach, Avenarius, Petzoldt and Co. characterise as "metaphysics." If Lunacharsky had really wanted to reflect on Engels' "wonderful" argument he could not have helped noticing the fundamental difference between the materialist theory of knowledge and agnosticism and idealism, which deny law in nature or declare it to be only "logical," etc., etc.

Secondly, Engels does not attempt to contrive "definitions" of freedom and necessity, the kind of scholastic definition with which the reactionary philosophers (like Avenarius) and their disciples (like Bogdanov) are most concerned. Engels takes the knowledge and will of man, on the one hand, and the necessity of nature, on the other, and instead of giving definitions, simply says that the necessity of nature is primary, and human will and mind secondary. The latter must necessarily and inevitably adapt themselves to the former. Engels regards this as so obvious that he does not waste words explaining his view. It needs the Russian Machians to *complain* of Engels' general definition of materialism (that nature is primary and mind secondary; remember Bogdanov's "perplexity" on this point!), and at the same time to regard *one of the particular appli-*

<sup>1</sup> *Anti-Dühring*. p. 128.—*Trans.*

cations by Engels of this general and fundamental definition as "wonderful" and "remarkably apt"!

Thirdly, Engels does not doubt the existence of "blind necessity." He admits the existence of a necessity *unknown* to man. This is quite obvious from the passage just quoted. But how, from the standpoint of the Machians, can man know of the existence of what he *does not know*? Is it not "mysticism," "metaphysics," the admission of "fetishes" and "idols," is it not the "Kantian unknowable thing-in-itself" to say that we know of the existence of an unknown necessity? Had the Machians given the matter any thought, they could not have failed to observe the *complete identity* between Engels' argument on the knowability of the objective nature of things and on the transformation of "things-in-themselves" into "things-for-us," on the one hand, and his argument on a blind, unknown necessity, on the other. The development of consciousness in each human individual and the development of the collective knowledge of humanity at large presents us at every step with examples of the transformation of the unknown "thing-in-itself" into the known "thing-for-us," of the transformation of blind, unknown necessity, "necessity-in-itself," into the known "necessity-for-us." Epistemologically, there is no difference whatever between these two transformations, for the basic point of view in both cases is the same, *viz.*, materialistic, the recognition of the objective reality of the external world and of the laws of external nature, and of the fact that this world and these laws are fully knowable to man but can never be known to him *with finality*. We do not know the necessity of nature in the phenomena of the weather, and to that extent we are inevitably—slaves of the weather. But while we *do not know this necessity*, we *do know that it exists*. Whence this knowledge? From the very source whence comes the knowledge that things exist outside our mind and independently of it, namely, from the development of our knowledge, which provides millions of examples to every individual of knowledge replacing ignorance when an object acts upon our sense-organs, and conversely of ignorance replacing knowledge when the possibility of such action is eliminated.

Fourthly, in the above-mentioned argument Engels plainly employs the "*salto-vitale*" method in philosophy, that is to say, he makes

a *leap* from theory to practice. Not a single one of the learned (and stupid) professors of philosophy, in whose footsteps our Machians follow, would permit himself to make such a leap, for this would be a disgraceful thing for a devotee of "pure science" to do. For them the theory of knowledge, which demands the cunning concoction of definitions, is one thing, while practice is another. For Engels all living human practice permeates the theory of knowledge itself and provides an *objective* criterion of truth. For until we know a law of nature, it, existing and acting independently and outside our mind, makes us slaves of "blind necessity." But once we come to know this law, which acts (as Marx pointed out a thousand times) *independently* of our will and our mind, we become the lords of nature. The mastery of nature manifested in human practice is a result of an objectively correct reflection within the human head of the phenomena and processes of nature, and is proof of the fact that this reflection (within the limits of what is revealed by practice) is objective, absolute, and eternal truth.

What is the result? Every step in Engels' argument, literally almost every phrase, every proposition, is constructed entirely and exclusively upon the epistemology of dialectical materialism, upon premises which stand out in striking contrast to the Machian nonsense about bodies being complexes of sensations, of "elements," of "the coincidence of sense-perceptions with the reality that exists outside us," etc., etc., etc. Without being the least deterred by this, the Machians abandon materialism and repeat (à la Berman) the vulgar banalities about dialectics, and at the same time welcome with open arms *one* of the applications of dialectical materialism. They have taken their philosophy from an eclectic pauper's broth and are continuing to offer this hotchpotch to the reader. They take a bit of agnosticism and a morsel of idealism from Mach, add to it slices of dialectical materialism from Marx, and call this mixture a *development* of Marxism. They imagine that if Mach, Avenarius, Petzoldt, and all those authorities of theirs have not the slightest inkling of how Hegel and Marx solved the problem (of freedom and necessity), this is purely accidental: why, it was simply because they overlooked a certain page in a certain book, and not because these "authorities" were and are utter ignoramuses on the subject of the *real* progress

made by philosophy in the nineteenth century and because they were and are philosophical obscurantists.

Here is the argument of one such obscurantist, the philosophy professor-in-ordinary at the University of Vienna, Ernst Mach:

"The correctness of the position of 'determinism' or 'indeterminism' cannot be demonstrated. Only a perfect science or a provedly impossible science could decide this question. It is a matter of the presuppositions which we bring (*man heranbringt*) to the consideration of things, depending upon whether we ascribe to previous successes or failures of the investigation a greater or lesser subjective weight (*subjektives Gewicht*). But during the investigation every thinker is of necessity a theoretical determinist" (*Erkenntnis und Irrtum*, 2. Aufl., S. 282 u. 283).

Is this not obscurantism, when pure theory is carefully partitioned off from practice; when determinism is confined to the field of "investigation," while in the field of morality, social activity, and all fields other than "investigation" the question is left to a "subjective estimate"? In my workroom, says the learned pedant, I am a determinist; but that the philosopher should seek to obtain an integral conception of the world based on determinism, embracing both theory and practice—of that there is no mention. Mach utters banalities because on the theoretical problem of freedom and necessity he is entirely at sea.

". . . Every new discovery discloses the defects of our knowledge, reveals a residue of dependencies hitherto unheeded" (p. 283).

Excellent! And is this "residue" the "thing-in-itself," which our knowledge reflects ever more deeply? Not at all:

". . . Thus, he also who in theory defends extreme determinism, must nevertheless in practice remain an indeterminist. . ." (p. 283).

And so things have been amicably divided<sup>1</sup>: theory for the professors, practice for the theologians! Or, objectivism (*i.e.*, "shamefaced" materialism) in theory and the "subjective method in sociology" in practice. No wonder the Russian ideologists of philistinism, the Narodniki, from Lesseovich to Chernov, sympathise with this banal philosophy. But it is very sad that would-be Marxists have been capti-

<sup>1</sup> Mach in the *Mechanik* says: "Religious opinions are people's *strictly private affairs* as long as they do not obtrude them on others and do not apply them to things which belong to another sphere" (p. 456).

vated by such nonsense and are embarrassedly covering up the more absurd of Mach's conclusions.

But on the question of the will Mach is not content with confusion and partial agnosticism: he goes much further.

"... Our sensation of hunger," we read in the *Mechanik*, "is not so essentially different from the affinity of sulphuric acid for zinc, and our will is not so very different from the pressure of the stone on its support. . . . We shall thus find ourselves [that is, if we hold such a view] nearer to nature without it being necessary to resolve ourselves into an incomprehensible nebula of molecules, or to resolve nature into a system of phantoms" (French translation, p. 434).

Thus there is no need for materialism ("nebulous atoms" or electrons, *i.e.*, the recognition of the objective reality of the material world), there is no need for an idealism which would recognise the world as the "otherness" of spirit; but there is a possible idealism which recognises the world as *will*! We are superior not only to materialism, but also to the idealism of "any" Hegel; but we are not averse to coquetting with an idealism like Schopenhauer's! Our Machians, who assume an air of injured innocence at every reminder of Mach's kinship to philosophical idealism, preferred to keep silent on this delicate question too. Yet it is difficult to find in philosophical writings an exposition of Mach's views which does not mention his tendency towards *Willensmetaphysik*, *i.e.*, voluntaristic idealism. This was pointed out by J. Baumann,<sup>1</sup> and in replying to him the Machian Kleinpeter does not take exception to this point, but declares that Mach is, of course, "nearer to Kant and Berkeley than to the metaphysical empiricism prevailing in science" (*i.e.*, instinctive materialism; *ibid.*, Vol. VI. p. 87). This is also pointed out by E. Becher, who remarks that if Mach in some places advocates voluntaristic metaphysics, and in others renounces it, it only testifies to the arbitrariness of his terminology; in fact, Mach's kinship to voluntarist metaphysics is beyond doubt.<sup>2</sup> Even Lucka admits the admixture of this metaphysics (*i.e.*, idealism) to

<sup>1</sup> *Archiv für systematische Philosophie*, 1897, Bd. IV, S. 63, article on Ernst Mach's philosophical views.

<sup>2</sup> Erich Becher, "The Philosophical Views of Ernst Mach," in the *Philosophical Review*, 1905, Vol. XIV, 5, pp. 536, 546, 547, 548.

"phenomenalism" (*i.e.*, agnosticism).<sup>1</sup> Wundt also points this out.<sup>2</sup> That Mach is a phenomenalist who is "not averse to voluntaristic idealism" is attested also in Ueberweg-Heinze's textbook on the history of modern philosophy.<sup>3</sup>

In short, Mach's eclecticism and his tendency to idealism are clear to everyone but the Russian Machians.

<sup>1</sup> E. Lucka, "*Das Erkenntnisproblem und Machs Analyse der Empfindungen*," *Kantstudien*, Bd. VIII, 1903, S. 400.

<sup>2</sup> *Systematische Philosophie*, Leipzig 1907, S. 131.

<sup>3</sup> *Grundriß der Geschichte der Philosophie* [*Outline of the History of Philosophy*], 9. Aufl., Berlin 1903, Bd. IV, S. 250.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE PHILOSOPHICAL IDEALISTS AS COMRADES-IN-ARMS AND SUCCESSORS OF EMPIRIO-CRITICISM

So far we have examined empirio-criticism taken by itself. We must now examine it in its historical development and in its connection and relation with other philosophical trends. First comes the question of the relation of Mach and Avenarius to Kant.

#### 1. THE CRITICISM OF KANTIANISM FROM THE LEFT AND FROM THE RIGHT

Both Mach and Avenarius began their philosophical careers in the 'seventies, when the fashionable cry in German professorial circles was "Back to Kant." And, indeed, both founders of empirio-criticism in their philosophical development started from Kant.

"His (Kant's) critical idealism," says Mach, "was, as I acknowledge with the deepest gratitude, the starting point of all my critical thought. But I found it impossible to remain faithful to it. Very soon I began to return to the views of *Berkeley* . . . [and then] arrived at views akin to those of *Hume*. . . . And even today I cannot help regarding *Berkeley and Hume* as far more consistent thinkers than Kant" (*Analyse der Empfindungen*, S. 299).

Thus Mach quite definitely admits that having begun with Kant he soon adopted the position of Berkeley and Hume. Let us turn to Avenarius.

In the preface to his *Prolegomena zu einer Kritik der reinen Erfahrung* (1876), Avenarius states that the words *Kritik der reinen Erfahrung* (*Critique of Pure Experience*) are indicative of his attitude towards Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, and "of course, of an antagonistic attitude" towards Kant (p. iv). In what does Avenarius' antagonism to Kant consist? In the fact that Kant, in Avenarius' opinion, had not sufficiently "purified experience."



It is with this "purification of experience" that Avenarius deals in his *Prolegomena* (§§ 56, 72 and many other places). Of what does Avenarius "purify" the Kantian doctrine of experience? In the first place, of apriorism. In § 56 he says:

"The question as to whether the superfluous '*a priori*' conceptions of reason' should and could be eliminated from the content of experience and thereby *pure experience par excellence* established, is, as far as I know, raised here as such for the first time."

We have already seen that Avenarius in this way "purified" Kantianism of the recognition of necessity and causality.

Secondly, he purifies Kantianism of the assumption of substance (§ 95), *i.e.*, the thing-in-itself, which, in Avenarius' opinion, "is not given in the stuff of actual experience but is imported into it by thought."

We shall presently see that Avenarius' definition of his philosophical line entirely coincides with that of Mach, differing only in pompousness of formulation. But we must first note that Avenarius is telling a *plain untruth* when he asserts that it was he who in 1876 *for the first time* raised the question of "purifying experience," *i.e.*, of purifying the Kantian doctrine of apriorism and the assumption of the thing-in-itself. As a matter of fact, the development of German classical philosophy immediately after Kant gave rise to a criticism of Kantianism exactly *along the very line* followed by Avenarius. This line is represented in German classical philosophy by Schulze-Aenesidemus, an adherent of Humean agnosticism, and by J. G. Fichte, an adherent of Berkeleianism, *i.e.*, of subjective idealism. In 1792 Schulze-Aenesidemus criticised Kant for *this very* recognition of apriorism (*op. cit.*, pp. 56, 141, etc.) and of the thing-in-itself. We sceptics, or followers of Hume, says Schulze, *reject* the thing-in-itself as being "beyond the bounds of all experience" (p. 57). We reject *objective knowledge* (p. 25); we deny that space and time really exist outside us (p. 100); we reject the presence in our experience (p. 112) of necessity, causality, force, etc. (p. 113). One cannot attribute to them any "reality outside our conceptions" (p. 114). Kant proves apriority "dogmatically," saying that since we cannot think otherwise, there is therefore an *a priori* law of thought. "This argument," Schulze replies to Kant, "has long

been utilised in philosophy to prove the objective nature of what lies outside our ideas" (p. 141). Arguing thus, we may attribute causality to things-in-themselves (p. 142). "Experience never tells us (*wir erfahren niemals*) that the action on us of objective things produces ideas," and Kant by no means proved that "this something (which lies outside our reason) must be regarded as a thing-in-itself, distinct from our sensation (*Gemüt*). But sensation also may be thought of as the *sole* basis of all our knowledge" (p. 265). The Kantian critique of pure reason "bases its argument on the proposition that every act of cognition begins with the action of objective things on our organs of sensation (*Gemüt*), but it then disputes the truth and reality of this proposition" (p. 266). Kant in no way refuted the idealist Berkeley (pp. 268-72).

It is evident from this that the Humean Schulze rejects Kant's doctrine of the thing-in-itself as an inconsistent concession to materialism, i.e., to the "dogmatic" assertion that in our sensations we are given objective reality, or, in other words, that our ideas are caused by the action of objective things (independent of our ideas) on our sense-organs. The agnostic Schulze reproaches the agnostic Kant on the grounds that the latter's assumption of the thing-in-itself contradicts agnosticism and leads to materialism. In the same way, but even more vigorously, Kant is criticised by the subjective idealist Fichte, who maintains that Kant's assumption of the thing-in-itself independent of the self is "realism" (*Werke*, I, S. 483), and that Kant makes "no clear" distinction between "realism" and "idealism." Fichte sees a crying inconsistency in the assumption of Kant and the Kantians that the thing-in-itself is the "basis of objective reality" (p. 480), for this is a contradiction of critical idealism. "With you," exclaims Fichte, addressing the realist expositors of Kant, "the earth rests on the great elephant, and the great elephant rests on the earth. Your thing-in-itself, which is only thought, acts on the Self!" (p. 483).

Thus Avenarius was profoundly mistaken in imagining that he "for the first time" undertook a "purification of the experience" of Kant from apriorism and from the thing-in-itself and that he was thereby giving rise to a "new" trend in philosophy. In reality he was continuing the *old* line of Hume and Berkeley, Schulze-

Aenesidemus and J. G. Fichte. Avenarius imagined that he was "purifying experience" in general. In reality he was only *purifying agnosticism of Kantianism*. He fought not against the agnosticism of Kant (agnosticism is a denial of objective reality given in sensation), but for a *purer agnosticism*, for the elimination of Kant's assumption, which is contradictory to agnosticism, that there is a thing-in-itself, albeit unknowable, noumenal and other-sided, that there is necessity and causality, albeit *a priori*, given in our understanding, and not in objective reality. He fought Kant not from the *Left*, as the materialists fought Kant, but from the *Right*, as the sceptics and idealists fought Kant. He imagined that he was advancing, when in reality he was retreating to the programme of criticising Kant which Kuno Fischer, speaking of Schulze-Aenesidemus, aptly characterised in the following words:

"The critique of pure reason with pure reason [i.e., apriorism] left out is scepticism. . . . The critique of pure reason with the thing-in-itself left out is Berkeleyian idealism" (History of Modern Philosophy, German ed., 1868, Vol. V. p. 115).

This brings us to one of the most curious episodes in our whole "Machiad," in the whole campaign of the Russian Machians against Engels and Marx. The latest discovery by Bogdanov and Bazarov, Yushkevich and Valentinov, trumpeted by them in a thousand different keys is that Plekhanov is making a "luckless attempt to reconcile Engels with Kant by the aid of a compromise—a thing-in-itself which is just a wee bit knowable" (*Studies*, etc., p. 67 and other places). This discovery of our Machians discloses a veritably bottomless pit of utter confusion and monstrous misunderstanding both of Kant and of the whole course of development of German classical philosophy.

The principal feature of Kant's philosophy is the reconciliation of materialism with idealism, a compromise between the two, the combination within one system of heterogeneous and contrary philosophical trends. When Kant assumes that something outside us, a thing-in-itself, corresponds to our ideas, he is a materialist. When he declares this thing-in-itself to be unknowable, transcenden-

<sup>1</sup> Kuno Fischer, *Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, Bd. V, Heidelberg—Trans.

tal, other-sided, he is an idealist. Recognising experience, sensations, as the only source of our knowledge, Kant is directing his philosophy towards sensationalism, and *via* sensationalism, under certain conditions, towards materialism. Recognising the apriority of space, time, causality, etc., Kant is directing his philosophy towards idealism. Both consistent materialists and consistent idealists (as well as the "pure" agnostics, the Humeans) have mercilessly criticised Kant for this inconsistency. The materialists blamed Kant for his idealism, rejected the idealist features of his system, demonstrated the knowability, the this-sidedness of the thing-in-itself, the absence of a fundamental difference between the thing-in-itself and the phenomenon, the need of deducing causality, etc., not from the *a priori* laws of thought, but from objective reality. The agnostics and idealists blamed Kant for his assumption of the "thing-in-itself" as a concession to materialism, "realism" or "naïve realism." The agnostics, moreover, rejected not only the thing-in-itself, but apriorism as well; while the idealists demanded the consistent deduction from pure thought not only of the *a priori* forms of the understanding, but of the world as a whole (by magnifying human thought to an abstract Self, or to an "absolute Idea," or to a "universal Will," etc.). And here our Machians, "without noticing" that they had taken as their teachers men who had criticised Kant from the standpoint of scepticism and idealism, began to rend their clothes and to cover their heads with ashes at the sight of monstrous people who criticised Kant from a *diametrically opposite point of view*, who rejected the slightest element of agnosticism (scepticism) and idealism in his system, who argued that the thing-in-itself is objectively real, fully knowable and this-sided, that it does not differ fundamentally from appearance, that it becomes transformed into appearance at every step in the development of the individual consciousness of man and the collective consciousness of mankind. Help, they cried, this is an illegitimate mixture of materialism and Kantianism! When I read the assurances of our Machians that they criticise Kant far more consistently and thoroughly than any of the antiquated materialists, it always seems to me as though Purishkevich<sup>1</sup> had joined our company and was

<sup>1</sup> V. M. Purishkevich, monarchist and extreme reactionary. Founder of the Union of the Russian People (the Black Hundreds).—*Trans.*

shouting: I criticised the Constitutional-Democrats far more consistently and thoroughly than you Marxist gentlemen! There is no question about it, Mr. Purishkevich, politically consistent people can and always will criticise the Constitutional-Democrats from diametrically opposite points of view, but after all it must not be forgotten that you criticised the Constitutional-Democrats for being *excessively* democratic, while we criticised them for being *insufficiently* democratic! The Machians criticise Kant for being too much of a materialist, while we criticise him for not being enough of a materialist. The Machians criticise Kant from the Right, we from the Left.

The Humean Schulze and the subjective idealist Fichte may be taken as examples of the former category of critics in the history of classical German philosophy. As we have already seen, they try to obliterate the "realistic" elements of Kantianism. Just as Schulze and Fichte criticised Kant himself, so the Humean empirio-criticists and the subjective idealist-immanentists criticised the German Neo-Kantians of the second half of the nineteenth century. The line of Hume and Berkeley reappeared in a slightly renovated verbal garb. Mach and Avenarius reproached Kant not because his treatment of the thing-in-itself was not sufficiently realistic, not sufficiently materialistic, but because he *assumed* its existence; not because he refused to deduce causality and necessity in nature from objective reality, but because he assumed causality and necessity at all (except perhaps purely "logical" necessity). The immanentists were at one with the empirio-criticists, also criticising Kant from the Humean and Berkeleian standpoint. For instance, Leclair in 1879, in the work in which he praised Mach as a remarkable philosopher, reproached Kant for his "inconsistency and connivance at realism" as expressed in the concept of the "*thing-in-itself*"—that "nominal residuum of vulgar realism" (*Der Realismus der modernen Naturwissenschaft, usw.*, S. 9). Leclair calls materialism "vulgar realism," in order "to make it stronger."

"In our opinion," writes Leclair, "all those parts of the Kantian theory which gravitate towards *realismus vulgaris* should be vanquished and eliminated as being inconsistencies and bastard (*zwitterhafte*) products of the idealist point of view" (p. 41). "The inconsistencies and contradictions in the Kantian

theory of knowledge [arise from] the amalgamation (*Verquickung*) of idealist criticism with still unvanquished remnants of realistic dogmatism" (p. 170).

By realistic dogmatism Leclair means materialism.

Another immanentist, Johannes Rehmke, reproached Kant because he *realistically walled himself* off from Berkeley by the thing-in-itself (Johannes Rehmke, *Die Welt als Wahrnehmung und Begriff*,<sup>1</sup> Berlin 1880, S. 9).

"The philosophical activity of Kant bore . . . an essentially polemical character: with the thing-in-itself he turned against German rationalism [*i.e.*, the old fideism of the eighteenth century], and with pure contemplation against English empiricism" (p. 25). "I would compare the Kantian thing-in-itself with a movable lid placed over a pit: the thing looks so innocent and safe; one steps on it and suddenly falls into . . . the '*world-in-itself*'" (p. 27).

That is why Kant is not liked by the associates of Mach and Avenarius, the immanentists; they do not like him because in some respects he approaches the "pit" of materialism!

And here are some examples of the criticism of Kant from the Left. Feuerbach reproaches Kant not for his "realism," but for his *idealism*, and describes his system as "idealism based on empiricism" (*Werke*, Bd. II, S. 296).

Here is a particularly important remark on Kant by Feuerbach.

"Kant says: If we regard—as we should—the objects of our perceptions as mere appearances, we thereby admit that at the bottom of appearances is a thing-in-itself, although we do not know how it is actually constructed, but only know its appearance, *i.e.*, the manner in which our senses are affected by this unknown something. Hence, our reason, by the very fact that it accepts appearances, also admits the existence of things-in-themselves; and to that extent we can say that to entertain an idea of such entities which lie at the bottom of appearances, and consequently are but thought entities, is not only permissible, but unavoidable. . . ."

Having selected a passage from Kant where the thing-in-itself is regarded merely as a mental thing, a thought entity, and not a real thing, Feuerbach directs his criticism against it.

"Therefore," he says, "the objects of the senses [the objects of experience] are for the mind only appearances, and not truth. . . . Yet the thought entities are not actual objects for the mind! The Kantian philosophy is a contradiction between subject and object, between entity and existence, thinking and being. Entity is left to the mind, existence to the senses. Existence

<sup>1</sup> J. Rehmke, *The World as Perception and Concept*, Berlin, 1880.—*Trans.*

without entity [i.e., the existence of appearances without objective reality] is mere appearance—the sensible things—while entity without existence is mere thought—the thought entities, the *noumena*; they are thought of, but they lack existence—at least for us—and objectivity; they are the things-in-themselves, the true things, but they are not real things. . . . But what a contradiction, to sever truth from reality, reality from truth!" (*Werke*, II, S. 303).

Feuerbach reproaches Kant not because he assumes things-in-themselves, but because he does not grant them reality, i.e., objective reality, because he regards them as mere thought, "thought entities," and not as "entities possessing existence," i.e., real and actually existing. Feuerbach rebukes Kant for deviating from materialism.

"The Kantian philosophy is a contradiction," Feuerbach wrote to Bolin on March 26, 1858, "it inevitably leads either to Fichtean idealism or to sensationalism. The former conclusion belongs to the past . . . the latter to the present and the future" (Karl Grün, *Ludwig Feuerbach*, Bd. II, S. 49).

We have already seen that Feuerbach advocates objective sensationalism, i.e., materialism. The new turn from Kant to agnosticism and idealism, to Hume and Berkeley, is undoubtedly *reactionary*, even from Feuerbach's standpoint. And his ardent follower, Albrecht Rau, who together with the merits of Feuerbach also adopted his faults, which were eliminated by Marx and Engels, criticised Kant wholly in the spirit of his teacher:

"The Kantian philosophy is an amphibole [ambiguity]; it is both materialism and idealism, and the key to its essence lies in its dual nature. As a materialist or an empiricist, Kant cannot help conceding things an existence (*Wesenheit*) outside us. But as an idealist he could not rid himself of the prejudice that the soul is an entity totally different from sensible things. Hence there are real things and a human mind which apprehends those things. But how can the mind approach things totally different from itself? The way out [adopted by Kant] is as follows: the mind possesses certain *a priori* knowledge, in virtue of which things must appear to it as they do. Hence, the fact that we understand things as we do is a fact of our creation. For the mind which lives within us is nothing but the divine mind, and just as God created the world out of nothing, so the human mind creates out of things something which they are not in themselves. Thus Kant guarantees real things their existence as 'things-in-themselves.' Kant, however, needed the soul, because immortality was for him a moral postulate. The 'thing-in-itself,' gentlemen [says Rau, addressing the Neo-Kantians in general and the muddle-headed Lange in particular, who falsified the *History of Materialism*], is what separates the idealism of Kant from the idealism of Berkeley; it spans the gap between materialism and idealism. Such is my criticism of the Kantian

philosophy, and let those who can, refute it" (pp. 87-88). "For the materialist a distinction between *a priori* knowledge and the 'thing-in-itself' is absolutely superfluous, for since he nowhere breaks the continuity of nature, since he does not regard matter and mind as two fundamentally different things, but as two aspects of one and the same thing, he need not resort to artifice in order to bring the mind and the thing into conjunction."<sup>1</sup>

Further, Engels, as we have seen, rebuked Kant for being an agnostic, but not for his deviation from consistent agnosticism. Lafargue, Engels' disciple, argued in 1900 against the Kantians (amongst whom at that time was Charles Rappoport) as follows:

"... At the beginning of the nineteenth century our bourgeoisie, having completed its task of revolutionary destruction, began to repudiate its Voltairean and free-thinking philosophy. Catholicism, which the master decorator Chateaubriand painted in romantic colours, was restored to fashion, and Sebastian Mercier imported the idealism of Kant in order to give the *coup de grace* to the materialism of the Encyclopædists, whose protagonists had been guillotined by Robespierre.

"At the end of the nineteenth century, which will go down in history as the 'bourgeois century,' the intellectuals attempted to crush the materialism of Marx and Engels beneath the philosophy of Kant. The reactionary movement started in Germany—without offence to the Socialist *integralistes* who would like to ascribe the honour to their chief, Malon. But Malon himself had been to the school of Höchberg, Bernstein and the other disciples of Dühring, who were reforming Marxism in Zurich. [Lafargue is referring to the ideological movement in German Socialism in the later 'seventies.] It is to be expected that Jaurès, Fournière and our other intellectuals will also treat us to Kant as soon as they have mastered his terminology. . . . Rappoport is mistaken when he assures us that for Marx 'the ideal and the real are identical.' In the first place we never employ such metaphysical phraseology. An idea is as real as the object of which it is the reflection in the brain. . . .

"To provide a little recreation for the comrades who have to acquaint themselves with bourgeois philosophy, I shall explain the substance of this famous problem which has so much exercised spiritualist minds.

"The workingman who eats a sausage and receives a hundred sous a day knows very well that he is robbed by the employer and is nourished by pork meat, that the employer is a robber and that the sausage is pleasant to the taste and nourishing to the body. Not at all, say the bourgeois sophists, whether they are called Pyrrho, Hume or Kant. His opinion is personal, an entirely subjective opinion; he might with equal reason maintain that the employer is his benefactor and that the sausage consists of chopped leather, for he cannot know *things-in-themselves*.

"The question is not properly put, that is the whole trouble. . . .

<sup>1</sup> Albrecht Rau, *Ludwig Feuerbachs Philosophie, die Naturforschung und die philosophische Kritik der Gegenwart* [*Ludwig Feuerbach's Philosophy, Natural Science and the Modern Philosophical Critique*]. Leipzig 1882, S. 87-89.



"In order to know an object, man must first verify whether his senses deceive him or not. . . .

"... The chemists have gone still further—they have penetrated into bodies, they have analysed them, decomposed them into their elements, and then performed the reverse procedure, they have recomposed them from their elements. And from the moment that man is able to produce things for his own use from these elements, he may, as Engels says, assert that he knows *the bodies themselves*. The God of the Christians, if he existed and if he created the world, could do no more."<sup>1</sup>

We have taken the liberty of making this long quotation in order to show how Lafargue understood Engels and how he criticised Kant from the Left, not for those aspects of Kantianism which distinguish it from Humism, but for those which are common to both Kant and Hume; not for his assumption of the thing-in-itself, but for his inadequately materialist view of it.

And lastly, Karl Kautsky in his *Ethics* also criticises Kant from a standpoint diametrically opposed to that of Hume and Berkeley.

"That I see green, red and white," he writes, arguing against Kant's epistemology, "is grounded in my faculty of sight. But that green is something different from red testifies to something that lies outside of me, to real differences between the things. . . . The *relations* and *differences* between the things themselves revealed to me by the individual space and time concepts . . . are *real* relations and differences of the external world, not conditioned by the nature of my perceptive faculty. . . . If this were really so [if Kant's doctrine of the ideality of time and space were true], we could know nothing about the world outside us, not even that it exists."

Thus the *entire school* of Feuerbach. Marx and Engels turned from Kant to the Left, to a complete rejection of idealism and agnosticism. But our Machians followed the *reactionary* trend in philosophy, Mach and Avenarius, who criticised Kant from the standpoint of Hume and Berkeley. Of course, it is the sacred right of every citizen, and particularly of every intellectual, to follow any ideological reactionary he likes. But when people who have radically severed relations with the very *foundations of Marxism* in philosophy begin to dodge, confuse matters, hedge and assure us that they "too" are Marxists in philosophy, that they are "almost" in agreement with Marx, and have only slightly "supplemented" him—the spectacle is a far from pleasant one.

<sup>1</sup> Paul Lafargue, "*Le matérialisme de Marx et l'idéalisme de Kant* ["Marx's Materialism and Kant's Idealism"], *Le Socialiste*, February 25, 1900.

## 2. HOW THE "EMPIRIO-SYMBOLIST" YUSHKEVICH RIDICULED THE "EMPIRIO-CRITICIST" CHERNOV

"It is, of course, amusing," writes Mr. P. Yushkevich, "to see how Mr. Chernov tries to make the agnostic positivist-Comtean and Spencerian, Mikhailovsky, a forerunner of Mach and Avenarius" (*op. cit.*, p. 73).

First of all, what is amusing here is Mr. Yushkevich's astonishing ignorance. Like all Voroshilovs, he conceals this ignorance under a display of erudite words and names. The passage quoted is from a paragraph devoted to the relation between Machism and Marxism. And although he undertakes to treat of this subject, Mr. Yushkevich does not know that for Engels (as for every materialist) the adherents of the Humean line and the adherents of the Kantian line are equally agnostics. Therefore, to contrast agnosticism generally with Machism, when even Mach himself confesses to being a follower of Hume, is to prove oneself an ignoramus in philosophy. The phrase "agnostic positivism" is also absurd, for the adherents of Hume likewise call themselves positivists. Mr. Yushkevich, who has taken Petzoldt as his teacher, should have known that Petzoldt definitely regards empirio-criticism as positivism. And finally, to drag in the names of Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer is again absurd, for Marxism rejects not what distinguishes one positivist from another, but what is common to both and what makes a philosopher a positivist instead of a materialist.

Our Voroshilov needed this verbal display so as to "mesmerise" his reader, to stun him with a cacophony of words, to distract his attention away from the essence of the matter to empty trifles. And the essence of the matter is the radical difference between materialism and the broad current of positivism, which includes Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, Mikhailovsky, a number of Neo-Kantians, and Mach and Avenarius. The essence of the matter has been very accurately expressed by Engels in his *Ludwig Feuerbach*, where he places all the Kantians and Humeans of that period (i.e., the eighties of the last century) in the camp of wretched eclectics, pettifoggers (*Flohknacker*: literally, fleacrackers), and so on. To whom this characterisation can and must apply is a question on which our Voroshilovs did not wish to reflect. And since they are incapable of reflecting, we shall

cite one illuminating comparison. Engels, speaking both in 1888 and 1891 of the Kantians and Humeans in general, mentions *no* names. The only reference Engels makes to a book is his reference to the work of Starcke on Feuerbach, which Engels analysed.

"Starcke," says Engels, "takes great pains to defend Feuerbach against the attacks and doctrines of the vociferous lecturers who today go by the name of philosophers in Germany. For people who are interested in this afterbirth of German classical philosophy this is a matter of importance; for Starcke himself it may have appeared necessary. We, however, will spare the reader this" (*op. cit.*, p. 42).

Engels wanted to "spare the reader," that is. to save the Social-Democrats from a pleasant acquaintance with the degenerate chatterboxes who call themselves philosophers. And who are implied by this "afterbirth"?

We open Starcke's book (C. N. Starcke, *Ludwig Feuerbach*, Stuttgart, 1885) and find constant references to the adherents of *Hume* and *Kant*. Starcke dissociates Feuerbach from these two trends. Starcke quotes in this connection *A. Riehl*, *Windelband* and *A. Lange* (pp. 3, 18-19, 127, etc., in Starcke).

We open Avenarius' *Der menschliche Weltbegriff*, which appeared in 1891, and on page 120 of the first German edition we read:

"The final result of our analysis concurs—although not absolutely (*durchgehend*) in the measure of the various points of view—with that reached by other investigators, for example, *E. Laas*, *E. Mach*, *A. Riehl*, *W. Wundt*. See also *Schopenhauer*."

Whom was our Voroshilov-Yushkevich jeering at?

Avenarius has not the slightest doubt as to his kinship in principle—not regarding any particular question, but regarding the "final result" of empirio-criticism—to the *Kantians* Riehl and Laas and to the idealist Wundt. He mentions Mach between the two Kantians. And, indeed, are they not all one company, since Riehl and Laas purified Kant à la Hume, and Mach and Avenarius purified Hume à la Berkeley?

Is it surprising that Engels wished to "spare" the German workers, to save them from a close acquaintance with this whole company of "flea-cracking" university lecturers?

Engels could spare the German workers, but the Voroshilovs do not spare the Russian reader.

It should be noted that an essentially eclectic combination of Kant and Hume, or Hume and Berkeley, is possible, so to speak, in varying proportions, by laying principal stress now on one, now on another element of the mixture. We saw above, for instance, that only one Machian, H. Kleinpeter, openly admits that he and Mach are solipsists (*i.e.*, consistent Berkeleians). On the other hand, the Humean trend in the views of Mach and Avenarius is emphasised by many of their disciples and followers: Petzoldt, Willy, Pearson, the Russian empirio-criticist Lesseovich, the Frenchman Delacroix<sup>1</sup> and others. We shall cite one example—an especially eminent scientist who in philosophy also combined Hume with Berkeley, but who emphasised the materialist elements of this mixture. He is Thomas Huxley, the famous English scientist, who gave currency to the term “agnostic” and whom Engels undoubtedly had chiefly and primarily in mind when he spoke of English agnosticism. Engels in 1892 called this type of agnostics “shamefaced materialists.” James Ward, the English spiritualist, in his book *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, wherein he chiefly attacks the “scientific champion of agnosticism,” Huxley (Vol. II, p. 229), bears out Engels’ opinion when he says:

“In Huxley’s case indeed the leaning towards the primacy of the physical side [“series of elements” Mach calls it] is often so pronounced that it can hardly be called parallelism at all. Spite of his vehement repudiation of the title of materialist as an affront to his untarnished agnosticism, I know of few recent writers who on occasion better deserve the title” (Vol. II, pp. 30-31).

And James Ward quotes the following statements by Huxley in confirmation of his opinion:

“Any one who is acquainted with the history of science will admit, that its progress has, in all ages, meant, and now more than ever means, the extension of the province of what we call matter and causation and the concomitant gradual banishment from all regions of human thought of what we call spirit and spontaneity” (Vol. I, p. 17).

<sup>1</sup> *Bibliothèque du congrès international de la philosophie*, Vol. IV, Henri Delacroix, “David Hume et la philosophie critique” [“David Hume and Critical Philosophy”]. Among the followers of Hume the author includes Avenarius and the immanentists in Germany, Ch. Renouvier and his school (the neo-criticists) in France.

Or:

"It is in itself of little moment whether we express the phenomena of matter in terms of spirit, or the phenomena of spirit in terms of matter—each statement has a certain relative truth ["relatively stable complexes of elements," according to Mach]. . . . But with a view to the progress of science, the materialistic terminology is in every way to be preferred. For it connects thought with the other phenomena of the universe. . . . Whereas, the alternative, or spiritualistic terminology is utterly barren, and leads to nothing but obscurity and confusion of ideas. Thus there can be little doubt, that the further science advances, the more extensively and consistently will all the phenomena of Nature be represented by materialistic formulæ and symbols" (Vol. I, p. 19).

So argued the "shamefaced materialist" Huxley, who refused to accept materialism, regarding it as "metaphysics" that illegitimately goes beyond "groups of sensations." And Huxley wrote:

"If I were obliged to choose between absolute materialism and absolute idealism I should feel compelled to accept the latter alternative. . . . Our one certainty is the existence of the mental world" (James Ward, Vol. II, pp. 216 and 219).

Huxley's philosophy is as much a mixture of Hume and Berkeley as is Mach's philosophy. But in Huxley's case the Berkeleyian streaks are incidental, and agnosticism serves as a fig-leaf for materialism. With Mach the "colouring" of the mixture is a different one, and Ward, the spiritualist, while bitterly combating Huxley, pats Avenarius and Mach affectionately on the back.

### 3. THE IMMANENTISTS AS COMRADES-IN-ARMS OF MACH AND AVENARIUS

In speaking of empirio-criticism we could not avoid repeatedly mentioning the philosophers of the so-called immanentist school, the principal representatives of which are Schuppe, Leclair, Rehmke, and Schubert-Soldern. It is now necessary to examine the relation of empirio-criticism to the immanentists and the nature of the philosophy preached by the latter.

In 1902 Mach wrote:

"... Today I see that a host of philosophers—positivists, empirio-critics, adherents of the immanentist philosophy—as well as a very few scientists, have all, without knowing anything of each other, entered on paths which, in spite of their individual differences, converge almost towards one point" (*Analyse der Empfindungen*, Vorwort zu 4. Auflage).

Here we must first note Mach's unusually frank admission that *very few* scientists are followers of the supposedly "new," but in truth very old, Humean-Berkeleyian philosophy. Secondly, extremely important is Mach's opinion that this "new" philosophy is a broad *current* in which the immanentists are on the same footing as the empirio-critics and the positivists.

"Thus"—repeats Mach in the introduction to the Russian translation of the *Analyse der Empfindungen* (1906)—"there is a common movement. . ." (p. 4). "My position [Mach says in another place], moreover, borders closely on that of the representatives of the immanentist philosophy. . . . I found hardly anything in this book [i.e., Schuppe, *Grundriß der Erkenntnistheorie und Logik*<sup>1</sup>] with which, with perhaps a very slight change, I would not gladly agree" (p. 46).

Mach considers that Schubert-Soldern is also "following close paths" (p. 4), and as to Wilhelm Schuppe, Mach even *dedicates* to him his latest work, the summary so to speak of his philosophical labours, *Erkenntnis und Irrtum*.

Avenarius, the other founder of empirio-criticism, wrote in 1894 that he was "gladdened" and "encouraged" by Schuppe's sympathy for empirio-criticism, and that the "differences" between him and Schuppe "exist, perhaps, only temporarily" (*vielleicht nur einstweilen noch bestehend*).<sup>2</sup> And, finally, J. Petzoldt, whose teachings Lessevich regards as the last word in empirio-criticism, *openly acclaims the trio*—Schuppe, Mach and Avenarius—as the leaders of the "new" trend (*Einführung in die Philosophie der reinen Erfahrung*, Bd. II, 1904, S. 295; *Das Weltproblem*, 1906, S. v. und 146). On this point Petzoldt is definitely opposed to Willy (*Einf.*, Bd. II, S. 321), probably the only outstanding Machian who felt ashamed of such a kinship as Schuppe's and who tried to dissociate himself from him fundamentally, for which this disciple was reprimanded by his beloved teacher Avenarius. Avenarius wrote the words about Schuppe above quoted in a comment on Willy's article against Schuppe, adding that Willy's criticism perhaps "was put more strongly than was really necessary" (*Vierteljahrsschrift für wis-*

<sup>1</sup> W. Schuppe, *Outline of the Theory of Knowledge and Logic*, Berlin, 1894. —*Trans.*

<sup>2</sup> *Vierteljahrsschrift für wissenschaftliche Philosophie*, 1894, 18. Jahrg., Heft 1, S. 29.

*senschaftliche Philosophie*, 18. Jahrg., 1894, S. 29; which also contains Willy's article against Schuppe).

Having acquainted ourselves with the empirio-criticists' opinion of the immanentists, let us examine the immanentists' opinion of the empirio-criticists. We have already mentioned the opinion uttered by Leclair in 1879. Schubert-Soldern in 1882 explicitly expressed his "agreement in part with the elder Fichte" (i.e., the distinguished representative of subjective idealism, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, whose son was as inept in philosophy as was the son of Joseph Dietzgen), and "with Schuppe, Leclair, *Avenarius* and partly with Rehmke," while *Mach* is cited with particular gusto in opposition to "natural-historical metaphysics"<sup>1</sup>—the term given to natural-historical materialism by all the reactionary university lecturers and professors in Germany. In 1893, after the appearance of *Avenarius' Der Menschliche Weltbegriff*, W. Schuppe hailed this work in *An Open Letter to Prof. Avenarius* as a "confirmation of the naïve realism" which he (Schuppe) himself advocated. "My conception of thought," Schuppe wrote, "excellently harmonises with your [*Avenarius*'] pure experience."<sup>2</sup> Then, in 1896, Schubert-Soldern, summarising the "methodological trend in philosophy" on which he "bases himself," traces his genealogy from Berkeley and Hume down through *F. A. Lange* ("the real beginning of our movement in Germany dates from Lange"), and then through Laas, Schuppe and Co., *Avenarius* and *Mach*, *Riehl* (among the Neo-Kantians), Ch. Renouvier (among the Frenchmen), etc.<sup>3</sup> Finally, in their programmatic "Introduction" printed in the first issue of the philosophical organ of the immanentists, alongside a declaration of war on materialism and an expression of sympathy with Ch. Renouvier, we read:

"Even in the camp of the scientists themselves voices of individual thinkers are being raised sermonising against the growing arrogance of their colleagues,

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Richard von Schubert-Soldern, *Ueber Transzendenz des Objekts und Subjekts* [*On the Transcendence of the Object and Subject*], 1882, S. 37, § 5. Cf. also his *Grundlagen einer Erkenntnistheorie* [*Principles of a Theory of Knowledge*], 1884, S. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Vierteljahrsschrift für wissenschaftliche Philosophie*, 17. Jahrg., 1893, S. 384.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Richard von Schubert-Soldern, *Das menschliche Glück und die soziale Frage* [*Human Happiness and the Social Question*], 1896, S. v u. vi.

against the unphilosophical spirit which has taken possession of the natural sciences. Thus the physicist Mach points to the necessity for an epistemological foundation for the natural sciences. . . . On all hands fresh forces are stirring and are working to destroy the blind faith in the infallibility of the natural sciences, and once again people are beginning to seek for other paths into the profundities of the mysterious, a better entrance to the house of truth."<sup>1</sup>

A word or two about Ch. Renouvier. He is the head of the influential and widespread school in France known as the neo-criticists. His theoretical philosophy is a combination of the phenomenalism of Hume and the apriorism of Kant. The thing-in-itself is absolutely rejected. The connection of phenomena, order and law is declared to be *a priori*; law is written with a capital letter and is converted into the basis of religion. The Catholic priests go into raptures over this philosophy. The Machian Willy scornfully refers to Renouvier as a "second apostle Paul," as "an obscurantist of the first water" and as a "casuistic preacher of free will" (*Gegen die Schulweisheit*, S. 129). And it is such co-thinkers of the immanentists who *warmly greet Mach's philosophy*. When his *Mechanik* appeared in a French translation, the organ of the neo-criticists—*L'Année philosophique*—edited by Pilon, a collaborator and disciple of Renouvier, wrote:

"It is unnecessary to speak of the extent to which, in this criticism of substance, the thing, the thing-in-itself, Mach's positive science agrees with neocritical idealism" (Vol. XV, 1904, p. 179).

As for the Russian Machians, they are all ashamed of their kinship with the immanentists, and one of course could not expect anything else of people who did not deliberately adopt the path of Struve, Menshikov, and the like. Bazarov alone refers to "certain representatives of the immanentist school" as "realists,"<sup>2</sup> Bogdanov briefly (*and in fact falsely*) declares that "the immanentist school is only an intermediate form between Kantianism and empirio-criticism" (*Empirio-Monism*, Bk. III, p. xxii). V. Chernov writes:

<sup>1</sup> *Zeitschrift für immanente Philosophie*, Bd. I, Berlin 1896, S. 6, 9.

<sup>2</sup> "Realists in modern philosophy—certain representatives of the immanentist school who have emerged from Kantianism, the school of Mach-Avenarius, and many other kindred movements—find that there are absolutely no grounds for rejecting the basis of naïve realism" (*Studies*, etc., p. 26).



"Generally speaking, the immanentists approach positivism in only one aspect of their theory, in other aspects they go far beyond it" (*Philosophical and Sociological Studies*, p. 37).

Valentinov says that "the immanentist school clothed these (Machian) ideas in an unsuitable form and found themselves in the blind alley of solipsism" (*op. cit.*, p. 149). As you see, you pay your money and take your choice: constitution and salmon mayonnaise, realism and solipsism. Our Machians are afraid to tell the plain and clear truth about the immanentists.

The fact is that the immanentists are rank reactionaries, open advocates of fideism, unadulterated in their obscurantism. There is *not one* of them who has not frankly made his more theoretical works on epistemology a defence of religion and a justification of mediævalism of one kind or another. Leclair, in 1879, advocated his philosophy as one that satisfies "all the needs of a religiously inclined mind" (*Der Realismus* etc., S. 73). J. Rehmke, in 1880, dedicated his "theory of knowledge" to the Protestant pastor Biedermann and closed his book by preaching not a supersensible God, but God as a "real concept" (it was for this reason, presumably, that Bazarov ranked "certain" immanentists among the "realists"), and moreover the "objectivisation of this real concept is relegated to practical life," while Biedermann's "Christian dogmatism" is declared to be a model of "scientific theology" (J. Rehmke, *Die Welt als Wahrnehmung und Begriff*, Berlin 1880, S. 312). Schuppe in the *Zeitschrift für immanente Philosophie* assures us that though the immanentists deny transcendentalism, God and the future life do not come under this concept (*Zeitschrift für immanente Philosophie*, Bd. II, S. 52). In his *Ethik* he insists on the "connection of the moral law . . . with the metaphysical world conception" and condemns the separation of the church from the state as a "senseless phrase" (Dr. Wilhelm Schuppe, *Grundzüge der Ethik und Rechtsphilosophie*,<sup>1</sup> Breslau 1881, S. 181, 325). Schubert-Soldern in his *Grundlagen einer Erkenntnistheorie* deduces both the pre-existence of the self before the body and the after-existence of the self after the body, i.e., the immortality of the soul (p. 82), etc. In *Die soziale*

<sup>1</sup> W. Schuppe, *Principles of Ethics and the Philosophy of Law*, Breslau, 1881.—*Trans.*

*Frage*, arguing against Bebel, he defends, together with "social reforms," suffrage based on class distinction, and says that the "Social-Democrats ignore the fact that without the divine gift of unhappiness there could be no happiness" (p. 330), and thereupon laments the fact that materialism "prevails" (p. 242): "he who in our time believes in a life beyond, or even in its possibility, is considered a fool" (*ibid.*).

And German Menshikovs like these, no less obscurantists of the first water than Renouvier, live in lasting concubinage with the empirio-criticists. Their theoretical kinship is incontestable. There is no more Kantianism in the immanentists than in Petzoldt or Pearson. We saw above that they themselves regard themselves as disciples of Hume and Berkeley, an opinion of the immanentists that is generally recognised in philosophical literature. In order to show clearly what epistemological premises these comrades-in-arms of Mach and Avenarius proceed from, we shall quote some fundamental theoretical propositions from the works of immanentists.

Leclair in 1879 had not yet invented the term "immanent," which really signifies "experiential," "given in experience," and which is just as spurious a label for concealing putrefaction as the labels of the European bourgeois parties. In his first work, Leclair frankly and explicitly calls himself a "critical idealist" (*Der Realismus* etc., S. 11, 21, 206, etc.). In this work he criticises Kant, as we have already seen, for his concessions to materialism, and clearly indicates his *own path away from Kant* to Fichte and Berkeley. Leclair fights materialism in general and *the tendency towards materialism displayed by the majority of scientists* in particular as mercilessly as Schuppe, Schubert-Soldern and Rehmke.

"If we return," Leclair says, "to the standpoint of critical idealism, if we do not attribute a transcendental existence [*i.e.*, an existence outside of human consciousness] to nature or the processes of nature, then for the subject the aggregate of bodies and his own body, in so far as he can see and feel it, together with all its changes, will be a directly given phenomenon of spatially connected co-existences and successions in time, and the whole explanation of nature will reduce itself to stating the laws of these co-existences and successions" (p. 21).

Back to Kant!—said the reactionary Neo-Kantians. Back to Fichte and Berkeley!—is *essentially* what the reactionary immanent-

ists are saying. For Leclair, all that exists consists of "complexes of sensations" (p. 38), while certain classes of properties (*Eigenschaften*), which act upon our sense-organs, he designates, for example, by the letter M, and other classes, which act upon other objects of nature, by the letter N (p. 150, etc.). Moreover, Leclair speaks of nature as the "phenomena of the consciousness" *Bewußtseinsphänomen*) not of a single person, but of "mankind" (pp. 55-56). If we remember that Leclair published his book in Prague, where Mach was professor of physics, and that Leclair cites with rapture only Mach's *Erhaltung der Arbeit*, which appeared in 1872, the question involuntarily arises: ought we not to regard the advocate of fideism and the frank idealist Leclair as the true progenitor of the "original" philosophy of Mach?

As for Schuppe, who, according to Leclair,<sup>1</sup> arrived at the "same results," he, as we have seen, really claims to defend "naïve realism," and in his *Open Letter to Prof. Avenarius* bitterly complains of the "established perversion of my [Schuppe's] theory of knowledge to subjective idealism." The true nature of the crude forgery which Schuppe calls a defence of realism is quite clear from his rejoinder to Wundt, who did not hesitate to class the immanentists with the Fichteans, the subjective idealists (*Philosophische Studien, loc. cit., S. 386, 397, 407*).

"In my case," Schuppe *retorts* to Wundt, "the proposition 'being is consciousness' means that consciousness without the external world is inconceivable, that the latter belongs to the former, i.e., the absolute connection (*Zusammengehörigkeit*) of the one with the other, which I have so often asserted and explained and in which the two constitute the primary whole of being."<sup>2</sup>

One must be extremely naïve not to discern unadulterated subjective idealism in such "realism"! Just think: the external world "belongs to consciousness" and is in *absolute* connection with it! The poor professor was indeed slandered by the "established" practice of ranking him with the subjective idealists! Such a philosophy

<sup>1</sup> *Beiträge zu einer monistischen Erkenntnistheorie* [Essays in a Monistic Theory of Knowledge], Breslau, 1892, S. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Wilhelm Schuppe, "Die immanente Philosophie und Wilhelm Wundt" ["The Immanent Philosophy and Wilhelm Wundt"], *Zeitschrift für immanente Philosophie*, Bd. II, S. 195.

completely coincides with Avenarius' "principal co-ordination"; no reservations and protests on the part of Chernov and Valentinov can sunder them; both philosophies will be consigned together to the museum of reactionary fabrications of German professordom. As a curiosity once more testifying to Valentinov's lack of judgment, let us note that he calls Schuppe a solipsist (it goes without saying that Schuppe vowed and swore that he was not a solipsist—and wrote articles specially dealing with this subject—just as vehemently as did Mach, Petzoldt, and Co.), and is highly delighted with Bazarov's article in the *Studies*! I should like to translate into German Bazarov's dictum that "sense-perception is the reality existing outside us" and forward it to some more or less intelligent immanentist. He would embrace and kiss Bazarov as heartily as the Schuppes, Leclairs and Schubert-Solderns embraced Mach and Avenarius. For Bazarov's dictum is the *alpha* and *omega* of the doctrines of the immanentist school.

And here, lastly, is Schubert-Soldern. "The materialism of natural science," the "metaphysics" of the recognition of the objective reality of the external world, is the chief enemy of this philosopher (*Grundlagen einer Erkenntnistheorie*, Leipzig 1884, p. 31 and the whole of Chapter II: *Die Metaphysik der Naturwissenschaft*). "Natural science abstracts from all relations of consciousness" (p. 52)—that is the chief evil (and that is just what constitutes materialism!). For the individual cannot escape from "sensations and, hence, from a state of consciousness" (pp. 33-34). Of course, Schubert-Soldern admitted in 1896, my standpoint is *epistemological solipsism* (*Die soziale Frage*, S. x), but not "metaphysical," not "practical" solipsism. "What is given us immediately is sensations, complexes of constantly changing sensations" (*Ueber Transzendenz des Objekts und Subjekts*, S. 73).

"Marx took the material process of production," says Schubert-Soldern, "as the cause of inner processes and motives, in the same way (and just as falsely) as natural science regards the common [to humanity] external world as the cause of the individual inner worlds" (*Die soziale Frage*, S. xviii).

That Marx's historical materialism is connected with natural-historical materialism and philosophical materialism in general, this comrade-in-arms of Mach does not even suspect.

"Many, perhaps the majority, will be of the opinion that from the standpoint of epistemological solipsism no metaphysics is possible, *i.e.*, that metaphysics is always transcendental. Upon more mature reflection I cannot concur with this opinion. Here are my reasons. . . . The immediate foundation of all that is given is the spiritual (solipsist) connection, the central point of which is the individual Self (the individual realm of thought) with its body. The rest of the world is inconceivable without this Self, just as this Self is inconceivable without the rest of the world. With the destruction of the individual Self the world is also annihilated, which appears impossible—and with the destruction of the rest of the world, nothing remains for my individual Self, for the latter can be separated from the world only logically, but not in time and space. Therefore my individual Self must continue to exist after my death also, if the entire world is not to be annihilated with it. . ." (*ibid.*, p. xxiii).

The "principal co-ordination," "complexes of sensations" and the rest of the Machian banalities render faithful service to the proper people!

"What is the hereafter (*Jenseits*) from the solipsist point of view? It is only a possible future experience for me. . ." (*ibid.*). "Spiritualism . . . would be obliged to prove the existence of the *Jenseits*. But at any rate the materialism of natural science cannot be brought into the field against spiritualism, for this materialism, as we have seen, is only one aspect of the world process within the all-embracing spiritual connection" (=the "principal co-ordination") (p. xxiv).

All this is said in that philosophical introduction to *Die soziale Frage* (1896) wherein Schubert-Soldern *all the time* appears arm in arm with Mach and Avenarius. Only for the handful of Russian Machians does Machism serve exclusively for purposes of intellectual prattle. In its native country its role as a flunkey to fideism is openly proclaimed!

#### 4. WHITHER IS EMPIRIO-CRITICISM TENDING?

Let us now cast a glance at the development of Machism after Mach and Avenarius. We have seen that their philosophy is a hash, a pot-pourri of contradictory and disconnected epistemological propositions. We must now examine how and whither, *i.e.*, in what direction, this philosophy is developing, for this will help us to settle certain "disputable" questions by referring to indisputable historical facts. And indeed, in view of the eclecticism and incoherence of the initial philosophical premises of the trend we are examining, varying interpretations of it and sterile disputes over particulars and trifles

are inevitable. But empirio-criticism, like every ideological current, is a living thing, which grows and develops, and the fact that it is growing in one direction or another will help us more than long arguments to settle the *basic* question as to what the real essence of this philosophy is. We judge a person not by what he says or thinks of himself but by his actions. And we must judge philosophers not by the labels they give themselves ("positivism," the philosophy of "pure experience," "monism" or "empirio-monism," the "philosophy of natural science," etc.) but by the manner in which they actually settle fundamental theoretical questions, by their associates, by what they are teaching and by what they have taught their disciples and followers.

It is this last question which interests us now. Everything essential was said by Mach and Avenarius more than twenty years ago. It was bound to become clear in the interval *how* these "leaders" were *understood* by those who wanted to understand them, and whom they themselves (at least Mach, who has outlived his colleague) regard as their successors. To be specific, let us take those who themselves claim to be disciples of Mach and Avenarius (or their adherents) and whom Mach himself ranks as such. We shall thus obtain a picture of empirio-criticism as a philosophical *current*, and not as a collection of literary cases.

In Mach's Introduction to the Russian translation of the *Analyse der Empfindungen*, Hans Cornelius is recommended as a "young investigator" who is following "if not quite the same, at least very close paths" (p. 4). In the text of the *Analyse der Empfindungen* Mach once again "mentions with pleasure the works" of Cornelius and others, "who have disclosed the kernel of Avenarius' ideas and have developed them further" (p. 40). Let us take Cornelius' *Einleitung in die Philosophie*<sup>1</sup> (German ed., 1903) and we find that its author also speaks of his endeavour to follow in the footsteps of Mach and Avenarius (pp. viii, 32). We have before us then a *disciple acknowledged by the teacher*. This disciple also begins with sensations-elements (pp. 17, 24), categorically declares that he confines himself to *experience* (p. vi), calls his views "consistent or epistemo-

<sup>1</sup> H. Cornelius, *Introduction to Philosophy*, Leipzig, 1903.—*Trans.*

logical empiricism" (p. 335), emphatically condemns the "one-sidedness" of idealism and the "dogmatism" of both the idealists and the materialists (p. 129), vehemently denies the possible "misconception" (p. 123) that his philosophy implies the recognition of the world as existing in the mind of man, flirts with naïve realism no less skilfully than Avenarius, Schuppe or Bazarov ("a visual, as well as every other sense-perception, is located where we find it, and only where we find it, that is to say, where the naïve mind, untouched by a false philosophy, localises it" (p. 125)—and this disciple, acknowledged as such by his teacher, arrives at *immortality* and *God*. Materialism—thunders this police sergeant in a professorial chair, this disciple of the "recent positivists"—converts man into an automaton.

"It need hardly be said that together with the belief in the freedom of our decisions it destroys all considerations of the moral value of our actions and our responsibility for this value. Just as little room is left for the idea of the continuation of our life after death" (p. 116).

The final note of the book is:

"Education [of the youth stultified by this man of science, presumably] is necessary not only for action but . . . above all . . . to inculcate veneration (*Ehrfurcht*) not for the transitory values of a fortuitous tradition, but for the imperishable values of duty and beauty, for the divine (*dem Göttlichen*) within us and without" (p. 357).

Compare this with Bogdanov's assertion that "there is *absolutely no room*" (Bogdanov's italics) and "there cannot be any room"<sup>1</sup> for the idea of God, freedom of the will and immortality of the soul in Mach's philosophy in view of his denial of every "thing-in-itself" (pp. xi-xii). While Mach in this same book (p. 293) declares that "there is no Machian philosophy," and recommends not only the immanentists, but also Cornelius who had disclosed the kernel of Avenarius' ideas! Thus, in the first place, Bogdanov *absolutely does not know* the "Machian philosophy" as a current which not only nestles under the wing of fideism, but which itself goes to the length of fideism. In the second place, Bogdanov *absolutely does not know* the history of philosophy; for to associate a denial of the ideas mentioned above with a denial of the thing-in-itself is to insult the history of

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from Bogdanov's introduction to the Russian translation of the *Analyse der Empfindungen*.—*Trants*.

philosophy. Will Bogdanov take it into his head to deny that all consistent followers of Hume, by rejecting every kind of thing-in-itself, *do leave room* for these ideas? Has Bogdanov never heard of the subjective idealists, who reject every kind of thing-in-itself and thereby make room for these ideas? "There can be no room" for these ideas *solely* in a philosophy that teaches that nothing exists but perceptual being, that the world is matter in motion, that the external world, the physical world familiar to all, is the sole objective reality, *i.e.*, in the philosophy of materialism. And it is for this, for this alone, that materialism is being combated by the immanentists recommended by Mach, by Mach's disciple Cornelius, and by modern professorial philosophy in general.

Our Machians began to repudiate Cornelius only after this indecency had been pointed out to them. Such repudiations are not worth much. Friedrich Adler evidently has not been "warned," and therefore recommends this Cornelius in a Socialist journal (*Der Kampf*, 1908, No. 5, p. 235: "a work that is easy to read and highly to be commended"). Through the medium of Machism, philosophical reactionaries and preachers of fideism are palmed off on the workers as teachers!

Petzoldt, without having been warned, detected the falsity in Cornelius: but his method of combating this falsity is a gem. Listen to this:

"To assert that the world is idea [as is asserted by the idealists whom we are combating, no joke!] has sense only when it implies that it is the idea of the predicator, or if you like, of all predicators, *i.e.*, that its existence depends exclusively upon the thought of that individual or of those individuals; it exists only inasmuch as he thinks about it, and what he does not think of does not exist. We, on the contrary, make the world dependent not upon the thought of an individual or individuals, or, to put it better and clearer, not upon the *act* of thinking, or upon any actual *thought*, but—and exclusively in the logical sense—upon thought in general. The idealist confuses one with the other, and the result is agnostic semi-solipsism, as we observe it in Cornelius" (*Einführung*, Bd. II, S. 317).

Stolypin<sup>1</sup> denied the existence of the *cabinets noirs*! Petzoldt annihilates the idealists. It is truly astonishing how much this annihilation resembles a recommendation to the idealists to exercise more skill in concealing their idealism. To say that the world depends upon

<sup>1</sup> P. A. Stolypin, Prime Minister under the tsar from 1906 to 1911.—*Trans.*



man's thought is a perverted idealism. To say that the world depends upon thought in general is "recent" positivism, critical realism—in a word, thoroughgoing bourgeois charlatanism! If Cornelius is an agnostic semi-solipsist, Petzoldt is a solipsist semi-agnostic. You are cracking a flea, gentlemen!

Let us proceed. In the second edition of his *Erkenntnis und Irrtum*, Mach says:

"A systematic exposition [of Mach's views], one to which in all its essentials I can subscribe," is given by Professor Dr. Hans Kleinpeter (*Die Erkenntnistheorie der Naturforschung der Gegenwart*,<sup>1</sup> Leipzig 1905).

Let us take Hans Number Two. This professor is an accredited disseminator of Machism: a pile of articles on Mach's views in philosophical journals, both in German and in English, translations of works recommended by Mach with introductions by Mach—in a word, the right hand of the "teacher." Here are his views:

"All my (outer and inner) experience, all my thoughts and aspirations are given me as a psychical process, as a part of my consciousness. . ." (*op. cit.*, p. 18). "That which we call physical is a construction of psychical elements. . ." (p. 144). "*Subjective conviction, not objective certainty (Gewißheit) is the only attainable goal of any science. . .*" (p. 9). (The italics are Kleinpeter's, who adds the following remark: "Something similar was already said by Kant in the *Critique of Practical Reason*.") "The assumption that there are other minds is one which can never be confirmed by experience. . ." (p. 43). "I do not know . . . whether, in general, there exist other selves outside of myself" (p. 43).

In Chapter II, § 5, entitled "Activity (Spontaneity) in Consciousness," we read that in the case of the animal-automaton the succession of ideas is purely mechanical. The same is true of us when we dream.

"The quality of our consciousness in its normal state essentially differs from this. It possesses a property which these (the automata) entirely lack, and which it would be very difficult, to say the least, to explain mechanically or automatically: the so-called self-activity of the Self. Every person can discever himself from his states of consciousness, he can manipulate them, can make them stand out more clearly or force them into the background, can analyse them, compare various parts, etc. All this is a fact of (immediate) experience. Our Self is therefore essentially different from the sum-total of the states of consciousness and cannot be put as an equivalent of it. Sugar consists of carbon, hydrogen and oxygen; were we to attribute a soul to it,

<sup>1</sup> H. Kleinpeter. *The Theory of Knowledge of Modern Science*, Leipzig, 1905.  
—Trans.

then by analogy it would have to possess the faculty of directing the movement of the hydrogen, oxygen and carbon at will" (pp. 29-30).

§ 4 of the following chapter is headed: "The Act of Cognition—An Act of Will (*Willenshandlung*)."

"It must be regarded as definitely established that all my psychical experiences are divisible into two large main groups: compulsory acts and deliberate acts. To the former belong all impressions of the external world. . ." (p. 47). "That it is possible to advance several theories regarding one and the same realm of facts . . . is as well known to physicists as it is incompatible with the premises of an absolute theory of knowledge. And this fact is also linked with the volitional character of our thought; it also implies that our volition is not bound by external circumstances" (p. 50).

Now judge how bold Bogdanov was in asserting that in Mach's philosophy "there is absolutely no room for free will," when Mach himself recommends such a specimen as Kleinpeter! We have already seen that the latter does not attempt to conceal either his own idealism or Mach's. In 1898-99 Kleinpeter wrote:

"Hertz proclaims the same subjectivist view [*i.e.*, as Mach] of the nature of our concepts. . . . If Mach and Hertz [with what justice Kleinpeter here implicates the famous physicist we shall soon see] deserve credit from the standpoint of idealism for having emphasised the subjective origin of *all* our concepts and of the connections between them—and not only of certain individual ones—from the standpoint of empiricism they deserve no less credit for having acknowledged that experience alone, as a court entirely independent of thought, can solve the question as to their correctness" (*Archiv für systematische Philosophie*, Bd. V, 1898-99, S. 169-70).

In 1900 he wrote that in spite of all the points on which Mach differs from Kant and Berkeley, "they at any rate are more akin to him than the metaphysical empiricism prevailing in natural science [*i.e.*, materialism! The professor does not like to call the devil by name] which is indeed the main target of Mach's attacks" (*op. cit.*, Bd. VI, S. 87). In 1903 he wrote: "The starting point of Berkeley and Mach is irrefutable . . . Mach completed what Kant began" (*Kantstudien*, Bd. VIII, 1903, S. 274, 314).

In the preface to the Russian edition of the *Analyse der Empfindungen*, Mach also mentions T. Ziehen, "who is following, if not the same, at least very close paths." We take Professor T. Ziehen's book

(*Psychophysiologische Erkenntnistheorie*,<sup>1</sup> Jena 1898) and find that the author refers to Mach, Avenarius, Schuppe, and so forth in the very introduction. Here therefore we again have a case of a disciple acknowledged by the teacher. The "recent" theory of Ziehen is that only the "mob" is capable of believing that "real objects evoke our sensations" (p. 3), and that:

"Over the portals of the theory of knowledge there can be no other inscription than the words of Berkeley: 'The external objects subsist not by themselves, but exist in our minds!'" (p. 5). "What is given us is sensations and ideas. Both are embraced by the word psychical. Non-psychical is a word devoid of meaning" (p. 100).

The laws of nature are relations not of material bodies but of "reduced sensations" (p. 104). This "new" concept—"reduced sensations"—contains everything that is original in Ziehen's Berkeleianism!

Petzoldt repudiated Ziehen as an idealist as far back as 1904 in the second volume of his *Einführung*, etc. (pp. 298-301). By 1906 he had already included Cornelius, Kleinpeter, Ziehen and Verworn (*Das Weltproblem*, S. 137, notes) in the list of *idealists or psychomomists*. In the case of all these worthy professors, you see, there is a "misconception" in their interpretations "of the views of Mach and Avenarius" (*ibid.*).

Poor Mach and Avenarius! Not only were they slandered by their enemies for idealism and "even" (as Bogdanov expresses it) solipsism, but their very friends, disciples and followers, expert professors, also understood their teachers pervertedly, in an idealist sense. If empirio-criticism is developing into idealism, that by no means demonstrates the radical falsity of its Berkeleian basic premises. God forbid! It is only a slight "misconception," in the Nozdriev-Petzoldt<sup>2</sup> sense of the term.

The funniest thing of all perhaps is that Petzoldt himself, the guardian of purity and innocence, firstly, "supplemented" Mach and Avenarius with his "logical *a priori*" and, secondly, coupled them with Wilhelm Schuppe, the vehicle of fideism.

<sup>1</sup> Theodor Ziehen, *Psycho-Physiological Theory of Knowledge*. Jena, 1898.—*Trans.*

<sup>2</sup> Nozdriev, a character in Gogol's *Dead Souls*.—*Trans.*

Had Petzoldt been acquainted with Mach's English adherents, he would have had very considerably to extend the list of Machians who had lapsed (because of a "misconception") into idealism. We have already referred to Karl Pearson, whom Mach praised, as an unadulterated idealist. Here are the opinions of two other "slanders" who say the same thing of Pearson:

"Professor Pearson is merely echoing a doctrine first given clear utterance by the truly great Berkeley" (Howard V. Knox, *Mind*, 1897, Vol. VI, p. 205).

"There can be no doubt that Mr. Pearson is an idealist in the strictest sense of the word" (Georges Rodier, *Revue philosophique*, 1888, II, Vol. 26, p. 200).

The English idealist, William Clifford, whom Mach regards as "coming very close" to his philosophy (*Analyse der Empfindungen*, S. 8), must be considered a teacher rather than a disciple of Mach, for Clifford's philosophical works appeared in the 'seventies. Here the "misconception" is due to Mach himself, who in 1901 "failed to notice" the idealism in Clifford's doctrine that the world is "mind-stuff," a "social object," a "highly organised experience," and so forth.<sup>1</sup> For a characterisation of the charlatanism of the German Machians, it is sufficient to note that Kleinpeter in 1905 elevated this idealist to the rank of founder of the "epistemology of modern science"!

On page 284 of the *Analyse der Empfindungen*, Mach mentions the "kindred" (to Buddhism and Machism) American philosopher, Paul Carus. Carus, who regards himself as an "admirer and personal friend" of Mach, edits in Chicago *The Monist*, a journal devoted to philosophy, and *The Open Court*, a journal devoted to the propagation of religion. Science is divine revelation, an editorial statement of this latter journal says.

"The object of *The Open Court* is to establish religion on the basis of Science, and in connection therewith it will present the Monistic philosophy. The founder of this journal believes this will furnish a religion which embraces all that is true and good in religion."

<sup>1</sup> W. K. Clifford, *Lectures and Essays*, 3rd ed., London, 1901, Vol. II, pp. 55, 65, 69: "On this point I agree entirely with Berkeley and not with Mr. Spencer" (p. 58); "The object, then, is a set of changes in my consciousness, and not anything out of it" (p. 52).

Mach is a regular contributor to *The Monist* and publishes in it individual chapters from his latest works. Carus corrects Mach "ever so little" à la Kant, and declares that Mach "is an idealist or, as we would say, a subjectivist." "There are, no doubt, differences between Mach's views and mine," although "I at once recognised in him a kindred spirit."<sup>1</sup>

"Our monism," says Carus, "is not materialistic, not spiritualistic, not agnostic; it merely means consistency . . . it takes experience as its basis and employs as method the systematic forms of the relations of experience" (evidently a plagiarism from Bogdanov's *Empirio-Monism*!).

Carus' motto is:

"Not agnosticism, but positive science, not mysticism, but clear thinking, not super-naturalism, not materialism, but a monistic view of the world, not a dogma, but religion, not creed, but faith."

And in conformity with this motto Carus preaches a "new theology," a "scientific theology," or "theonomy," which denies the literalness of the bible but insists that "all truth is divine and God reveals himself in science as he does in history."<sup>2</sup> It should be remarked that Kleinpeter, in his book on the epistemological foundations of modern science already referred to, recommends Carus, together with Ostwald, Avenarius and the immanentists (pp. 151-52). When Haeckel issued his theses for a Monistic Alliance, Carus vigorously opposed him on the ground that, first, Haeckel vainly attempts to refute apriorism, which is "quite in keeping with scientific philosophy"; second, that Haeckel's doctrine of determinism "excludes the possibility of free will"; third, that Haeckel is mistaken

"in emphasising the one-sided view of the naturalist against the traditional conservatism of the churches. Thus he appears as an enemy to the existing churches instead of rejoicing at their higher development into a new and truer interpretation of their dogmas" (*ibid.*, Vol. XVI, 1906, pp. 121-22).

Carus himself admits that

"I appear reactionary to many freethinkers who blame me for not joining their chorus in denouncing all religion as superstition" (p. 355).

<sup>1</sup> *The Monist*, Chicago, Vol. XVI, July 1906, P. Carus, "Professor Mach's Philosophy," pp. 345, 332. The article is a reply to an article by Kleinpeter which appeared in the same journal.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. XIII, pp. 27, 36, "Theology as a Science."

It is quite evident that we have here a leader of a gang of American literary swindlers who are engaged in doping the people with religious opium. Mach and Kleinpeter joined this gang evidently as the result of a slight "misconception."

### 5. A. BOGDANOV'S EMPIRIO-MONISM

"I personally," writes Bogdanov of himself, "know so far of only one empirio-monist in literature—a certain A. Bogdanov. But I know him very well and can answer for it that his views fully accord with the sacramental formula of the primacy of 'nature' over 'mind.' To wit, he regards all that exists as a continuous chain of development, the lower links of which are lost in the 'chaos of elements,' while the higher links, known to us, represent the *experience of men* [Bogdanov's italics]—psychical and, still higher, physical experience. This experience, and the knowledge resulting therefrom, correspond to what is usually called mind" (*Empirio-Monism*, Bk. III, p. xii).

The "sacramental" formula here ridiculed by Bogdanov is Engels' well-known proposition, which Bogdanov however diplomatically evades! We do not differ from Engels. oh. no!

But let us examine more carefully Bogdanov's own summary of this famous "empirio-monism" and "substitution." The physical world is called the *experience of men* and it is declared that physical experience is "higher" in the chain of development than psychical. But this is utter nonsense! And it is precisely the kind of nonsense that is characteristic of all idealist philosophies. It would be farcical to class this "system" of Bogdanov's as materialism. With me, too, he says, nature is primary and mind secondary. If Engels' definition is to be thus construed, then Hegel is also a materialist, for with him, too, psychical experience (under the title of the absolute idea) comes first, then follow, "higher up," the physical world, nature, and, lastly, human knowledge, which through nature apprehends the absolute idea. Not a single idealist will deny the primacy of nature taken in this sense, for it is not a genuine primacy, since in fact nature is not taken as the *immediately* given, as the starting point of epistemology. Nature is in fact reached as the result of a long process, *through abstraction* of the "psychical." It is immaterial what these abstractions are called: whether absolute

idea, universal self, world will, and so on and so forth. These terms distinguish the different *varieties* of idealism, and such varieties exist in countless numbers. The essence of idealism is that the psychical is taken as the starting point; from it external nature is deduced, *and only then* is the ordinary human consciousness deduced from nature. Hence, this primary psychical always turns out to be a *lifeless abstraction* concealing a diluted theology. For instance, everybody knows what a human *idea* is; but an idea independent of man and prior to man, an idea in the abstract, an absolute idea, is a theological invention of the idealist Hegel. Everybody knows what human sensation is; but sensation independent of man, sensation prior to man, is nonsense, a lifeless abstraction, an idealist artifice. And it is precisely to such an artifice that Bogdanov resorts when he erects the following ladder:

1) The chaos of "elements" (we know that no other human concept lies back of the term "element" save *sensation*).

2) The psychical experience of men.

3) The physical experience of men.

4) "The knowledge emerging therefrom."

There are no sensations (human) without man. Hence, the first rung of this ladder is a lifeless idealist abstraction. As a matter of fact, what we have here is not the usual and familiar *human* sensations, but fictitious sensations, nobody's sensations, sensations *in general*, divine sensations—just as the ordinary *human* idea became divine with Hegel when it was divorced from man and man's brain.

So away with the first rung!

Away also with the second rung, for the *psychical before* the physical (and Bogdanov places the second rung *before* the third) is something unknown to man or science. The physical realm existed before the psychical could have appeared, for the latter is the highest product of the highest forms of organic matter. Bogdanov's second rung is also a lifeless abstraction, it is thought without brain, human reason divorced from man.

Only when we throw out the first two rungs can we obtain a picture of the world that truly corresponds to science and materialism. To wit: 1) the physical world exists *independently* of the mind

of man and existed long *prior to man*, *prior to any* "human experience"; 2) the psychical, the mind, etc., is the highest product of matter (*i.e.*, the physical), it is a function of that particularly complex fragment of matter called the human brain.

"The realm of substitution," writes Bogdanov, "coincides with the realm of physical phenomena; for the psychical phenomena we need substitute nothing, because they are immediate complexes" (p. xxxix).

And this precisely is idealism; for the psychical, *i.e.*, consciousness, idea, sensation, etc., is taken as the *immediate* and the physical is deduced from it, substituted for it. The world is the non-ego created by the ego, said Fichte. The world is absolute idea, said Hegel. The world is will, said Schopenhauer. The world is conception and idea, said the immanentist Rehmke. Being is consciousness, said the immanentist Schuppe. The physical is a substitution for the psychical, says Bogdanov. One must be blind not to perceive the identical idealist essence under these various verbal cloaks.

"Let us ask ourselves the following question," writes Bogdanov in Book I of *Empirio-Monism* (pp. 128-29): "What is a living being, for instance, man?"

And he answers:

"Man is primarily a definite complex of immediate experiences. [Mark, 'primarily'!] *Then*, in the further development of experience, 'man' becomes both for himself and for others a physical body amidst other physical bodies."

Why, this is a sheer "complex" of absurdities, fit only for deducing the immortality of the soul, or the idea of God, and so forth. Man is primarily a complex of immediate experiences and in the course of *further development* becomes a physical body! That means that there are "immediate experiences" *without* a physical body, *prior* to a physical body! What a pity that this magnificent philosophy has not yet found acceptance in our theological seminaries! There its merits would have been fully appreciated.

". . . We have admitted that 'physical nature' itself is a *product* [Bogdanov's italics] of complexes of an immediate character (to which psychical co-ordinations also belong), that it is the reflection of such complexes in others, analogous to them, but of the most complex type (in the socially-organised experience of living beings)" (p. 146).

A philosophy which teaches that physical nature itself is a prod-



uct, is a philosophy of the priests pure and simple. And its character is in no wise altered by the fact that personally Bogdanov repudiates all religion. Dühring was also an atheist; he even proposed to prohibit religion in his "socialitarian" order. Nevertheless, Engels was absolutely right in pointing out that Dühring's "system" could not make ends meet without religion. The same is true of Bogdanov, with the essential difference that the quoted passage is not a chance inconsistency but the very essence of his "empirio-monism" and of all his "substitution." If nature is a product, it is obvious that it can be a product only of something that is greater, richer, broader, mightier than nature, of something that exists; for in order to "produce" nature, it must exist independently of nature. That means that something exists *outside* nature, something which moreover *produces* nature. In plain language this is called God. The idealist philosophers have always sought to change this latter name, to make it more abstract, more vague and at the same time (for the sake of plausibility) to bring it nearer to the "psychical," as an "immediate complex," as the immediately given which requires no proof. Absolute idea, universal spirit, world will, "*general substitution*" of the psychical for the physical, are different formulations of one and the same idea. Every man knows, and science investigates, idea, spirit, will, the psychical, as a function of the normally operating human brain. To divorce this function from substance organised in a definite way, to convert this function into a universal, general abstraction, to "substitute" this abstraction for the whole of physical nature, this is the raving of philosophical idealism and a mockery of science.

Materialism says that the "socially-organised experience of living beings" is a product of physical nature, a result of a long development of the latter, a development from a state of physical nature when no society, organisation, experience, or living beings existed or could have existed. Idealism says that physical nature is a product of this experience of living beings, and in saying this, idealism is equating (if not subordinating) nature to God. For God is undoubtedly a product of the socially-organised experience of living beings. No matter from what angle you look at it, Bogdanov's philosophy contains nothing but a reactionary muddle.

Bogdanov thinks that to speak of the social organisation of experience is "cognitive Socialism" (Bk. III, p. xxxiv). This is insane twaddle. If Socialism is thus regarded, the Jesuits are ardent adherents of "cognitive Socialism," for the basis of their epistemology is divinity as "socially-organised experience." And there can be no doubt that Catholicism is a socially-organised experience; only, it reflects not objective truth (which Bogdanov denies, but which science reflects), but the exploitation of the ignorance of the masses by definite social classes.

But why speak of the Jesuits! We find Bogdanov's "cognitive Socialism" in its entirety among the immanentists, so beloved of Mach. Leclair regards nature as the consciousness of "mankind" (*Der Realismus*, S. 55), and not of the individual. The bourgeois philosophers will serve you up any amount of such Fichtean cognitive Socialism. Schuppe also emphasises *das generische, das gattungsmäßige Moment des Bewußtseins* (*Vierteljahrsschrift für wissenschaftliche Philosophie*, Bd. XVII, S. 379-80), i.e., the general, the generic factor of consciousness. To think that philosophical idealism vanishes by substituting the consciousness of mankind for the consciousness of the individual, or the socially-organised experience for the experience of one person, is like thinking that capitalism will vanish by replacing one capitalist by a joint stock company.

Our Russian Machians, Yushkevich and Valentinov, echo the materialist Rakhmetov in asserting that Bogdanov is an idealist (at the same time foully abusing Rakhmetov himself). But they could not stop to think where this idealism came from. They make out that Bogdanov is an individual and chance phenomenon, an isolated case. This is not true. Bogdanov personally may think that he has invented an "original" system, but one has only to compare him with the aforementioned disciples of Mach to realise the falsity of such an opinion. The difference between Bogdanov and Cornelius is far less than the difference between Cornelius and Carus. The difference between Bogdanov and Carus is less (as far as their philosophical systems are concerned, of course, and not the deliberateness of their reactionary implications) than the difference between Carus and Ziehen, and so on. Bogdanov is only one of the manifestations of that "socially-organised experience" which testifies to the growth

of Machism into idealism. Bogdanov (we are here, of course, speaking *exclusively* of Bogdanov as a philosopher) could not have come into God's world had the doctrines of his teacher Mach contained no "elements" . . . of Berkeleianism. And I cannot imagine a more "terrible vengeance" on Bogdanov than to have his *Empirio-Monism* translated, say, into German and presented for review to Leclair and Schubert-Soldern, Cornelius and Kleinpeter, Carus and Pillon (the French collaborator and disciple of Renouvier). The compliments that would be paid by these comrades-in-arms and, at times, direct followers of Mach to the "substitution" would be much more eloquent than their arguments.

However, it would scarcely be correct to regard Bogdanov's philosophy as a finished and static system. In the nine years from 1899 to 1908, Bogdanov has gone through four stages in his philosophical peregrinations. At the beginning he was a "natural-historical" materialist (*i.e.*, semi-consciously and instinctively faithful to the spirit of science). His *Fundamental Elements of the Historical Outlook on Nature* bears obvious traces of that stage. The second stage was the "energetics" of Ostwald, which was so fashionable in the latter 'nineties, a muddled agnosticism which at times stumbled into idealism. From Ostwald (the title page of Ostwald's *Vorlesungen über Naturphilosophie*<sup>1</sup> bears the inscription: "Dedicated to E. Mach") Bogdanov went over to Mach, that is he borrowed the fundamental premises of a subjective idealism that is as inconsistent and muddled as Mach's entire philosophy. The fourth stage is an attempt to eliminate some of the contradictions of Machism, and to create a semblance of objective idealism. "The theory of general substitution" shows that Bogdanov has described a curve of almost 180° from his starting position. 'Is this stage of Bogdanov's philosophy more remote or less remote from dialectical materialism than the previous stages? If Bogdanov remains in one place, then he is, of course, more remote. If he keeps moving along the same curve in which he has been moving for the last nine years, he is less remote. He now has *only* one serious step to make in order to return once more to materialism, namely, universally to discard his whole universal

<sup>1</sup> W. Ostwald, *Lectures on Natural Philosophy*, Leipzig, 1902.—*Trans.*

substitution. For this universal substitution gathers into one Chinese pigtail all the transgressions of half-hearted idealism and all the weaknesses of consistent subjective idealism, just as (*si licet parva componere magnis!*—if it is permissible to compare the great with the small) Hegel's "absolute idea" gathered together all the contradictions of Kantian idealism and all the weaknesses of Fichteanism. Feuerbach had to make *only* one serious step in order to return to materialism, namely, universally to discard, absolutely to eliminate, the absolute idea, that Hegelian "substitution of the psychical" for physical nature. Feuerbach cut off the Chinese pigtail of philosophical idealism, in other words, he took nature as the basis without any "substitution" whatever.

We must wait and see whether the Chinese pigtail of Machian idealism will go on growing for much longer.

## 6. THE "THEORY OF SYMBOLS" (OR HIEROGLYPHS) AND THE CRITICISM OF HELMHOLTZ

As a supplement to what has been said above of the idealists as the comrades-in-arms of and successors to empirio-criticism, it will be appropriate to dwell on the character of the Machian criticism of certain philosophical propositions touched upon in our literature. For instance, our Machian would-be Marxists fastened with glee on Plekhanov's "hieroglyphs," that is, on the theory that man's sensations and ideas are not copies of real things and processes of nature, not their images, but conventional signs, symbols, hieroglyphs, and so on. Bazarov ridicules this hieroglyphic materialism; and, it should be stated, *he would be right* in doing so if he rejected hieroglyphic materialism in favour of non-hieroglyphic *materialism*. But Bazarov here again resorts to a sleight-of-hand and palms off his renunciation of materialism as a criticism of "hieroglyphism." Engels speaks neither of symbols nor of hieroglyphs, but of copies, photographs, images, mirror-reflections of things. Instead of pointing out the erroneousousness of Plekhanov's deviation from Engels' formulation of materialism, Bazarov uses Plekhanov's error in order to conceal Engels' truth from the reader.

To make clear both Plekhanov's error and Bazarov's confusion

we shall refer to an important advocate of the "theory of symbols" (calling a symbol a hieroglyph changes nothing), Helmholtz, and shall see how he was criticised by the materialists and by the idealists in conjunction with the Machians.

Helmholtz, a scientist of the first magnitude, was as inconsistent in philosophy as are the great majority of scientists. He tended toward Kantianism, but he did not adhere even to these views with epistemological consistency. Here for instance are some passages on the subject of the correspondence of ideas and objects from his *Handbuch der physiologischen Optik*<sup>1</sup>:

"I have . . . designated sensations as merely *symbols* for the relations of the external world and I have denied that they have any similarity or equivalence to what they represent" (p. 442).

This is agnosticism, but on the same page further on we read:

"Our concepts and ideas are *effects* wrought on our nervous system and our consciousness by the objects that are conceived and apprehended."

This is materialism. But Helmholtz is not clear as to the relation between absolute and relative truth, as is evident from his subsequent remarks. For instance, a little further on he says:

"I therefore think that there can be no possible meaning in speaking of the truth of our ideas save as a *practical* truth. Our ideas of things *cannot be anything but* symbols, natural signs for things, which we learn to use in order to regulate our movements and actions. When we have learned to read these symbols rightly we are in a position with their aid to direct our actions so as to achieve the desired result. . . ."

This is not correct. Helmholtz here lapses into subjectivism, into a denial of objective reality and objective truth. And he arrives at a flagrant untruth when he concludes the paragraph with the words:

"An idea and the object it represents obviously belong to two entirely different worlds."

Only the Kantians thus divorce idea from reality, consciousness from nature. However, a little further on we read:

"As to the properties of the objects of the external world, a little reflection will show that all the properties we may attribute to them merely signify the *effects* wrought by them either on our senses or on other natural objects" (p. 444).

<sup>1</sup> H. Helmholtz, *Handbook of Physiological Optics*, Leipzig, 1866.—*Trans.*

Here again Helmholtz reverts to the materialist position. Helmholtz was an inconsistent Kantian, now recognising *a priori* laws of thought, now tending towards the "transcendental reality" of time and space (i.e., to a materialist conception of them); now deriving human sensations from external objects, which act upon our sense-organs, and now declaring sensations to be only symbols, i.e., certain arbitrary signs divorced from the "entirely different" world of the things signified (cf. Viktor Heyfelder, *Ueber den Begriff der Erfahrung bei Helmholtz*,<sup>1</sup> Berlin 1897).

This is how Helmholtz expressed his views in a speech delivered in 1878 on "Facts in Perception" ("a noteworthy pronouncement from the realistic camp," as Leclair characterised this speech):

"Our sensations are indeed effects wrought by external causes in our organs, and the manner in which such effects manifest themselves, of course, depends very essentially on the nature of the apparatus on which these effects are wrought. Inasmuch as the quality of our sensation informs us of the properties of the external action by which this sensation is produced, the latter can be regarded as its sign (*Zeichen*), but not as its *image*. For a certain resemblance to the object imaged is demanded of an image. . . . But a sign need not resemble that of which it is a sign. . ." (*Vorträge und Reden*,<sup>2</sup> 1884, Bd. II, S. 226).

If sensations are not images of things, but only signs or symbols, which do "not resemble" them, then Helmholtz's initial materialist premise is undermined; the existence of external objects becomes subject to doubt; for signs or symbols may quite possibly indicate imaginary objects, and everybody is familiar with instances of *such* signs or symbols. Helmholtz, following Kant, attempts to draw something like an absolute boundary between the "phenomenon" and the "thing-in-itself." Helmholtz harbours an insuperable prejudice against straightforward, clear, and open materialism. But a little further on he says:

"I do not see how one could refute a system even of the most extreme subjective idealism that chose to regard life as a dream. One might declare it to be highly improbable and unsatisfactory—I myself would in this case subscribe to the severest expressions of dissent—yet it could be constructed consistently. . . . The *realistic hypothesis*, on the contrary, trusts the evidence (*Aussage*) of ordinary self-observation, according to which the changes

<sup>1</sup> V. Heyfelder, *Helmholtz's Conception of Experience*, Berlin, 1897.—*Trans.*

<sup>2</sup> Helmholtz, *Lectures and Speeches*, Vol. II, Brunswick, 1896.—*Trans.*

of perception that follow a certain action have no psychical connection with the preceding impulse of volition. This hypothesis regards everything that seems to be substantiated by our everyday perception, *viz.*, the material world outside of us, as existing independently of our ideas. Undoubtedly, the realistic hypothesis is the simplest we can construct; it has been tested and verified in an extremely broad field of application; it is sharply defined in its several parts and, therefore, it is in the highest degree useful and fruitful as a basis of action" (pp. 242-43).

Helmholtz's agnosticism also resembles "shamefaced materialism," with certain Kantian twists, in distinction to Huxley's Berkeleian twists.

Albrecht Rau, a follower of Feuerbach, therefore vigorously criticises Helmholtz's theory of symbols as an inconsistent deviation from "realism." Helmholtz's basic view, says Rau, is a realistic hypothesis, according to which "we apprehend the objective properties of things with the help of our senses."<sup>1</sup>

The theory of symbols cannot be reconciled with such a view (which, as we have seen, is wholly materialist), for it implies a certain distrust of perception, a distrust of the evidence of our sense-organs. It is beyond doubt that an image cannot wholly resemble the model, but an image is one thing, a symbol, a *conventional sign*, another. The image inevitably and of necessity implies the objective reality of that which it "images." "Conventional sign," symbol, hieroglyph are concepts which introduce an entirely unnecessary element of agnosticism. Albrecht Rau, therefore, is perfectly right in saying that Helmholtz's theory of symbols pays tribute to Kantianism.

"Had Helmholtz," says Rau, "remained true to his realistic conception, had he consistently adhered to the basic principle that the properties of bodies express the relations of bodies to each other and also to us, he obviously would have had no need of the whole theory [of symbols]; he could then have said, briefly and clearly: the sensations which are produced in us by things are reflections of the nature of those things" (*ibid.*, p. 320).

That is the way a materialist criticises Helmholtz. He rejects Helmholtz's hieroglyphic or symbolic materialism or semi-materialism in the name of Feuerbach's consistent materialism.

The idealist Leclair (a representative of the "immanentist school,"

<sup>1</sup> Albrecht Rau, *Empfinden und Denken* [*Sensation and Thought*], Gießen 1896, S. 304.

so dear to Mach's heart and mind) also accuses Helmholtz of inconsistency, of wavering between materialism and spiritualism (*Der Realismus*, etc., S. 154). But for Leclair the theory of symbols is not insufficiently materialistic but too materialistic. Leclair says:

"Helmholtz thinks that the perceptions of our consciousness offer sufficient support for the cognition of sequence in time as well as of the identity or non-identity of transcendental causes. This in Helmholtz's opinion is sufficient for the assumption and cognition of law in the realm of the transcendental" (i.e., in the realm of the objectively real) (p. 33).

And Leclair thunders against this "dogmatic prejudice of Helmholtz's":

"Berkeley's God," he exclaims, "as the hypothetical cause of the conformity to natural law of the ideas in our mind is at least just as capable of satisfying our need of causality as a world of external objects. . ." (p. 34). "A consistent application of the theory of symbols . . . can achieve nothing without a generous admixture of vulgar realism" (i.e., *materialism*) (p. 35).

This is how a "critical idealist" criticised Helmholtz for his materialism in 1879. Twenty years later, in his article "The Fundamental Views of Mach and Heinrich Hertz on Physics,"<sup>1</sup> Kleinpeter, the disciple of Mach so highly praised by his teacher, refuted the "antiquated" Helmholtz with the aid of Mach's "recent" philosophy in the following way. Let us for the moment leave Hertz (who, in fact, was as inconsistent as Helmholtz) and examine Kleinpeter's comparison of Mach and Helmholtz. Having quoted a number of passages from the works of both writers, and having particularly stressed Mach's well-known statement to the effect that bodies are mental symbols for complexes of sensations and so on, Kleinpeter says:

"If we follow Helmholtz's line of thought, we shall encounter the following fundamental premises:

"1. There exist objects of the external world.

"2. A change in these objects is inconceivable without the action of some cause (which is thought of as real).

"3. 'Cause, according to the original meaning of the word, is the unchangeable residue or being behind the changing phenomena, namely, substance and the law of its action, force.' [The quotation is taken by Kleinpeter from Helmholtz.]

"4. It is possible to deduce all phenomena from their causes in a logically strict and uniquely determined manner.

<sup>1</sup> *Archiv für systematische Philosophie*, Bd. V, 1899, S. 163-64.



"5. The achievement of this end is equivalent to the possession of objective truth, the acquisition (*Erlangung*) of which is thus regarded as conceivable" (p. 163).

Rendered indignant by these premises, their contradictoriness and their creation of insoluble problems, Kleinpeter remarks that Helmholtz does not hold strictly to these views and sometimes employs "turns of speech which are somewhat suggestive of Mach's purely logical understanding of such words" as matter, force, causality, etc.

"It is not difficult to find the source of our dissatisfaction with Helmholtz, if we recall Mach's fine, clear words. The false understanding of the words mass, force, etc., is the basic weakness of Helmholtz's whole argument. These are only concepts, products of our imagination (and not realities existing outside of thought). We are not even in a position to know such things. From the observation of our senses we are in general unable, owing to their imperfection, to make a single uniquely determined conclusion. We can never assert, for instance, that upon reading a certain scale (*durch Ablesen einer Skala*) we shall obtain a definite figure; there are always, within certain limits, an infinite number of possible figures all equally compatible with the facts of the observation. And to have knowledge of something real lying outside us—that is for us impossible. Let us assume however that it were possible, and that we did get to know reality; in that case we would have no right to apply the laws of logic to it, for they are *our* laws, applicable only to *our* conceptions, to *our* mental products [Kleinpeter's italics]. Between facts there is no logical connection, but only a simple succession; apodictic assertions are here unthinkable. It is therefore incorrect to say that one fact is the cause of another and, consequently, the whole deduction built up by Helmholtz on this conception falls to the ground. Finally, the attainment of objective truth, i.e., truth existing independently of any subject, is impossible, not only because of the nature of our senses, but also because as men (*als Menschen*) we can in general have no notion of what exists quite independently of us" (p. 164).

As the reader sees, our disciple of Mach, repeating the favourite phrases of his teacher and of Bogdanov, who does not own himself a Machian, rejects Helmholtz's whole philosophy, rejects it from the idealist standpoint. The theory of symbols is not even especially singled out by the idealist, who regards it as an unimportant and perhaps accidental deviation from materialism. And Helmholtz is chosen by Kleinpeter as a representative of the "traditional views in physics," "views shared by the majority of physicists" (p. 160).

The result we have arrived at is that Plekhanov was guilty of an obvious mistake in his exposition of materialism, but that Bazarov completely muddled the matter, mixed up materialism with

idealism and advanced in opposition to the "theory of symbols," or "hieroglyphic materialism," the idealist nonsense that "sense-perception is the reality existing outside us." From the Kantian Helmholtz, just as from Kant himself, the materialists went to the Left, the Machians to the Right.

## 7. TWO KINDS OF CRITICISM OF DÜHRING

Let us note another characteristic feature in the Machians' incredible perversion of materialism. Valentinov endeavours to beat the Marxists by comparing them to Büchner, who supposedly has much in common with Plekhanov, although Engels sharply dissociated himself from Büchner. Bogdanov, on the other hand, approaching the same question from another angle, defends, as it were, the "materialism of the natural scientists," which, he says, "is usually spoken of with a certain contempt" (*Empirio-Monism*, Bk. III, p. x). Both Valentinov and Bogdanov are inordinately muddled on this question. Marx and Engels always "spoke contemptuously" of bad Socialists; but from this it follows that they demanded the teaching of correct Socialism, scientific Socialism, and not a flight from Socialism to bourgeois views. Marx and Engels always condemned *bad* (and, particularly, anti-dialectical) materialism; but they condemned it from the standpoint of a higher, more advanced, dialectical *materialism*, and not from the standpoint of Humism or Berkeleianism. Marx, Engels and Dietzgen would discuss the bad materialists, reason with them and seek to correct their errors. But they would not even discuss the Humeans and Berkeleians, Mach and Avenarius, confining themselves to a single still more contemptuous remark about their trend *as a whole*. Therefore, the endless faces and grimaces made by our Machians over Holbach and Co., Büchner and Co., etc., are absolutely nothing but an attempt to throw dust in the eyes of the public, a cover for the retreat of Machism as a whole from the very foundations of materialism in general, and a fear to take up a straightforward and clear position with regard to Engels.

And it would be hard to express oneself more clearly on the French materialism of the eighteenth century and on Büchner, Vogt and Moleschott, than Engels does at the end of Chapter II of

his *Ludwig Feuerbach*. It is impossible not to understand Engels, unless one deliberately wishes to distort him. Marx and I are materialists—says Engels in this chapter, explaining what *fundamentally* distinguishes all schools of materialism *from the whole camp* of the idealists, from all the Kantians and Humeans in general. And Engels reproaches Feuerbach for a certain 'pusillanimity, a certain frivolity of thought, as expressed in his rejection at times of materialism in general because of the mistakes of one or another school of materialists. Feuerbach "should not have confounded the doctrines of these hedge-preachers [Büchner and Co.] with materialism in general," says Engels (*op. cit.*, p. 38). Only minds that are spoilt by reading and credulously accepting the doctrines of the German reactionary professors could have *misunderstood* the nature of *such* reproaches levelled by Engels at Feuerbach.

Engels says very clearly that Büchner and Co. "by no means overcame the limitations of their teachers," *i.e.*, the materialists of the eighteenth century, that they had not made a single *step forward*. And it is for this, and *this alone*, that Engels took Büchner and Co. to task; not for their materialism, as the ignoramuses think, but because they did not *advance* materialism; "*and, in truth, it was quite beyond their scope to develop the theory [of materialism] any further.*" It was for *this alone* that Engels took Büchner and Co. to task. And thereupon Engels enumerates *point by point* three fundamental "limitations" (*Beschränktheit*) of the French materialists of the eighteenth century, from which Marx and Engels had emancipated themselves, but from which Büchner and Co. were unable to emancipate themselves. The first limitation was that the views of the old materialists were "mechanical," *in the sense* that they believed in "the exclusive application of the standards of mechanics to processes of a chemical and organic nature" (p. 37). We shall see in the next chapter that failure to understand these words of Engels' caused certain people to succumb to idealism through the new physics. Engels does not reject *mechanical* materialism on the grounds attributed to him by physicists of the "recent" idealist (and Machian) trend. The second limitation was the metaphysical character of the views of the old materialists, the "*anti-dialectical character of their philosophy.*" This limitation is fully shared with

Büchner and Co. by our Machians, who, as we have seen, entirely failed to understand Engels' application of dialectics to epistemology (for example, absolute and relative truth). The third limitation was the preservation of idealism "up above," in the realm of the social sciences, a non-understanding of historical materialism.

Having enumerated these three "limitations" and explained them with exhaustive clarity, Engels *then and there* adds that they (Büchner and Co.) had not overcome these limitations (*über diese Schranken kamen*).

*Exclusively* for these three things and *exclusively* within these limits, does Engels refute both the materialism of the eighteenth century and the doctrines of Büchner and Co.! On all other, more elementary, questions of materialism (questions distorted by the Machians) *there is and can be no difference* between Marx and Engels on the one hand and all these old materialists on the other. It was only the Russian Machians who brought confusion into this perfectly clear question, since for their West-European teachers and like thinkers the radical difference between the position of Mach and his friends and the position of the materialists generally is perfectly obvious. Our Machians found it necessary to confuse the issue in order to represent their break with Marxism and their desertion to the camp of bourgeois philosophy as "minor corrections" of Marxism!

Take Dühring. It is hard to imagine anything more contemptuous than the opinion Engels expressed of him. But *at the same time that Dühring was criticised by Engels, just see how he was criticised by Leclair*, who praises Mach's "revolutionary philosophy." Leclair regards Dühring as the "*extreme Left*" of materialism, which

"without any evasion declares sensation, as well as every activity of consciousness and intelligence in general, to be the secretion, function, supreme flower, aggregate effect, etc., of the animal organism" (*Der Redismus* etc., 1879, S. 23-24).

Is it for this that Engels criticised Dühring? No. In this he was in *full agreement* with Dühring, as he was with every other materialist. He criticised Dühring from the diametrically opposite standpoint, namely, for the inconsistency of his materialism, for his idealist fancies, which left a loophole for fideism.

"Nature itself works both within ideating beings and from without, in order to create the required knowledge of the course of things by systematically producing coherent views."

Leclair quotes these words of Dühring's and savagely attacks the materialism of such a point of view, the "crude metaphysics" of this materialism, the "self-deception," etc., etc. (pp. 160-63).

Is it for this that Engels criticised Dühring? No. He ridiculed all florid language, but as regards the recognition of objective law in nature, reflected by the consciousness, *Engels was fully in agreement with Dühring*, as he was with every other materialist.

"Thought is a form of reality higher than the rest. . . . A fundamental premise is the independence and distinction of the materially real world from the groups of manifestations taken by the consciousness."

Leclair quotes these words of Dühring's together with a number of Dühring's attacks on Kant, etc., and for this accuses Dühring of "metaphysics" (pp. 218-22), of subscribing to a "metaphysical dogma," etc.

Is it for this that Engels criticised Dühring? No. That the world exists independently of the mind and that every deviation from this truth on the part of the Kantians, Humeans, Berkeleians, and so forth, is false, on this point Engels was fully in agreement with Dühring, as he was with every other materialist. Had Engels seen from what angle Leclair, in the spirit of Mach, criticised Dühring, he would have called both these philosophical reactionaries names a hundred times more contemptuous than those he called Dühring. To Leclair Dühring was the incarnation of pernicious realism and materialism (cf. also *Beiträge zu einer monistischen Erkenntnistheorie*, 1882, S. 45). In 1878, W. Schuppe, teacher and comrade-in-arms of Mach, accused Dühring of "visionary realism" (*Traumrealismus*)<sup>1</sup> in revenge for the epithet "visionary idealism" which Dühring had hurled against the idealists. For Engels, on the contrary, Dühring was *not* a sufficiently steadfast, clear and consistent materialist.

Marx and Engels, as well as J. Dietzgen, entered the philosophical arena at a time when materialism reigned among the advanced

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Wilhelm Schuppe, *Erkenntnistheoretische Logik* [Epistemological Logic], Bonn, 1878, S. 56.

intellectuals in general, and in working class circles in particular. It is therefore quite natural that they should have devoted their attention not to a repetition of old ideas but to a serious theoretical *development* of materialism, its application to history, in other words, to the *completion* of the edifice of materialist philosophy *up to its summit*. It is quite natural that in the sphere of epistemology they *confined* themselves to correcting Feuerbach's errors, to ridiculing the banalities of the materialist Dühring, to criticising the errors of Büchner (see J. Dietzgen), to emphasising what these most widely known and popular writers among the workers *particularly* lacked, namely, dialectics. Marx, Engels and J. Dietzgen did not worry about the elementary truths of materialism, which had been cried by the hucksters in dozens of books, but devoted all their attention to ensuring that these elementary truths should not be vulgarised, should not be over-simplified, should not lead to stagnation of thought ("materialism below, idealism above"), to forgetfulness of the *valuable* fruit of the idealist systems. Hegelian dialectics—that pearl which those farmyard cocks, the Büchners, the Dührings and Co. (as well as Leclair, Mach, Avenarius and so forth), could not pick out from the dunghheap of absolute idealism.

If one envisages at all concretely the historical conditions in which the philosophical works of Engels and J. Dietzgen were written, it will be perfectly clear why they *dissociated* themselves from the vulgarisation of the elementary truths of materialism *rather than defend* these truths themselves. Marx and Engels also dissociated themselves from the vulgarisation of the fundamental demands of political democracy rather than defend these demands.

Only disciples of the philosophical reactionaries could have "failed to notice" this circumstance, and could have presented the case to their readers in such a way as to make it appear that Marx and Engels did not know what being a materialist means.

#### 8. HOW COULD DIETZGEN HAVE FOUND FAVOUR WITH THE REACTIONARY PHILOSOPHERS?

The previously cited example of Helfond already contains the answer to this question, and we shall not examine the innumerable

instances in which J. Dietzgen receives Helfond-like treatment at the hands of our Machians. It is more expedient to quote a number of passages from J. Dietzgen himself in order to bring out his weak points.

"Thought is a function of the brain," says Dietzgen (*Das Wesen der menschlichen Kopjarbeit*, 1903). "Thought is a product of the brain. . . . My desk, as the content of my thought, is identical with that thought, does not differ from it. But my desk outside of my head is a separate object quite distinct from it" (pp. 52-53).

These perfectly clear materialistic propositions are, however, supplemented by Dietzgen thus:

"Nevertheless, the non-sensible idea is also *sensible*, material, *i.e.*, real. . . . The mind differs no more from the table, light, or sound than these things differ from each other" (p. 54).

This is obviously false. That both thought and matter are "real," *i.e.*, exist, is true. But to say that thought is material is to make a false step, a step towards confusing materialism and idealism. As a matter of fact this is only an inexact expression of Dietzgen's, who elsewhere correctly says: "Mind and matter at least have this in common, that they exist" (p. 80).

"Thinking," says Dietzgen, "is a work of the body. . . . In order to think I require a substance that can be thought of. This substance is provided in the phenomena of nature and life. . . . Matter is the boundary of the mind, beyond which the latter cannot pass. . . . Mind is a product of matter, but matter is more than a product of mind. . ." (p. 64).

The Machians refrain from analysing materialist arguments of the materialist Dietzgen such as these! They prefer to fasten on passages where he is inexact and muddled. For example, he says that scientists can be "idealists only outside their field" (p. 108). Whether this is so, and why it is so, on this the Machians are silent. But a page or so earlier Dietzgen recognises the "positive side of modern idealism" (p. 106) and the "inadequacy of the materialist principle," which should rejoice the Machians. Dietzgen's incorrectly expressed thought consists in the fact that the difference between matter and mind is also *relative and not excessive* (p. 107). This is true, but what follows from this is not that materialism as such is inadequate, but that metaphysical, anti-dialectical materialism is inadequate.

"Simple, scientific truth is not based on a person. It has its foundation outside [i.e., of the person], in its material; it is objective truth. . . . We call ourselves materialists. . . . Philosophical materialists are distinguished by the fact that they put the corporeal world at the beginning, at the head, and put the idea, or spirit, as the sequel, whereas their opponents, after the manner of religion, derive things from the word . . . the material world from the idea" (*Kleinere philosophische Schriften*, 1903, S. 59-62).

The Machians avoid this recognition of objective truth and repetition of *Engels'* definition of materialism. But Dietzgen goes on to say:

"We would be equally right in calling ourselves idealists, for our system is based on the total result of philosophy, on the scientific investigation of the idea, on a clear insight into the nature of mind" (p. 63).

It is not difficult to seize upon this obviously incorrect phrase in order to deny materialism. Actually, Dietzgen's formulation is more inexact than his basic thought, which amounts to this, that the old materialism was unable to investigate ideas scientifically (with the aid of historical materialism).

Here are Dietzgen's ideas on the old materialism.

"Like our understanding of political economy, our materialism is a scientific, historical conquest. Just as definitely as we distinguish ourselves from the Socialists of the past, so we distinguish ourselves from the old materialists. With the latter we have only this in common, that we acknowledge matter to be the premise, or prime base of the idea" (p. 140).

This word "only" is characteristic! It contains the *whole* epistemological foundation of materialism, *as distinguished from* agnosticism, Machism and idealism. But Dietzgen's attention is here concentrated on dissociating himself from vulgar materialism.

But a little further on another incorrect passage occurs:

"The concept matter must be broadened. It embraces all the phenomena of reality, as well as our faculty of knowing or explaining" (p. 141).

This is a muddle which can only lead to confusing materialism and idealism under the guise of "broadening" the former. To seize upon this "broadening" would be to forget the *basis* of Dietzgen's philosophy, the recognition of matter as the primary, "the boundary of the mind." But, as a matter of fact, a few lines further down Dietzgen corrects himself:

"The whole governs the part, matter the mind. . . . In this sense we may love and honour the material world . . . as the first cause, as the creator of heaven and earth" (p. 142).



That the conception of "matter" must also include "thoughts," as Dietzgen repeats in the "Excursions" (*Kleinere philosophische Schriften*, p. 214), is a muddle. for if such an inclusion is made, the epistemological contrast between mind and matter, idealism and materialism, a contrast upon which Dietzgen himself insists, loses all meaning. That this contrast must not be made "excessive," exaggerated, metaphysical, is beyond dispute (and it is to the great credit of the *dialectical* materialist Dietzgen that he emphasised this). The limits of the absolute necessity and absolute truth of this relative contrast are precisely those limits which define the *trend* of epistemological investigations. To operate beyond these limits with the distinction between matter and mind, physical and psychical, as though they were absolute opposites, would be a great mistake.

Dietzgen, unlike Engels, expresses his thoughts in a vague, unclear, mushy way. But apart from his defects of exposition and his individual mistakes, he not unsuccessfully champions the "*materialist theory of knowledge*" (pp. 222 and 271) and "*dialectical materialism*."

"The materialist theory of knowledge then," says Dietzgen, "amounts to the recognition that the human organ of perception radiates no metaphysical light, but is a piece of nature which reflects other pieces of nature" (pp. 222-23). "Our perceptive faculty is not a supernatural source of truth, but a mirror-like instrument, which reflects the things of the world, or nature" (p. 243).

Our profound Machians avoid an analysis of each individual proposition of Dietzgen's *materialist theory of knowledge*, but seize upon his *deviations* from that theory, upon his vagueness and confusion. J. Dietzgen could find favour with the reactionary philosophers only because he occasionally gets muddled. And, it goes without saying, where there is a muddle there you will find Machians.

Marx wrote to Kugelmann on December 5, 1868:

"A fairly long time ago he [Dietzgen] sent me a fragment of a manuscript on the 'faculty of thought' which, in spite of a certain confusion and of too frequent repetition, contains much that is excellent and—as the independent product of a working man—admirable."<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Valentinov quotes this opinion, but *it never dawned on him to ask what* Marx regarded as Dietzgen's *confusion*, whether it was

<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx, *Letters to Dr. Kugelmann*, Eng. ed., 1934, p. 80.—*Trans.*

that which brings Dietzgen close to Mach, or that which distinguishes Dietzgen from Mach. Mr. Valentinov does not ask this question because he read both Dietzgen and Marx's letters after the manner of Gogol's Petrushka. And it is not difficult to find the answer to this question. Marx frequently called his world outlook dialectical materialism, and Engels' *Anti-Dühring*, the whole of which Marx read through in manuscript, expounds precisely this world outlook. Hence, it should have been clear even to the Valentinovs that Dietzgen's *confusion* could lie only in his *deviation* from a consistent application of dialectics, from consistent materialism, in particular from *Anti-Dühring*.

Does it now dawn upon Mr. Valentinov and his brethren that what Marx could call Dietzgen's confusion is *only what brings Dietzgen close to Mach*, who went from Kant not towards materialism, but towards Berkeley and Hume? Or was it that the materialist Marx called Dietzgen's materialist theory of knowledge confused, yet approved his deviations from materialism, that is, approved what differs from *Anti-Dühring*, which was written with his [Marx's] participation?

Whom are they trying to fool, our Machians, who desire to be regarded as Marxists and at the same time inform the world that "their" Mach approved of Dietzgen? Have our heroes failed to guess that Mach could approve in Dietzgen only that for which he was dubbed a muddlehead by Marx?

When a general judgment is made of J. Dietzgen, he does not deserve so severe a censure. He is nine-tenths a materialist and never made any claims either to originality or to possessing a special philosophy distinct from materialism. He spoke of Marx frequently, and invariably as the *head of the movement* (*Kleinere philosophische Schriften*, S. 4—an opinion uttered in 1873; on page 95—1876—he emphasises that Marx and Engels "possessed the necessary philosophical training"; on page 181—1886—he speaks of Marx and Engels as the "acknowledged founders" of the movement). Dietzgen was a Marxist, and his son, Eugene Dietzgen, and—alas!—Comrade P. Dauge are rendering him left-handed service by their invention of "Naturmonismus," "Dietzgenism," etc. "Dietzgenism" as distinct from dialectical materialism is *confusion*, a

*step* towards reactionary philosophy, an attempt to create a trend not from what is great in Joseph Dietzgen (and in that worker-philosopher, who discovered dialectical materialism in his own way, there is much that is great!) but *from his weak points*.

I shall confine myself to two examples in order to illustrate how Comrade P. Dauge and Eugene Dietzgen are sliding into reactionary philosophy.

In the second edition of the *Akquisit*<sup>1</sup> (p. 273) Dauge writes:

"Even bourgeois criticism . . . points out the connection between Dietzgen's philosophy and empirio-criticism and also the immanentist school [and below] . . . especially Leclair" (a quotation from a "bourgeois criticism").

That Dauge values and esteems J. Dietzgen cannot be doubted. But it also cannot be doubted that he is *defaming* him by citing *without protest* the opinion of a bourgeois scribbler who classes the sworn enemy of fideism and of the professors—the "graduated flunkys" of the bourgeoisie—with the direct preacher of fideism and avowed reactionary, Leclair. It is possible that Dauge repeated another's opinion of the immanentists and of Leclair without himself being familiar with the writings of these reactionaries. But let this serve him as a warning: the road *away from* Marx to the peculiarities of Dietzgen—to Mach—to the immanentists—is a road leading into a morass. To class him not only with Leclair but even with Mach is to lay stress on Dietzgen the muddlehead as distinct from Dietzgen the materialist.

I shall defend Dietzgen against Dauge. I assert that Dietzgen did not deserve the shame of being classed with Leclair. And I can cite a witness, a most authoritative one on such a question, one who is as much a reactionary philosopher, fideist and "immanentist" as Leclair himself, namely, Schubert-Soldern. In 1896 he wrote:

"The Social-Democrats willingly lean for support on Hegel with more or less (usually less) justification, but they materialise the Hegelian philosophy; cf. J. Dietzgen. . . . With Dietzgen, the absolute becomes the uni-

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to an afterword to the 2nd Russian edition of the *Akquisit der Philosophie* written by P. Dauge and entitled "Joseph Dietzgen and His Critic, G. Plekhanov."—*Trans.*

versal, and this becomes the thing-in-itself, the absolute subject, whose appearances are its predicates. That he [Dietzgen] is thus converting a pure abstraction into the basis of the concrete process, he does not, of course, realise any more than Hegel himself did. . . . He frequently chaotically lumps together Hegel, Darwin, Haeckel, and natural-scientific materialism" (*Die soziale Frage*, S. XXXIII).

Schubert-Soldern is a keener judge of philosophical shades than Mach, who praises everybody indiscriminately, including the Kantian Jerusalem.

Eugene Dietzgen was so simple-minded as to complain to the German public that in Russia the narrow materialists had "insulted" Joseph Dietzgen, and he *translated* Plekhanov's and Dauge's articles on Joseph Dietzgen into German. (See Joseph Dietzgen, *Erkenntnis und Wahrheit*,<sup>1</sup> Stuttgart 1908, Anhang.) The poor *Naturmonist's* complaint rebounded on his own head. Franz Mehring, who may be regarded as knowing something of philosophy and Marxism, wrote in his review that *Plekhanov was essentially right as against Dauge* (*Die Neue Zeit*, 1908, No. 38, 10. Juni, Feuilleton, S. 431). That J. Dietzgen got into difficulties when he deviated from Marx and Engels is for Mehring beyond question. Eugene Dietzgen replied to Mehring in a long, snivelling note, in which he went so far as to say that J. Dietzgen might be of service "in reconciling" the "warring brothers, the orthodox and the revisionists" (*Die Neue Zeit*, 1908, No. 44, 31. Juli, S. 652).

Another warning, Comrade Dauge: the road away from Marx to "Dietzgenism" and "Machism" is a *road into the morass*, not for individuals, not for Tom, Dick and Harry, but for the movement.

And do not complain, Messrs. Machians, that I quote the "authorities"; your objections to the authorities are but a screen for the fact that for the Socialist authorities (Marx, Engels, Lafargue, Mehring, Kautsky) you are substituting bourgeois *authorities* (Mach, Petzoldt, Avenarius and the immanentists). You would do better not to raise the question of "authorities" and "authoritarianism"!

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Dietzgen, *Knowledge and Truth*, Stuttgart, 1908.—*Trans.*

## CHAPTER FIVE

### PHILOSOPHICAL IDEALISM AND THE RECENT REVOLUTION IN NATURAL SCIENCE

A YEAR ago, in *Die Neue Zeit* (1907, No. 52), there appeared an article by Joseph Diner-Dénes entitled "Marxism and the Recent Revolution in the Natural Sciences." The defect of this article is that it ignores the epistemological conclusions which are being drawn from the "new" physics and in which we are especially interested at present. But it is precisely this defect which renders the point of view and the conclusions of the author particularly interesting for us. Joseph Diner-Dénes, like the present writer, holds the view of the "rank-and-file Marxist," of whom our Machians speak with such haughty contempt. For instance, Mr. Yushkevich writes that "ordinarily, the average rank-and-file Marxist calls himself a dialectical materialist" (p. 1 of his book). And now this rank-and-file Marxist, in the person of J. Diner-Dénes, has *directly* compared the recent discoveries in science, and especially in physics (X-rays, Becquerel rays, radium, etc.), with Engels' *Anti-Dühring*. To what conclusion has this comparison led him?

"In the most varied fields of natural science," writes Diner-Dénes, "new knowledge has been acquired, all of which tends towards that single point which Engels desired to make clear, namely, that in nature 'there are no irreconcilable contradictions, no forcibly fixed boundary lines and distinctions,' and that if contradictions and distinctions are met with in nature, it is because we alone have introduced their rigidity and absoluteness into nature."

It was discovered, for instance, that light and electricity are only manifestations of one and the same force of nature. Each day it becomes more probable that chemical affinity may be reduced to electrical processes. The indestructible and non-disintegrable elements of chemistry, whose number continues to grow as though in

derision of the unity of the world, now prove to be destructible and disintegrable. The element radium has been converted into the element helium.

"Just as all the forces of nature have been reduced to one force, so, with this knowledge, all substances in nature have been reduced to *one substance*" (Diner-Dénes' italics).

Quoting the opinion of one of the writers who regard the atom as a condensation of the ether, the author exclaims:

"How brilliantly does this confirm the statement made by Engels thirty years ago that motion is the mode of existence of matter. . . . All phenomena of nature are motion, and the differences between them lie only in the fact that we human beings perceive this motion in different forms. . . . It is as Engels said. Nature, like history, is subject to the dialectical law of motion."

On the other hand, you cannot take up any of the writings of the Machians or about Machism without encountering pretentious references to the new physics, which is said to have refuted materialism, and so on and so forth. Whether these assertions are well-founded is another question, but the connection between the new physics, or rather a definite school of the new physics, and Machism and other varieties of modern idealist philosophy is beyond doubt. To analyse Machism and at the same time to ignore this connection—as Plekhanov does—is to scoff at the spirit of dialectical materialism, i.e., to sacrifice the method of Engels to the letter of Engels. Engels says explicitly that "with each epoch-making discovery even in the sphere of natural science ["not to speak of the history of mankind"], it [materialism] has to change its form" (*Ludwig Feuerbach*, p. 36). Hence, a revision of the "form" of Engels' materialism, a revision of his natural-philosophical propositions is not only not "revisionism," in the accepted meaning of the term, but, on the contrary, is demanded by Marxism. We criticise the Machians not for making such a revision, but for their *purely revisionist method* of changing the *essence* of materialism under the guise of criticising its *form* and of adopting the fundamental precepts of reactionary bourgeois philosophy without making the slightest attempt to deal directly, frankly and definitely with assertions of Engels' which are unquestionably extremely important to the given

question, as, for example, his assertion that “. . . motion without matter is unthinkable” (*Anti-Dühring*, p. 74).

It goes without saying that in examining the connection between one of the schools of modern physicists and the rebirth of philosophical idealism it is far from being our intention to deal with special physical theories. What interests us exclusively is the epistemological conclusions that follow from certain definite propositions and generally known discoveries. These epistemological conclusions are of themselves so insistent that many physicists are already reaching for them. What is more, there are already various trends among the physicists, and definite schools are beginning to be formed on this basis. Our object, therefore, will be confined to explaining clearly the essence of the difference between these various trends and the relation in which they stand to the fundamental lines of philosophy.

## 1. THE CRISIS IN MODERN PHYSICS

In his book *La valeur de la science*, the famous French physicist Henri Poincaré says that there are “symptoms of a serious crisis” in physics, and he devotes a special chapter to this crisis (Chap. VIII, cf. also p. 171). This crisis is not confined to the fact that “radium, the great revolutionary,” is undermining the principle of the conservation of energy. “All the other principles are equally endangered” (p. 180). For instance, Lavoisier’s principle, or the principle of the conservation of mass, has been undermined by the electron theory of matter. According to this theory atoms are composed of very minute particles called electrons, which are charged with positive or negative electricity and “are immersed in a medium which we call the ether.” The experiments of physicists provide data for calculating the velocity of the electrons and their mass (or the relation of their mass to their electrical charge). The velocity proves to be comparable with the velocity of light (300,000 kilometres per second), attaining, for instance, one-third of the latter. Under such circumstances the twofold mass of the electron has to be taken into account, corresponding to the necessity of overcoming the inertia, firstly, of the electron itself and, secondly, of the

ether. The former mass will be the real or mechanical mass of the electron, the latter the "electrodynamic mass which represents the inertia of the ether." And it turns out that the former mass is equal to zero. The entire mass of the electrons, or, at least, of the negative electrons, proves to be totally and exclusively electrodynamic in its origin. Mass disappears. The foundations of mechanics are undermined. Newton's principle, the equality of action and reaction, is undermined, and so on.

We are faced, says Poincaré, with the "ruins" of the old principles of physics, "a debacle of principles." It is true, he remarks, that all the mentioned departures from principles refer to infinitesimal magnitudes; it is possible that we are still ignorant of other infinitesimals counteracting the undermining of the old principles. Moreover, radium is very rare. But at any rate we have reached a "*period of doubt*." We have already seen what epistemological deductions the author draws from this "period of doubt": "it is not nature which imposes on [or dictates to] us the concepts of space and time, but we who impose them on nature"; "whatever is not thought, is pure nothing." These deductions are idealist deductions. The breakdown of the most fundamental principles shows (such is Poincaré's trend of thought) that these principles are not copies, photographs of nature, not images of something external in relation to man's consciousness, but products of his consciousness. Poincaré does not develop these deductions consistently, nor is he essentially interested in the philosophical aspect of the question. It is dealt with in detail by the French writer on philosophical problems, Abel Rey, in his book *La théorie physique chez les physiciens contemporains*,<sup>1</sup> Paris, 1907. True, the author himself is a positivist, i.e., a muddlehead and a semi-Machian, but in this case this is even a certain advantage, for he cannot be suspected of a desire to slander our Machians' idol. Rey cannot be trusted when it comes to giving an exact definition of philosophical concepts and of materialism in particular, for Rey too is a professor, and as such is imbued with an utter contempt for the materialists (and distinguishes himself by utter ignorance of the epis-

<sup>1</sup> A. Rey, *The Physical Theory of the Modern Physicists*, Paris, 1907.—*Trans.*



temology of materialism). It goes without saying that a Marx or an Engels is absolutely non-existent for such "men of science." But Rey summarises carefully and in general conscientiously the extremely abundant literature on the subject, not only French, but English and German as well (Ostwald and Mach in particular), so that we shall have frequent recourse to his work.

The attention of philosophers in general, says the author, and also of those who, for one reason or another, wish to criticise science generally, has now been particularly attracted towards physics.

"In discussing the limits and value of physical knowledge, it is in effect the legitimacy of positive science, the possibility of knowing the object, that is criticised" (pp. i-ii).

From the "crisis in modern physics" people hasten to draw sceptical conclusions (p. 14). Now, what is this crisis? During the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century the physicists agreed among themselves on everything essential.

"They believed in a purely mechanical explanation of nature: they assumed that physics is nothing but a complication of mechanics, namely, a molecular mechanics. They differed only as to the methods used in reducing physics to mechanics and as to the details of the mechanism. . . . At present the spectacle presented by the physico-chemical sciences seems completely changed. Extreme disagreement has replaced general unanimity, and no longer does it concern details, but leading and fundamental ideas.

"While it would be an exaggeration to say that each scientist has his own peculiar tendencies, it must nevertheless be noted that science, and especially physics, has, like art, its numerous schools, the conclusions of which often differ from, and sometimes are directly opposed and hostile to each other. . . .

"From this one may judge the significance and scope of what has been called the crisis in modern physics.

"Down to the middle of the nineteenth century, traditional physics had assumed that it was sufficient merely to extend physics in order to arrive at a metaphysics of matter. This physics ascribed to its theories an ontological value. And its theories were all mechanistic. The traditional mechanism [Rey employs this word in the specific sense of a system of ideas which reduces physics to mechanics] thus claimed, over and above the results of experience, a *real* knowledge of the material universe. This was not a hypothetical account of experience; it was a dogma" (p. 16).

We must here interrupt the worthy "positivist." It is clear that he is describing the materialist philosophy of traditional physics but does not want to call the devil (materialism) by name. Materialism

to a Humean must appear to be metaphysics, dogma, a transgression of the bounds of experience, and so forth. Knowing nothing of materialism, the Humean Rey has no conception whatever of dialectics, of the difference between dialectical materialism and metaphysical materialism, in Engels' meaning of the term. Hence, the relation between absolute and relative truth, for example, is absolutely unclear to Rey.

"... The criticism of traditional mechanism made during the whole of the second half of the nineteenth century weakened the premise of the ontological reality of mechanism. On the basis of these criticisms a philosophical conception of physics was founded which became almost traditional in philosophy at the end of the nineteenth century. Science was nothing but a symbolic formula, a method of notation (*repérage*), and since the methods of notation varied according to the schools, the conclusion was soon reached that only that was denoted which had been previously designed (*façonné*) by men for notation (or symbolisation). Science became a work of art for dilettantes, a work of art for utilitarians: views which could with legitimacy be generally interpreted as the negation of the possibility of science. A science which is a pure artifice for acting upon nature, a mere utilitarian technique, has no right to call itself science, without perverting the meaning of words. To say that science can be nothing but such an artificial means of action is to disavow science in the proper meaning of the term.

"The collapse of traditional mechanism, or, more precisely, the criticism to which it was subjected, led to the proposition that science itself had also collapsed. From the impossibility of adhering purely and simply to traditional mechanism it was inferred that science was impossible" (p. 17).

And the author asks:

"Is the present crisis in physics a temporary and external incident in the evolution of science, or is science itself making an abrupt right-about-face and definitely abandoning the path it has hitherto pursued? . . ." (p. 18).

"If the [physical and chemical] sciences, which in history have been essentially emancipators, collapse in this crisis, which reduces them to the status of mere, technically useful recipes but deprives them of all significance from the standpoint of knowledge of nature, the result must needs be a complete revolution both in the art of logic and the history of ideas. Physics then loses all educational value; the spirit of positive science it represents becomes false and dangerous."

Science can offer only practical recipes but no real knowledge.

"Knowledge of the real must be sought and given by other means. . . . One must take another road, one must return to subjective intuition, to a mystical sense of reality, in a word, to the mysterious, to all of which one thought it had been deprived" (p. 19).

As a positivist, the author considers such a view wrong and the

crisis in physics only temporary. We shall presently see how Rey purifies Mach, Poincaré and Co. of these conclusions. At present we shall confine ourselves to noting the fact of the "crisis" and its significance. From the last words of Rey quoted by us it is quite clear what reactionary elements have taken advantage of and aggravated this crisis. Rey explicitly states in the preface to his work that "the fideist and anti-intellectualist movement of the last years of the nineteenth century" is seeking "to base itself on the general spirit of modern physics" (p. 11). In France, those who put faith above reason are called fideists (from the Latin *fides*, faith). Anti-intellectualism is a doctrine that denies the rights or claims of reason. Hence, in its philosophical aspect, the essence of the "crisis in modern physics" is that the old physics regarded its theories as "real knowledge of the material world," i.e., the reflection of objective reality. The new trend in physics regards theories only as symbols, signs, and marks for practice, i.e., it denies the existence of an objective reality independent of our mind and reflected by it. If Rey had used correct philosophical terminology, he would have said: the materialist theory of knowledge, instinctively accepted by the earlier physics, has been replaced by an idealist and agnostic theory of knowledge, which, against the wishes of the idealists and agnostics, has been taken advantage of by fideism.

But Rey does not present this replacement, which constitutes the crisis, as though all the modern physicists stand opposed to all the old physicists. No. He shows that in their epistemological trends the modern physicists are divided into three schools: the energetist or conceptualist school; the mechanistic or neo-mechanistic school, to which the vast majority of physicists still adhere; and in between the two, the critical school. To the first belong Mach and Duhem; to the third, Henri Poincaré; to the second, Kirchhoff, Helmholtz, Thomson (Lord Kelvin), Maxwell—among the older physicists—and Larmor and Lorentz among the modern physicists. What the essence of the *two* basic trends is (for the third is not independent, but intermediate) may be judged from the following words of Rey's:

"Traditional mechanism constructed a system of the material world."

Its doctrine of the structure of matter was based on "elements qualitatively homogeneous and identical"; and elements were to be regarded as "immutable, impenetrable," etc. Physics "constructed a *real* edifice out of *real* materials and *real* cement. The physicist possessed *material elements, the causes and modes* of their action, and the *real* laws of their action" (pp. 33-38).

"The change in this view consists in the rejection of the ontological significance of the theories and an exaggerated emphasis on the phenomenological significance of physics."

The conceptualist view operates with

"pure abstractions . . . and seeks a purely abstract theory which will as far as possible eliminate the hypothesis of matter. . . . The notion of energy thus becomes the substructure of the new physics. This is why conceptualist physics may most often be called *energeticist physics*,"

although this designation does not fit, for example, such a representative of conceptualist physics as Mach (p. 46).

Rey's identification of energetics with Machism is not altogether correct, of course; nor is his assurance that the neo-mechanistic school as well is approaching a phenomenalist view of physics (p. 48), despite the profundity of its disagreement with the conceptualists. Rey's "new" terminology does not clarify, but rather obscures matters; but we could not avoid it if we were to give the reader an idea of how a "positivist" regards the crisis in physics. Essentially, the opposition of the "new" school to the old views fully coincides, as the reader may have convinced himself, with Kleinpeter's criticism of Helmholtz quoted above. In his presentation of the views of the various physicists Rey reflects the indefiniteness and vacillation of their philosophical views. The *essence* of the crisis in modern physics consists in the breakdown of the old laws and basic principles, in the rejection of an objective reality existing outside the mind, that is, in the replacement of materialism by idealism and agnosticism. "Matter has disappeared"—one may thus express the fundamental and characteristic difficulty in relation to many of the particular questions which has created this crisis. Let us pause to discuss this difficulty.

## 2. "MATTER HAS DISAPPEARED"

Such, literally, is the expression that may be encountered in the descriptions given by modern physicists of recent discoveries. For instance, L. Houllevigue, in his book *L'évolution des sciences*, entitles his chapter on the new theories of matter: "Does Matter Exist?" He says: "The atom dematerialises, matter disappears."<sup>1</sup> To see how easily fundamental philosophical conclusions are drawn from this by the Machians, let us take Valentinov. He writes:

"The statement that the scientific explanation of the world can find a firm foundation *only* in materialism is nothing but a fiction, and what is more, an absurd fiction" (p. 67).

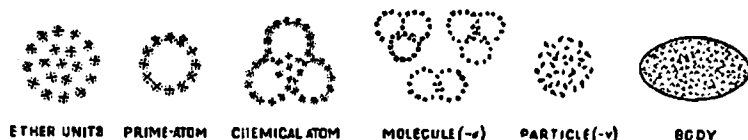
He quotes as a destroyer of this absurd fiction Augusto Righi, the Italian physicist, who says that the electron theory "is not so much a theory of electricity as of matter; the new system simply puts electricity in the place of matter."<sup>2</sup> Having quoted these words (p. 64), Mr. Valentinov exclaims:

"Why does Righi permit himself to commit this offence against sacred matter? Is it perhaps because he is a solipsist, an idealist, a bourgeois criticist, an empirio-monist, or even something worse?"

This remark, which seems to Mr. Valentinov to annihilate the materialists by its sarcasm, only discloses his virgin innocence on the subject of philosophical materialism. Mr. Valentinov has no suspicion of the *real* connection between philosophical idealism and the "disappearance of matter." That "disappearance of matter" of which he speaks, in imitation of the modern physicists, has no relation to the epistemological distinction between materialism and idealism. To make this clear, let us take one of the most consistent and clear Machians, Karl Pearson. For him the physical universe consists of groups of sense-impressions. He illustrates "our conceptual model of the physical universe" by the following diagram, explaining, however, that it takes no account of relative sizes (*The Grammar of Science*, p. 282):—

<sup>1</sup> L. Houllevigue, *L'évolution des sciences* [*The Evolution of the Sciences*], Paris, 1908, pp. 63, 87, 88; cf. his article: "Les idées des Physiciens sur la matière" ["The Physicists' Ideas of Matter"], in *l'Année psychologique*, 1908.

<sup>2</sup> Augusto Righi, *Die moderne Theorie der physikalischen Erscheinungen* [*The Modern Theory of Physical Phenomena*], Leipzig 1905, S. 131.



In order to simplify his diagram, Karl Pearson entirely omits the question of the relation between ether and electricity, or positive electrons and negative electrons. But that is not important. What is important is that from Pearson's idealist standpoint "bodies" are first regarded as sense-impressions, and then the constitution of these bodies out of particles, particles out of molecules and so forth affects the changes in the model of the physical world, but in no way affects the question of whether bodies are symbols of perceptions, or perceptions images of bodies. Materialism and idealism differ in their respective answers to the question of the *source* of our knowledge and of the relation of knowledge (and of the "psychical" in general) to the *physical* world; while the question of the structure of matter, of atoms and electrons, is a question that concerns only this "physical world." When the physicists say that "matter is disappearing," they mean that hitherto science reduced its investigations of the physical world to three ultimate concepts: matter, electricity and ether; whereas now *only* the two latter remain. For it has become possible to reduce matter to electricity; the atom can be explained as resembling an infinitely small solar system, within which negative electrons move around a positive electron with a definite (and, as we have seen, enormously large) velocity. It is consequently possible to reduce the physical world from scores of elements to two or three elements (inasmuch as positive and negative electrons constitute "two essentially distinct kinds of matter," as the physicist Pelat says—Rey, *op. cit.*, pp. 294-95). Hence, natural science leads to the "unity of matter" (*ibid.*)<sup>1</sup>—such is the real meaning of the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Oliver Lodge, *Electrons*, London, 1906. "The electrical theory of matter," the recognition of electricity as the "fundamental substance," is "an approximate accomplishment of that to what the philosophers strove always, that is, the unity of matter"; cf. also Righi, *Ueber die Struktur der Materie* [*On the Structure of Matter*], Leipzig 1908; J. J. Thomson, *The Corpuscular Theory of Matter*, London, 1907; P. Langevin, "*La physique des électrons*"

statement regarding the disappearance of matter, its replacement by electricity, etc., which is leading so many people astray. "Matter is disappearing" means that the limit within which we have hitherto known matter is vanishing and that our knowledge is penetrating deeper; properties of matter are disappearing which formerly seemed absolute, immutable, and primary (impenetrability, inertia, mass, etc.) and which are now revealed to be relative and characteristic only of certain states of matter. For the sole "property" of matter with whose recognition philosophical materialism is bound up is the property of *being an objective reality*, of existing outside our mind.

The error of Machism in general, as of the Machian new physics, is that it ignores this basis of philosophical materialism and the distinction between metaphysical materialism and dialectical materialism. The recognition of immutable elements, "of the immutable substance of things," and so forth, is not materialism, but *metaphysical*, i.e., anti-dialectical, materialism. That is why J. Dietzgen emphasised that the "subject-matter of science is endless," that not only the infinite, but the "smallest atom" is immeasurable, unknowable to the end, *inexhaustible*, "for nature in all her parts has no beginning and no end" (*Kleinere philosophische Schriften*, S. 229-30). That is why Engels gave the example of the discovery of alizarin in coal tar and criticised *mechanical* materialism. In order to present the question in the only correct way, that is, from the dialectical materialist standpoint, we must ask: Do electrons, ether and so on exist as objective realities outside the human mind or not? The scientists will also have to answer this question unhesitatingly; and they do invariably answer it in the *affirmative*, just as they unhesitatingly recognise that nature existed prior to man and prior to organic matter. Thus, the question is decided in favour of materialism, for the concept matter, as we already stated, epistemologically implies *nothing but* objective reality existing independently of the human mind and reflected by it.

But dialectical materialism insists on the approximate, relative character of every scientific theory of the structure of matter and

[*"The Physics of the Electrons"*], in the *Revue générale des sciences*, 1905 pp. 257-76.

its properties; it insists on the absence of absolute boundaries in nature, on the transformation of moving matter from one state into another which, from one point of view, is to us apparently irreconcilable with it, and so forth. However bizarre from the standpoint of "common sense" the transformation of imponderable ether into ponderable matter and *vice versa* may appear, however "strange" may seem the absence of any other kind of mass in the electron save electromagnetic mass, however extraordinary may be the fact that the mechanical laws of motion are confined only to a single sphere of natural phenomena and are subordinated to the more profound laws of electromagnetic phenomena, and so forth—all this is but another *corroboration* of dialectical materialism. It is mainly because the physicists did not know dialectics that the new physics strayed into idealism. They combated metaphysical (in Engels', and not the positivist, *i.e.*, Humean sense of the word) materialism and its one-sided "mechanism," and in so doing threw the baby out with the bathwater. Denying the immutability of the elements and the properties of matter known hitherto, they ended in denying matter, *i.e.*, the objective reality of the physical world. Denying the absolute character of some of the most important and basic laws, they ended in denying all objective law in nature and in declaring that a law of nature is a mere convention, "a limitation of expectation," "a logical necessity," and so forth. Insisting on the approximate and relative character of our knowledge, they ended in denying the object independent of the mind and reflected approximately-correctly and relatively-truthfully by the mind. And so on, and so forth, without end.

The opinions expressed by Bogdanov in 1899 regarding "the immutable essence of things," the opinions of Valentinov and Yushkevich regarding "substance," and so forth—are similar fruits of ignorance of dialectics. From Engels' point of view, the only immutability is the reflection by the human mind (when there is a human mind) of an external world existing and developing independently of the mind. No other "immutability," no other "essence," no other "absolute substance," in the sense in which these concepts were depicted by the empty professorial philosophy, exist for Marx and Engels. The "essence" of things, or "substance," is *also* relative; it expresses only the degree of profundity of man's



knowledge of objects; and while yesterday the profundity of this knowledge did not go beyond the atom, and today does not go beyond the electron and ether, dialectical materialism insists on the temporary, relative, approximate character of all these *milestones* in the knowledge of nature gained by the progressing science of man. The electron is as *inexhaustible* as the atom, nature is infinite, but it infinitely *exists*. And it is this sole categorical, this sole unconditional recognition of nature's *existence* outside the mind and perceptions of man that distinguishes dialectical materialism from relativist agnosticism and idealism.

Let us cite two examples of the way in which the new physics wavers unconsciously and instinctively between dialectical materialism, which remains unknown to the bourgeois scientists, and "phenomenalism," with its inevitable subjectivist (and, subsequently, directly fideist) deductions.

This same Augusto Righi, from whom Mr. Valentinov was *unable* to get a reply on the question which interested him about materialism, writes in the introduction to his book:

"What the electrons, or electrical atoms, really are remains even now a mystery; but in spite of this, the new theory is perhaps destined in time to achieve no small philosophical significance, since it is arriving at entirely new hypotheses regarding the structure of ponderable matter and is striving to reduce all phenomena of the external world to one common origin.

"For the positivist and utilitarian tendencies of our time such an advantage may be of small consequence, and a theory is perhaps regarded primarily as a means of conveniently ordering and summarising facts and as a guide in the search for further phenomena. But while in former times perhaps too much confidence was placed in the faculties of the human mind, and it was considered too easy to grasp the ultimate causes of all things, there is nowadays a tendency to fall into the opposite error" (*op. cit.*, p. 3).

Why does Righi dissociate himself here from the positivist and utilitarian tendencies? Because, while apparently he has no definite philosophical standpoint, he instinctively clings to the reality of the external world and to the recognition that the new theory is not only a "convenience" (Poincaré), not only an "empirio-symbol" (Yushkevich), not only a "harmonising" of experience (Bogdanov), or whatever else they call such subjectivist subterfuges, but a further step in the cognition of objective reality. Had this physicist been acquainted with *dialectical* materialism, his opinion of the error which is the opposite of the old metaphysical materialism might per-

haps have become the starting point of a correct philosophy. But these people's whole environment estranges them from Marx and Engels and throws them into the embrace of vulgar official philosophy.

Rey too is entirely unfamiliar with dialectics. But he too is compelled to state that among the modern physicists there are those who continue the traditions of "mechanism" (i.e., materialism). The path of "mechanism," says he, is pursued not only by Kirchhoff, Hertz, Boltzmann, Maxwell, Helmholtz and Lord Kelvin.

"Pure mechanists, and in some respects more mechanist than anybody else, and representing the culmination (*l'aboutissant*) of mechanism, are those who follow Lorentz and Larmor in formulating an electrical theory of matter and who arrive at a denial of the constancy of mass, declaring it to be a function of motion. *They are all mechanists because they take real motion as their starting point*" (Rey's italics, p. 290).

"If, for example, the hypotheses of Lorentz, Larmor and Langevin were, thanks to certain experimental confirmation, to obtain a sufficiently stable basis for the systematisation of physics, it would be certain that the laws of present-day mechanics are nothing but a corollary of the laws of electromagnetism: they would constitute a special case of the latter within well-defined limits. Constancy of mass and the principle of inertia would be valid only for moderate velocities of bodies, the term 'moderate' being taken in relation to our senses and to the phenomena which constitute our general experience. A general recasting of mechanics would result, and hence also a general recasting of the systematisation of physics" (p. 275).

"Would this imply the abandonment of mechanism? By no means. The purely mechanist tradition would still be followed, and mechanism would follow its normal course of development" (p. 295).

"Electronic physics, which should be ranked among the theories of a generally mechanist spirit, tends at present to impose its systematisation on physics. Although the fundamental principles of this electronic physics are not furnished by mechanics but by the experimental data of the theory of electricity, its spirit is mechanistic, because:

"(1) It uses *figurative* (*figurés*), *material* elements to represent physical properties and their laws; it expresses itself in terms of perception.

"(2) While it no longer regards physical phenomena as particular cases of mechanical phenomena, it regards mechanical phenomena as particular cases of physical phenomena. The laws of mechanics thus retain their *direct continuity* with the laws of physics; and the concepts of mechanics remain concepts of the same order as physico-chemical concepts. In traditional mechanism it was motions copied (*calqués*) from *relatively slow* motions, which, since they alone were known and most directly observable, were taken . . . as a type of all possible motions. *Recent experiments*, on the contrary, show that it is necessary to *extend* our conception of possible motions. Traditional mechanics remains entirely intact, but it now applies only to *relatively slow* motions. . . . In relation to large velocities, the laws of motion are different. Matter appears to be reduced to electrical particles, the ultimate element of the atom. . . .

"(3) Motion, displacement in space, remains the only figurative element of physical theory.

"(4) Finally, what from the standpoint of the general spirit of physics comes before every other consideration is the fact that the conception of physics, its methods, its theories, and their relation to experience remains *absolutely identical* with the conception of mechanism, with the conception of physics held since the Renaissance" (p. 47).

I have given this long quotation from Rey in full because owing to his perpetual anxiety to avoid "materialist metaphysics," it would have been impossible to expound his statements in any other way. But however much both Rey and the physicists of whom he speaks abjure materialism, it is nevertheless beyond question that traditional mechanics was a copy of real motions of moderate velocity, while the new physics is a copy of real motions of enormous velocity. The recognition of theory as a copy, as an approximate copy of objective reality, is materialism. When Rey says that among modern physicists there "is a reaction against the conceptualist [Machian] and energeticist school," and when he ranks the physicists of the electron theory among the representatives of this reaction (p. 46), we could desire no better corroboration of the fact that the struggle is essentially between the materialist and the idealist tendencies. But we must not forget that, apart from the prejudices against materialism common to all educated philistines, the most outstanding theoreticians exhibit a complete ignorance of dialectics.

### 3. IS MOTION WITHOUT MATTER CONCEIVABLE?

The fact that philosophical idealism is attempting to make use of the new physics, or that idealist conclusions are being drawn from the latter, is due not to the discovery of new kinds of substance and force, of matter and motion, but to the fact that an attempt is being made to conceive motion without matter. And it is the essence of this attempt which our Machians fail to examine. They were unwilling to take account of Engels' statement that "motion without matter is *inconceivable*." J. Dietzgen in 1869, in his *Wesen der menschlichen Kopfarbeit*, expressed the same idea as Engels, although, it is true, not without his usual muddled attempts to "reconcile" materialism and idealism. Let us leave aside these attempts, which are to a large extent to be explained by the fact that Dietzgen

is arguing against Büchner's non-dialectical materialism, and let us examine Dietzgen's own statements on the question under consideration. He says:

"They [the idealists] want to have the general without the particular, mind without matter, force without substance, science without experience or material, the absolute without the relative" (*Das Wesen der menschlichen Kopfarbeit*, 1903, S. 108).

Thus the endeavour to divorce motion from matter, force from substance, Dietzgen associates with idealism, compares with the endeavour to divorce thought from the brain.

"Liebig," Dietzgen continues, "who is especially fond of straying from his inductive science into the field of speculation, says in the spirit of idealism: 'force cannot be seen.' . ." (p. 109). "The spiritualist or the idealist believes in the spiritual, i.e., ghostlike and inexplicable, nature of force. . ." (p. 110). "The antithesis between force and matter is as old as the antithesis between idealism and materialism. . ." (p. 111). "Of course, there is no force without matter, no matter without force; forceless matter and matterless force are absurdities. If there are idealist natural scientists who believe in the immaterial existence of forces . . . on this point they are not natural scientists . . . but seers of ghosts" (p. 114).

We thus see that scientists who were prepared to grant that motion is conceivable without matter were to be encountered forty years ago too, and that "on this point" Dietzgen declared them to be seers of ghosts. What, then, is the connection between idealism and the divorce of matter from motion, the separation of substance from force? Is it not "more economical," indeed, to conceive motion without matter?

Let us imagine a consistent idealist who holds that the entire world is his sensation, his idea, etc. (if we take "nobody's" sensation or idea, this changes only the variety of philosophical idealism but not its essence). The idealist would not even think of denying that the world is motion, i.e., the motion of my thoughts, ideas, sensations. The question as to *what* moves, the idealist will reject and regard as absurd: what is taking place is a change of my sensations, my ideas come and go, and nothing more. Outside me there is nothing. "It moves"—and that is all. It is impossible to conceive a more "economical" way of thinking. And no proofs, syllogisms, or definitions are capable of refuting the solipsist if he consistently adheres to his view.

The fundamental distinction between the materialist and the adherent of idealist philosophy consists in the fact that the sensation, perception, idea, and the mind of man generally, is regarded as an image of objective reality. The world is the movement of this objective reality reflected by our consciousness. To the movement of ideas, perceptions, etc., there corresponds the movement of matter outside me. The concept matter expresses nothing more than the objective reality which is given us in sensation. Therefore, to divorce motion from matter is equivalent to divorcing thought from objective reality, or to divorcing my sensations from the external world—in a word, it is to go over to idealism. The trick which is usually performed in denying matter, and in assuming motion without matter, consists in ignoring the relation of matter to thought. The question is presented as though this relation did not exist, but in reality it is introduced surreptitiously; at the beginning of the argument it remains unexpressed, but subsequently crops up more or less imperceptibly.

Matter has disappeared, they tell us, wishing from this to draw epistemological conclusions. But has thought remained?—we ask. If not, if with the disappearance of matter thought has also disappeared, if with the disappearance of the brain and nervous system ideas and sensations, too, have disappeared—then it follows that everything has disappeared. And your argument has disappeared as a sample of “thought” (or lack of thought)! But if it has remained—if it is assumed that with the disappearance of matter, thought (idea, sensation, etc.) does not disappear, then you have surreptitiously gone over to the standpoint of philosophical idealism. And this always happens with people who wish, for “economy’s sake,” to conceive of motion without matter, for *tacitly*, by the very fact that they continue to argue, they are acknowledging the existence of thought *after* the disappearance of matter. This means that a very simple, or a very complex philosophical idealism is taken as a basis; a very simple one, if it is a case of frank solipsism (*I* exist, and the world is only *my* sensation); a very complex one, if instead of the thought, ideas and sensations of a living person, a dead abstraction is posited, that is, nobody’s thought, nobody’s idea, nobody’s sensation, but thought in general (the Absolute Idea, the

Universal Will, etc.), sensation as an indeterminate "element," the "psychical," which is substituted for the whole of physical nature, etc., etc. Thousands of shades of varieties of philosophical idealism are possible and it is always possible to create a thousand and first shade; and to the author of this thousand and first little system (empirio-monism, for example) what distinguishes it from the rest may appear to be momentous. From the standpoint of materialism, however, these distinctions are absolutely unessential. What is essential is the point of departure. What is essential is that the attempt to *think* of motion without matter smuggles in *thought* divorced from matter—and that is philosophical idealism.

Therefore, for example, the English Machian Karl Pearson, the clearest and most consistent of the Machians, who is averse to verbal trickery, directly begins the seventh chapter of his book, devoted to "matter," with the characteristic heading: "All things move—but only in conception." "It is therefore, for the sphere of perception, idle to ask what moves and why it moves" (*The Grammar of Science*, p. 243).

Therefore, too, in the case of Bogdanov, his philosophical misadventures in fact began before his acquaintance with Mach. They began from the moment he put his trust in the assertion of the great chemist, but poor philosopher, Ostwald, that motion can be thought of without matter. It is all the more fitting to pause on this long-past episode in Bogdanov's philosophical development since it is impossible when speaking of the connection between philosophical idealism and certain trends in the new physics to ignore Ostwald's "energetics."

"We have already said," wrote Bogdanov in 1899, "that the nineteenth century did not succeed in ultimately solving the problem of 'the immutable essence of things.' This essence, under the name of 'matter,' even holds an important place in the world outlook of the foremost thinkers of the century" (*Fundamental Elements of the Historical Outlook*, p. 38).

We said that this is a sheer muddle. The recognition of the objective reality of the outer world, the recognition of the existence outside our mind of eternally moving and eternally changing matter, is here confused with the recognition of the immutable essence of things. It is hardly possible that Bogdanov in 1899 did not rank

Marx and Engels among the "foremost thinkers." But he obviously did not understand dialectical materialism.

"... In the processes of nature two aspects are usually still distinguished: *matter* and its *motion*. It cannot be said that the concept of matter is distinguished by great clarity. It is not easy to give a satisfactory answer to the question—what is matter? It is defined as the 'cause of sensations' or as the 'permanent possibility of sensation'; but it is evident that matter is here confused with motion. . ." (p. 38).

It is evident that Bogdanov is arguing incorrectly. Not only does he confuse the materialist recognition of an objective source of sensations (unclearly formulated in the words "cause of sensations") with Mill's agnostic definition of matter as the *possibility* of sensation, but the chief error here is that the author, having boldly approached the question of the existence or non-existence of an objective source of sensations, abandons this question half-way and jumps to another question, the question of the existence or non-existence of matter without motion. The idealist may regard the world as the *movement* of our sensations (even though "socially organised" and "harmonised" to the highest degree); the materialist regards the world as the movement of an objective source, of an objective model of our sensations. The metaphysical, i.e., anti-dialectical, materialist may accept the existence of matter without motion (even though temporarily, before "the first impulse," etc.). The dialectical materialist not only regards motion as an inseparable property of matter, but rejects the simplified view of motion and so forth.

"... The most exact definition would, perhaps, be the following: 'matter is what moves'; but this is as devoid of content as though one were to say that matter is the subject of a sentence, the predicate of which is 'moves.' The fact, most likely, is that in the epoch of statics men were wont to see something necessarily solid in the role of the subject; 'object,' and such an inconvenient thing for statics as 'motion' they were prepared to tolerate only as a predicate, as one of the attributes of 'matter'" (pp. 38-39).

This is something like the charge Akimov brought against the *Iskra*-ists,<sup>1</sup> namely, that their programme did not contain the word

<sup>1</sup> *Iskra*, the central organ of the illegal Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party in its formative stages. Lenin was the prime founder of the paper and its moving spirit until the split of the Party into Bolsheviks and Mensheviks after its Second Congress in 1903.—*Trans.*

proletariat in the nominative case! Whether we say the world is moving matter, or that the world is material motion, makes no difference whatever.

"... But energy must have a vehicle—say those who believe in matter. Why?—asks Ostwald, and with reason. Must nature necessarily consist of subject and predicate?" (p. 39).

Ostwald's answer, which so pleased Bogdanov in 1899, is plain sophistry. Must our judgments necessarily consist of electrons and ether?—one might retort to Ostwald. As a matter of fact, the mental elimination from "nature" of matter as the "subject" only implies the tacit admission into *philosophy* of *thought* as the "subject," (i.e., as the primary, the starting point, independent of matter). Not the subject, but the objective source of *sensation* is eliminated, and *sensation* becomes the "subject," i.e., philosophy becomes Berkeleyan, no matter in what trappings the word "sensation" is afterwards decked. Ostwald endeavoured to avoid this inevitable philosophical alternative (materialism or idealism) by an indefinite use of the word "energy," but this very endeavour only once again goes to prove the futility of such artifices. If energy is motion, you have only shifted the difficulty from the subject to the predicate, you have only changed the question, does matter move? into the question, is energy material? Does the transformation of energy take place outside my mind, independently of man and mankind, or are these only ideas, symbols, conventional signs, and so forth? And this question proved fatal to the "energeticist" philosophy, that attempt to disguise old epistemological errors by a "new terminology."

Here are examples of how the energeticist Ostwald got into a muddle. In the preface to his *Lectures on Natural Philosophy*<sup>1</sup> he declares that he regards

"as a great gain the simple and natural removal of the old difficulties in the way of uniting the concepts matter and spirit by subordinating both to the concept energy."

This is not a gain, but a loss, because the question whether episte-

<sup>1</sup> Wilhelm Ostwald, *Vorlesungen über Naturphilosophie*, 2. Aufl., Leipzig, 1902, S. viii.



mological investigation (Ostwald does not clearly realise that he is raising an epistemological and not a chemical question) is to be conducted along materialist or idealist lines is not being solved but is being confused by an arbitrary use of the term "energy." Of course, if we "subordinate" both matter and spirit to this concept, the *verbal* annihilation of the antithesis is beyond question, but the absurdity of the belief in sprites and hobgoblins, for instance, is not removed by calling it "energetics." On page 394 of the *Vorlesungen* we read:

"That all external events may be presented as an interaction of energies can be most simply explained if our mental processes are themselves energetic and impose (*ausprägen*) this property of theirs on all external phenomena."

This is pure idealism: it is not our thought that reflects the transformation of energy in the external world, but the external world that reflects a certain "property" of our mind! The American philosopher Hibben, pointing to this and similar passages in Ostwald's *Vorlesungen*, aptly says that Ostwald "appears . . . in a Kantian disguise" and that the explicability of the phenomena of the external world is deduced from the properties of our mind!

"It is obvious therefore," says Hibben, "that if the primary concept of energy is so defined as to embrace psychical phenomena, we have no longer the simple concept of energy as understood and recognised in scientific circles or even among the *Energetiker* themselves."<sup>1</sup>

The transformation of energy is regarded by science as an objective process independent of the minds of men and of the experience of mankind, that is to say, it is regarded materialistically. And by energy, Ostwald himself in many instances, probably in the vast majority of instances, means *material* motion.

And this accounts for the remarkable phenomenon that Bogdanov, a disciple of Ostwald, having become a disciple of Mach, began to reproach Ostwald not because he does not adhere consistently to a materialistic view of energy, but because he admits the materialistic view of energy (and at times even takes it as his

<sup>1</sup> J. G. Hibben, "The Theory of Energetics and its Philosophical Bearings." *The Monist*, April 1903, Vol. XIII, pp. 329-30.

basis). The materialists criticise Ostwald because he lapses into idealism, because he attempts to reconcile materialism and idealism. Bogdanov criticises Ostwald from the *idealist* standpoint. In 1906 he wrote:

"... Ostwald's 'energetics,' hostile to atomism but for the rest closely akin to the old materialism, enlisted my heartiest sympathy. I soon noticed, however, an important contradiction in his *Naturphilosophie*: although he frequently emphasises the *purely methodological* significance of the concept 'energy,' in a great number of instances he himself fails to adhere to it. He every now and again converts 'energy' from a pure symbol of correlations between the facts of experience into the *substance* of experience, into the 'world stuff'" (*Empirio-Monism*, Bk. III, pp. xvi-xvii).

Energy is a pure symbol! After this Bogdanov may dispute as much as he pleases with the "empirio-symbolist" Yushkevich, with the "pure Machians," the empirio-critics, etc.—from the standpoint of the materialists it is a dispute between a man who believes in a yellow devil and a man who believes in a green devil. For the important thing is not the differences between Bogdanov and the other Machians, but what they have in common, to wit: the *idealist* interpretation of "experience" and "energy," the denial of objective reality, adaptation to which constitutes human experience and the copying of which constitutes the only scientific "methodology" and scientific "energetics."

"It [Ostwald's energetics] is indifferent to the material of the world, it is fully compatible with both the old materialism and panpsychism" (*i.e.*, philosophical idealism?) (p. xvii).

And Bogdanov departed from muddled energetics *not* by the materialist road *but by the idealist* road.

"When 'energy' is represented as substance it is nothing but the old materialism minus the absolute atoms—materialism with a correction in the sense of the *continuity* of the existing" (*ibid.*).

Yes, Bogdanov left the "old" materialism, *i.e.*, the metaphysical materialism of the scientists, not for *dialectical* materialism, which he understood as little in 1906 as he did in 1899, but for idealism and fideism; for no educated representative of modern fideism, no immanentist, no "neo-criticist," and so forth, will object to the "methodological" conception of energy, to its interpretation as a

"pure symbol of correlation of the facts of experience." Take Paul Carus, with whose mental make-up we have already become sufficiently acquainted, and you will find that this Machian criticises Ostwald *in the very same way as Bogdanov*:

"Materialism and energetics are exactly in the same predicament" (*The Monist*, 1907, Vol. XVII, No. 4, p. 536).

"We are helped very little by materialism when we are told that everything is matter, that bodies are matter, and that thoughts are merely a function of matter, and Professor Ostwald's energetics is not a whit better when it tells us that matter is energy, and that the soul too is only a factor of energy" (p. 533).

Ostwald's energetics is a good example of how quickly a "new" terminology becomes fashionable, and how quickly it turns out that a somewhat altered mode of expression can in no way eliminate fundamental philosophical questions and fundamental philosophical trends. Both materialism and idealism can be expressed in terms of "energetics" (more or less consistently, of course) just as they can be expressed in terms of "experience," and the like. Energeticist physics is a source of new idealist attempts to conceive motion without matter—because of the disintegration of particles of matter which hitherto had been accounted non-disintegrable and because of the discovery of heretofore unknown forms of material motion.

#### 4. ENGLISH SPIRITUALISM AND THE TWO TRENDS IN MODERN PHYSICS

In order to illustrate concretely the philosophical battle raging in present-day literature over the various conclusions drawn from the new physics, we shall let certain of the direct participants in the "fray" speak for themselves, and we shall begin with the English. The physicist Arthur W. Rücker defends one trend—from the standpoint of the natural scientist; the philosopher James Ward another trend—from the standpoint of epistemology.

At the meeting of the British Association held in Glasgow in 1901, A. W. Rücker, the president of the physics section, chose as the subject of his address the question of the value of physical theory and the doubts that have arisen as to the existence of atoms, and especially of the ether. The speaker referred to the physicists Poincaré and Poynting (an Englishman who shares the views of

the symbolists, or Machians), the philosopher Ward, and to E. Haeckel's famous book as having raised this problem, and attempted to present his own views.<sup>1</sup>

"The question at issue," said Rücker, "is whether the hypotheses which are at the base of the scientific theories now most generally accepted are to be regarded as accurate descriptions of the constitution of the universe around us, or merely as convenient fictions." (In the terms used in our controversy with Bogdanov, Yushkevich and Co.: are they a copy of objective reality, of moving matter, or are they only a "methodology," a "pure symbol," mere "forms of organisation of experience"?)

Rücker agrees that in practice there may prove to be no difference between the two theories; the direction of a river can be determined as well by one who examines only the blue streak on a map or diagram as by one who knows that this streak represents a real river. Theory, from the standpoint of a convenient fiction, will be an "aid to memory," a means of "producing order" in our observations in accordance with some artificial system, of "arranging our knowledge," reducing it to equations, etc. We can, for instance, confine ourselves to declaring heat to be a form of motion or energy, thus exchanging "a vivid conception of moving atoms for a colourless statement of heat energy, the real nature of which we do not attempt to define." While fully recognising the possibility of achieving great scientific successes by this method, Rücker

"ventures to assert that the exposition of such a system of tactics cannot be regarded as the last word of science in the struggle for the truth. The questions still force themselves upon us: Can we argue back from the phenomenon displayed by matter to the constitution of matter itself; whether we have any reason to believe that the sketch which science has already drawn is to some extent a copy, and not a mere diagram of the truth?"

Analysing the problem of the structure of matter, Rücker takes air as an example, saying that it consists of gases and that science resolves

"an elementary gas into a mixture of atoms and ether. . . . There are those who cry 'Halt'; molecules and atoms cannot be directly perceived; they are mere conceptions, which have their uses, but cannot be regarded as realities."

Rücker meets this objection by referring to one of numberless in-

<sup>1</sup> The British Association at Glasgow, 1901. Presidential address by Professor A. W. Rücker, in *The Scientific American Supplement*, 1901, Nos. 1345 and 1346.

stances in the development of science: the rings of Saturn appear to be a continuous mass when observed through a telescope. The mathematicians proved by calculation that this is impossible and spectral analysis corroborated the conclusion reached on the basis of the calculations. Another objection: properties are attributed to atoms and ether such as our senses do not disclose in ordinary matter. Rücker answers this also, referring to such examples as the diffusion of gases and liquids. A number of facts, observations and experiments prove that matter consists of discrete particles or grains. Whether these particles, atoms, are distinct from the surrounding "original medium" or "basic medium" (ether), or whether they are parts of this medium in a particular state, is still an open question, and has no bearing on the theory of the existence of atoms. There is no ground for denying *a priori* the evidence of experiments showing that "quasi-material substances" exist which differ from ordinary matter (atoms and ether). Particular errors are here inevitable, but the aggregate of scientific data leaves no room for doubting the existence of atoms and molecules.

Rücker then refers to the new data on the structure of atoms, which consist of corpuscles (electrons) charged with negative electricity, and notes the similarities in the results of various experiments and calculations on the size of molecules: the "first approximation" gives a diameter of about 100 millimicrons (millionths of a millimetre). Omitting Rücker's particular remarks and his criticism of neo-vitalism, we quote his conclusions:

"Those who belittle the ideas which have of late governed the advance of scientific theory, too often assume that there is no alternative between the opposing assertions that atoms and the ether are mere figments of the scientific imagination, and that, on the other hand, a mechanical theory of the atoms and the ether, which is now confessedly imperfect, would, if it could be perfected, give us a full and adequate representation of the underlying realities. For my part I believe that there is a *via media*."

A man in a dark room may discern objects dimly, but if he does not stumble over the furniture and does not walk into a looking-glass instead of through a door, it means that he sees some things correctly. There is no need, therefore, either to renounce the claim to penetrate below the surface of nature, or to claim that we have already fully unveiled the mystery of the world around us.

"It may be granted that we have not yet framed a consistent image either of the nature of the atoms or of the ether in which they exist, but I have tried to show that in spite of the tentative nature of some of our theories, in spite of many outstanding difficulties, the atomic theory unifies so many facts, simplifies so much that is complicated, that we have a right to insist—at all events until an equally intelligible rival hypothesis is produced—that the main structure of our theory is true: that atoms are not merely aids to puzzled mathematicians, but physical realities" (*ibid.*).

That is how Rucker ended his address. The reader will see that the speaker did not deal with epistemology, but as a matter of fact, doubtless in the name of a host of scientists, he was essentially expounding an instinctive materialist standpoint. The gist of his position is this: The theory of physics is a copy (becoming ever more exact) of objective reality. The world is matter in motion, our knowledge of which grows ever more profound. The inaccuracies of Rucker's philosophy are due to an unnecessary defence of the "mechanical" (why not electro-magnetic?) theory of other motions and to a failure to understand the relation between relative and absolute truth. This physicist lacks *only* a knowledge of *dialectical* materialism (if we do not count, of course, those very important social considerations which induce English professors to call themselves "agnostics").

Let us now see how the spiritualist James Ward criticised this philosophy:

"... Naturalism is not science, and the mechanical theory of Nature, the theory which serves as its foundation, is no science either. . . .

"Nevertheless, though Naturalism and the natural sciences, the Mechanical Theory of the Universe and mechanics as a science, are logically distinct, yet the two are at first sight very similar, and historically are very closely connected. Between the natural sciences and philosophies of the idealist (or spiritualist) type there is indeed no danger of confusion, for all such philosophies necessarily involve criticism of the epistemological assumptions which science unconsciously makes. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

True! The natural sciences *unconsciously* assume that their teachings reflect objective reality, and *only* such a philosophy is reconcilable with the natural sciences!

"... Not so with Naturalism, which is as innocent of any theory of knowledge as science itself. In fact Naturalism, like Materialism, is only physics

<sup>1</sup> James Ward, *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, 1906, Vol. 1, p. 303.

treated as metaphysics. . . . Naturalism is less dogmatic than Materialism, no doubt, owing to its agnostic reservation as to the nature of ultimate reality; but it insists emphatically on the priority of the material aspect of its Unknowable."

The materialist treats physics as metaphysics! A familiar argument. By metaphysics is meant the recognition of an objective reality outside man. The spiritualists agree with the Kantians and Humeans in such reproaches against materialism. This is understandable; for without doing away with the *objective* reality of things, bodies and objects known to everyone, it is impossible to clear the road for "real conceptions" in Rehmke's sense!

". . . When the essentially philosophical question, how best to systematise experience as a whole [a plagiarism from Bogdanov, Mr. Ward!] arises, the naturalist . . . contends that we must begin from the physical side. Then only are the facts precise, determinate and rigorously concatenated: every thought that ever stirred the human heart . . . can, it holds, be traced to a perfectly definite redistribution of matter and motion. . . . That propositions of such philosophic generality and scope are legitimate deductions from physical science, few, if any, of our modern physicists are bold enough directly to maintain. But many of them consider that their science itself is attacked by those who seek to lay bare the latent metaphysics, the physical realism, on which the Mechanical Theory of the Universe rests. . . . The criticism of this theory in the preceding lectures has been so regarded [by Rücker]. . . . In point of fact my criticism [of this "metaphysics," so detested by the Machians too] rests throughout on the expositions of a school of physicists—if one might call them so—steadily increasing in number and influence who reject entirely the almost mediæval realism. . . . This realism has remained so long unquestioned, that to challenge it now seems to many to spell scientific anarchy. And yet it surely verges on extravagance to suppose that men like Kirchhoff or Poincaré—to mention only two out of many distinguished names—who do challenge it, are seeking 'to invalidate the methods of science'! . . . To distinguish them from the old school, whom we may fairly term physical realists, we might call the new school physical symbolists. The term is not very happy, but it may at least serve to emphasise the one difference between the two which now specially concerns us. The question at issue is very simple. Both schools start, of course, from the same perceptual experiences; both employ an abstract conceptual system, differing in detail but essentially the same; both resort to the same methods of verification. But the one believes that it is getting nearer to the ultimate reality and leaving mere appearances behind it; the other believes that it is only substituting a generalised descriptive scheme that is intellectually manageable, for the complexity of concrete facts. . . . In either view the value of physics as systematic knowledge *about* [Ward's italics] things is unaffected; its possibilities of future extension and of practical application are in either case the same. But the speculative difference between the two is immense, and in this respect the question which is right becomes important. . ." (pp. 303-06).

The question is put by this frank and consistent spiritualist with remarkable truth and clarity. Indeed, the difference between the two schools in modern physics is *only* philosophical, only epistemological. Indeed, the basic distinction is *only* that one recognises the "ultimate" (he should have said objective) reality reflected by our theory, while the other denies it, regarding theory as only a systematisation of experience, a system of empirio-symbols, and so on and so forth. The new physics, having found new aspects of matter and new forms of its motion, raised the old philosophical questions because of the collapse of the old physical concepts. And if the people belonging to "intermediate" philosophical trends ("positivists," Humeans, Machians) are unable to put the question at issue distinctly, it remained for the outspoken idealist Ward to tear off the veil.

"... Sir A. W. Rücker . . . devoted his Inaugural Address to a defence of physical realism against the symbolic interpretations recently advocated by Professors Poincaré and Poynting and by myself" (pp. 305-06; and in other parts of his book Ward adds to this list the names of Duhem, Pearson and Mach; see Vol. II, pp. 161, 63, 57, 75, 83 etc.).

"... Rücker is constantly talking of 'mental pictures,' while constantly protesting that atoms and ether must be more than these. Such procedure practically amounts to saying: In this case I can form no other picture, and therefore the reality must be like it. . . . He [Rücker] allows the abstract possibility of a different mental picture. . . . Nay, he allows 'the tentative nature of some of our theories'; he admits 'many outstanding difficulties'! After all, then, he is only defending a working hypothesis, and one, moreover, that has lost greatly in prestige in the last half century. But if the atomic and other theories of the constitution of matter are but working hypotheses, and hypotheses strictly confined to physical phenomena, there is no justification for a theory which maintains that mechanism is fundamental everywhere and reduces the facts of life and mind in epiphenomena—makes them, that is to say, a degree more phenomenal, a degree less real than matter and motion. Such is the mechanical theory of the universe. Save as he seems unwittingly to countenance that, we have then no quarrel with Sir Arthur Rücker" (pp. 314-15).

It is, of course, utterly absurd to say that materialism ever maintained that consciousness is "less" real, or necessarily professed a "mechanical" picture of the world, and not an electro-magnetic, or some other, immeasurably more complex, picture of the world as *matter in motion*. But in a truly adroit manner, much more skilfully than our Machians (*i.e.*, muddled idealists), the outspoken and straightforward idealist Ward *seizes upon* the weak points in "instinc-



tive" natural-historical materialism, as, for instance, its inability to explain the relation of relative and absolute truth. Ward turns somersaults and declares that since truth is relative, approximate, only "tentative," it cannot reflect reality! But, on the other hand, the question of atoms, etc., as "a working hypothesis" is very correctly put by the spiritualists. Modern, cultured fideism (which Ward directly deduces from his spiritualism) *does not think of demanding* anything more than the declaration that the concepts of natural science are "working hypotheses." We will, sirs, surrender science to you scientists, provided you surrender epistemology, philosophy, to us—such is the condition for the cohabitation of the theologians and professors in the "advanced" capitalist countries.

Among the other points on which Ward connects his epistemology with the "new" physics must be counted his determined attack on *matter*. What is matter and what is energy?—asks Ward, mocking at the plethora of hypotheses and their contradictoriness. Is it ether or ethers?—or, perhaps, some new "perfect fluid," arbitrarily endowed with new and improbable qualities? And Ward's conclusion is:

"... we find nothing definite except movement left. Heat is a mode of motion, elasticity is a mode of motion, light and magnetism are modes of motion. Nay, mass itself is, in the end, supposed to be but a mode of motion of a something that is neither solid, nor liquid nor gas, that is neither itself a body nor an aggregate of bodies, that is not phenomenal and must not be noumenal, a veritable apeiron [a term used by the Greek philosophers signifying: cannot be experienced, unknowable] on which we can impose our own terms" (Vol. I, p. 140).

The spiritualist is true to himself when he divorces motion from matter. The movement of bodies is transformed in nature into a movement of something that is not a body with a constant mass, into a movement of an unknown charge of an unknown electricity in an unknown ether—this dialectics of *material* transformation, performed in the laboratory and in the factory, serves in the eyes of the idealist (as in the eyes of the public at large, and of the Machians) not as a confirmation of materialist dialectics, but as evidence against materialism:

"The mechanical theory, as a professed explanation of the world, receives its death-blow from the progress of mechanical physics itself" (p. 143).

The world is matter in motion, we reply, and the laws of its motion are reflected in mechanics in the case of moderate velocities and by the electro-magnetic theory in the case of great velocities.

"Extended, solid, indestructible atoms have always been the stronghold of materialistic views of the universe. But, unhappily for such views, the hard, extended atom was not equal to the demands which increasing knowledge made upon it" (p. 144).

The destructibility of the atom, its inexhaustibility, the mutability stronghold of dialectical materialism. All boundaries in nature are conditional, relative, moveable, and express the gradual approximation of our reason towards the knowledge of matter. But this does not in any way prove that nature, matter itself, is a symbol, a conventional sign, i.e., the product of our mind. The electron is to the atom as a full stop in this book is to the size of a building 200 feet long, 100 feet broad, and 50 feet high (Lodge); it moves with a velocity as high as 270,000 kilometres per second; its mass is a function of its velocity; it makes 500 trillion revolutions in a second—all this is much more complicated than the old mechanics; but it is, nevertheless, movement of matter in space and time. Human reason has discovered many amazing things in nature and will discover still more, and will thereby increase its power over nature. But this does not mean that nature is the creation of our mind or of abstract mind, i.e., of Ward's God, Bogdanov's "substitution," etc.

"Rigorously carried out as a theory of the real world, that ideal [i.e., "mechanism"] lands us in nihilism: all changes are motions, for motions are the only changes we can understand, and so what moves, to be understood, must itself be motion" (p. 166).

"As I have tried to shew, and as I believe, the very advance of physics is proving the most effectual cure for this ignorant faith in matter and motion as the inmost substance rather than the most abstract symbols of the sum of existence. . . . We can never get to God through a mere mechanism" (p. 180).

Well, well, this is exactly in the spirit of the *Studies "in" the Philosophy of Marxism!* Mr. Ward, you ought to address yourself to Lunacharsky, Yushkevich, Bazarov and Bogdanov. They are a little more "shamefaced" than you are, but they preach the same doctrine.

## 5. GERMAN IDEALISM AND THE TWO TRENDS IN MODERN PHYSICS

In 1896, the Kantian idealist Hermann Cohen, with unusually triumphant exultation, wrote an introduction to the fifth edition of the *Geschichte des Materialismus*,<sup>1</sup> the falsified history of materialism written by F. Albert Lange. "Theoretical idealism," exclaims Cohen, "has already begun . . . to shake the . . . materialism of the natural scientists, and perhaps . . . in only a little while" will defeat it completely. Idealism is permeating (*Durchwirkung*) the new physics. "Atomism must give place to dynamism. . . ."

"It is a remarkable turn of affairs that research into the chemical problem of substance should have led to a fundamental triumph over the materialist view of matter. Just as Thales performed the first abstraction of the idea of substance, although . . . he linked it with speculations on the electron, so the theory of electricity was destined to cause the greatest revolution in the conception of matter and, through the transformation of matter into force, bring about the victory of idealism" (pp. xxvi-xxix).

Hermann Cohen is as clear and definite as James Ward in pointing out the *fundamental* philosophical trends, and does not lose himself (as our Machians do) in petty distinctions between this and that energeticist, symbolist, empirio-criticist, empirio-monist idealism, and so forth. Cohen takes the *fundamental* philosophical trend of the school of physics that is now associated with the names of Mach, Poincaré and others and correctly describes this trend as idealist. "The transformation of matter into force" is here for Cohen the most important triumph of idealism, just as it was for the "spiritualist" scientists—whom J. Dietzgen exposed in 1869. Electricity is proclaimed a collaborator of idealism, because it has destroyed the old theory of the structure of matter, shattered the atom and discovered new forms of material motion, so unlike the old, so totally uninvestigated and unstudied, so unusual and "miraculous," that it permits nature to be presented as *non-material* (spiritual, mental, psychical) motion. Yesterday's limit to our knowledge of the infinitesimal particles of matter has disappeared, hence—concludes the idealist philosopher—matter has disappeared (but thought remains). Every physicist and every engineer knows that electricity is (material) motion, but nobody knows clearly *what*

<sup>1</sup> F. Lange, *History of Materialism*, 5th ed., Leipzig, 1896.—*Trans.*

is moving, hence—concludes the idealist philosopher—we can dupe the philosophically uneducated with the seductively “economical” proposition: let us *conceive* motion *without matter*. . . .

Hermann Cohen tries to enlist the famous physicist Heinrich Hertz as his ally. Hertz is ours—he is a Kantian, we sometimes find him admitting the *a priori*, he says. Hertz is ours, he is a Machian—contends the Machian Kleinpeter—for in Hertz we have glimpses of “the same subjectivist view of the nature of our concepts as in the case of Mach.”<sup>1</sup> This strange dispute as to *where* Hertz belongs is a good example of how the idealists seize on the minutest error, the slightest vagueness of expression on the part of renowned scientists in order to justify their refurbished defence of fideism. As a matter of fact, Hertz’s philosophical preface to his *Mechanik*<sup>2</sup> displays the usual standpoint of the scientist who has been intimidated by the professorial hue and cry against the “metaphysics” of materialism, but who nevertheless cannot overcome his instinctive conviction of the reality of the external world. This has been acknowledged by Kleinpeter himself, who on the one hand casts to the mass of readers thoroughly false popularly-written pamphlets on the theory of knowledge of *natural science*, in which Mach figures side by side with Hertz, while on the other, in specifically philosophical articles, he admits that “Hertz, as opposed to Mach, Pearson and Stallo, still clings to the prejudice that all physics can be explained a mechanistic way,”<sup>3</sup> that he retains the concept of the thing-in-itself and “the usual standpoint of the physicists,” and that Hertz “still adheres to the view of the existence of the world in itself.”<sup>4</sup>

It is interesting to note Hertz’s view of energetics. He writes:

“If we inquire into the real reason why physics at the present time prefers to express itself in terms of energetics, we may answer that it is because in this way it best avoids talking about things of which it knows very little. . . . Of course, we are now convinced that ponderable matter consists of atoms; and in certain cases we have fairly definite ideas of the

<sup>1</sup> *Archiv für systematische Philosophie*. Bd. V, 1898-99, S. 167.

<sup>2</sup> Heinrich Hertz, *Gesammelte Werke* [Collected Works], Bd. III, Leipzig 1894, esp. S. 1, 2, 49.

<sup>3</sup> *Kantstudien*, Bd. VIII, 1903, S. 309-10.

<sup>4</sup> *The Monist*, Vol. XVI, 1906, No. 9, p. 164; an article on Mach’s “Monism.”

magnitude of these atoms and of their motions. But the form of the atoms, their connection, their motions, in most cases . . . all these are entirely hidden from us. . . . So that our conception of atoms is therefore in itself an important and interesting object for further investigations, but is not particularly adapted to serve as a known and secure foundation for mathematical theories" (*op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 21).

Hertz expected that further study of the ether would provide an explanation of the "nature of traditional matter . . . its inertia and gravitational force" (Vol. I, p. 354).

It is evident from this that the possibility of a non-material view of energy did not even occur to Hertz. Energetics served the philosophers as an excuse to desert materialism for idealism. The scientist regards energetics as a convenient method of expressing the laws of material motion at a period when, if we may so express it, physicists had left the atom but had not yet arrived at the electron. This period is to a large extent not yet at an end; one hypothesis yields place to another; nothing whatever is known of the positive electron; only three months ago (June 22, 1908), Jean Becquerel reported to the French Academy of Science that he had succeeded in discovering this "new component part of matter" (*Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Sciences*, p. 1131). How could idealist philosophy refrain from taking advantage of such an opportunity, when "matter" was still being "sought" by the human mind and was therefore no more than a "symbol."

Another German idealist, one far more reactionary than Cohen, Eduard von Hartmann, devoted a whole book to the world outlook of modern physics (*Die Weltanschauung der modernen Physik*, Leipzig 1902). We are, of course, not interested in the special arguments of the author in favour of his own variety of idealism. For us it is important only to point out that this idealist notes the same phenomena as Rey, Ward and Cohen.

"Modern physics had grown up on a realist basis," says Hartmann, "and it was only the Neo-Kantian and agnostic movement of our own time that led it to re-interpret its data in an idealist spirit" (p. 218).

According to Hartmann, three epistemological systems constitute the basis of modern physics—hylo-kinetics (from the Greek *hyle*—matter, and *kinesis*—motion—*i.e.*, the recognition of physical phenomena as matter in motion), energetics, and dynamism (*i.e.*,

the recognition of force without substance). Of course, the idealist Hartmann favours "dynamism," from which he draws the conclusion that the laws of nature are world-thought, in a word, he "substitutes" the psychical for physical nature. But he is forced to admit that hylo-kinetics has the majority of physicists on its side, that it is the system that "is most frequently employed" (p. 190), that its serious defect is "materialism and atheism, which threaten from pure hylo-kinetics" (p. 189). The author quite justly regards energetics as an intermediary system and calls it agnosticism (p. 136). Of course, it is an "ally of pure dynamism, for it dethrones substance" (pp. vi, 192), but Hartmann dislikes its agnosticism as a form of "Anglomania," which is incompatible with the genuine idealism of a true-German reactionary.

It is highly instructive to see how this irreconcilable partisan idealist (non-partisans in philosophy are just as hopelessly thick-headed as they are in politics) explains to the physicists what it means to follow one epistemological trend or another.

"Only a very few of the physicists who follow this *fashion*," writes Hartmann in reference to the idealist interpretation of the latest results in physics, "realise the scope and importance of such an interpretation. They have failed to observe that physics with its specific laws has retained significance only in so far as, despite its idealism, it has adhered to *realistic* basic propositions, *viz.*, the existence of things-in-themselves, their real mutability in time, real causality. . . . Only by granting these realistic premises (the transcendental validity of causality, time and three-dimensional . . . space . . .), *i.e.*, only on the condition that nature, of whose laws physics speaks, coincides with a . . . realm of things-in-themselves, can one speak of natural laws as distinct from psychological laws. Only if natural laws operate in a realm independent of our mind can they serve as an explanation of the fact that the logically necessary effects of our images are always images of the natural-historically necessary effects of the unknown which they reflect or symbolise in our consciousness" (pp. 218-19).

Hartmann rightly feels that the idealism of the new physics is nothing but a *fashion*, and not a serious philosophical turn away from natural-historical materialism; and he, therefore, correctly explains to the physicists that in order to transform the "fashion" into consistent, integral philosophical idealism it is necessary radically to modify the doctrine of the objective reality of time, space, causality and natural law. We cannot regard only atoms, electrons and ether as mere symbols, as a mere "working hypothesis": time, space, the laws of nature and the whole external

world must also be proclaimed a "working hypothesis." Either materialism, or the universal substitution of the psychical for the whole of physical nature; those anxious to confound the two are legion, but we and Bogdanov are not among their number.

Among the German physicists, Ludwig Boltzmann, who died in 1906, systematically combated the Machian tendency. We have already pointed out that as against those who were "carried away by the new epistemological dogmas" he simply and clearly reduced Machism to solipsism (see above, Chap. I. § 6). Boltzmann, of course, was afraid to call himself a materialist and even explicitly stated that he did not deny the existence of God.<sup>1</sup> But his theory of knowledge is essentially materialistic, and expresses—as is admitted by S. Günther,<sup>2</sup> the historian of natural science in the nineteenth century—the views of the majority of scientists.

"We know," says Boltzmann, "of the existence of all things solely from the impressions they make on our senses" (*op. cit.*, p. 29).

Theory is an "image" (or copy) of nature, of the external world (p. 77). To those who say that matter is only a complex of sense-perceptions, Boltzmann points out that in that case other people are only the sensations of the speaker (p. 168). These "ideologues," as Boltzmann sometimes calls the philosophical idealists, present us with a "subjective picture of the world" (p. 176), whereas the author prefers a "simpler objective picture of the world."

"The idealist compares the assertion that matter exists as well as our sensations with the child's opinion that a stone which is beaten experiences pain. The realist compares the assertion that one cannot conceive how the psychical can be formed from the material, or even from the play atoms, with the opinion of an uneducated person who asserts that the distance between the sun and the earth cannot be twenty million miles, for he cannot conceive it" (p. 186).

Boltzmann does not deny that the ideal of science is to present spirit and volition as "complex actions of particles of matter" (p. 396).

L. Boltzmann frequently polemicised against Ostwald's ener-

<sup>1</sup> Ludwig Boltzmann, *Populäre Schriften*, Leipzig 1905, S. 187.

<sup>2</sup> Siegmund Günther, *Geschichte der anorganischen Naturwissenschaften im XIX. Jahrhundert* [History of the Inorganic Sciences in the Nineteenth Century], Berlin 1901, S. 941-42.

getics from the standpoint of a physicist. and showed that Ostwald could neither disprove nor eliminate the formula of kinetic energy (half the mass multiplied by the square of velocity) and that he was revolving in a vicious circle by first deducing energy from mass (by accepting the formula of kinetic energy) and then defining mass as energy (pp. 112, 139). This reminds me of Bogdanov's paraphrase of Mach in the third book of his *Empirio-Monism*.

"In science," writes Bogdanov in reference to Mach's *Mechanik*, "the concept matter is reduced to the coefficient of mass as it appears in the equations of mechanics; upon accurate analysis, however, the coefficient of mass proves to be the reciprocal of the acceleration when two physical body-complexes interact" (p. 146).

It is evident that if a certain *body* is taken as a unit, the motion (mechanical) of all other bodies can be expressed as a mere relation of acceleration. But this does not mean that "bodies" (*i.e.*, matter) disappear or cease to exist independently of our mind. When the whole world is reduced to the movement of electrons, it will be possible to eliminate the electron from all equations, because it will be everywhere assumed, and the correlation between groups or aggregates of electrons will reduce itself to their mutual acceleration, if the forms of motion prove to be as simple as those of mechanics.

Combating the "phenomenalist" physics of Mach and Co., Boltzmann maintained that

"those who believe atomism to have been eliminated by differential equations, cannot see the wood for the trees. . ." (p. 144). "If we do not wish to entertain illusions as to the significance of a differential equation . . . we cannot doubt that this picture of the world (expressed in differential equations) must again by its nature be an atomic one, *i.e.*, an instruction that the changes in time of a vast quantity of things arranged in three-dimensional space must be thought of in accordance with definite rules. The things can, of course, be similar or dissimilar, unchangeable or changeable" (p. 156).

"If we are perfectly clear," said Boltzmann in an address delivered to the Congress of Scientists held in Munich in 1899, "that the phenomenologists cloaked in differential equations likewise base themselves on atom-like discrete units (*Einzelwesen*) which they have to picture as possessing now certain properties now others for each group of phenomena, the need for a simplified, uniform atomism will soon again be felt" (p. 223). The electron theory "is developing into an atomic theory of electricity as a whole" (p. 357).

The unity of nature is revealed in the "astonishing analogy" be-



tween the differential equations of the various realms of phenomena.

"The same equations can be regarded as solving the problems of hydrodynamics and of the theory of potentials. The theory of vortices in fluids and the theory of friction in gases (*Gasreibung*) reveal a most astonishing analogy to the theory of electro-magnetism, etc." (p. 7).

Those who accept "the theory of universal substitution" cannot escape the question: Who was it that thought of "substituting" physical nature so uniformly?

As if in answer to those who brush aside "the physicist of the old school," Boltzmann relates in detail how certain specialists in "physical chemistry" are adopting an epistemological position contrary to that of Machism. Vaubel, the author of "one of the best" comprehensive works of 1903 (according to Boltzmann), "takes up a definitely hostile attitude towards the so-called phenomenism so often recommended today" (p. 380).

"He tries rather to obtain as concrete and clear an idea as possible of the nature of atoms and molecules and of the forces and agencies acting between them, and this idea he attempts to bring into conformity with the most recent experiments in this field [ions, electrons, radium, Zeeman effect, etc.]. . . . The author . . . strictly adheres to the dualism of matter and energy,<sup>1</sup> which have this in common that each has a special law of conservation. In regard to matter, the author also holds fast to the dualism between ponderable matter and ether, yet regards the latter as material in the strictest sense" (p. 381).

In the second volume of his work (theory of electricity) the author "from the very outset takes the view that the phenomena of electricity are determined by the interaction and movement of atom-like entities, the electrons" (p. 383).

Hence, we find that what the spiritualist James Ward admitted to be true of England applies also to Germany, namely, that the physicists of the realistic school systematise the facts and discoveries of recent years no less successfully than the physicists of the symbolist school and that the essential difference between them consists "only" in their epistemological points of view.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Boltzmann wishes to say that the author does not attempt to conceive motion without matter. To speak of dualism here is ridiculous. Philosophical monism and dualism consist respectively in a consistent or inconsistent adherence to materialism or idealism.

<sup>2</sup> The work of Erich Becher, *Philosophische Voraussetzungen der exakten*

## 6. FRENCH FIDEISM AND THE TWO TRENDS IN MODERN PHYSICS

In France, idealist philosophy has seized upon the vacillations of Machian physics with no less determination. We have already seen how the neo-critics greeted Mach's *Mechanik* and how they immediately discerned the idealist character of the principles of Mach's philosophy. The French Machian, Henri Poincaré, was even more successful in this respect. The most reactionary idealist philosophy, the implications of which were definitely fideistic, immediately seized upon his theory. An adherent of this philosophy, Le Roy, argued thus: the truths of science are conventional signs, symbols; you have abandoned the absurd, "metaphysical" claims to

*Naturwissenschaften* [*Philosophical Premises of the Exact Sciences*], Leipzig 1907, with which I became acquainted only after my book had been completed, confirms what has been said in this paragraph. Holding closest of all to the epistemological point of view of Helmholtz and Boltzmann, that is, to a "shamefaced" and incompletely thought-out materialism, the author devotes his work to a defence and interpretation of the fundamental premises of physics and chemistry. This defence naturally becomes converted into a fight against the fashionable but increasingly-resisted Machian trend in physics (cf. p. 91, etc.). E. Becher correctly characterises this tendency as "subjective positivism" (p. iii) and reduces the central point of his objection to it to a proof of the "hypothesis" of the external world (Chapters II-VII), to a proof of its "existence independently of human perceptions" (*vom Wahrgenommenwerden unabhängigen Existenz*). The denial of this "hypothesis" by the Machians frequently leads the latter to solipsism (pp. 78-82, etc.). "Mach's view that sensations and complexes of sensations, and not the external world" (p. 138), are the only subject matter of science, Becher calls "sensationalist monism" (*Empfindungsmonismus*) and classifies it with the "purely conscientistic tendencies." This clumsy and absurd term is constructed from the Latin word "*conscientia*"—consciousness, and means nothing but philosophical idealism (cf. p. 156). In the last two chapters of the book E. Becher quite skillfully compares the old mechanical theory with the new electrical theory of matter and world-picture (the "kinetico-elastic," as the author puts it, with the "kinetico-electric" conception of nature). The latter theory, based on the electron theory, is a step forward in knowledge of the unity of the world; according to this theory the "elements of the material world are electrical charges" (*Ladungen*, p. 223). "Every purely kinetic conception of nature knows nothing save a certain number of moving objects, whether they are called electrons or something else. The state of motion of these objects in successive time intervals is consistently determined by the position and state of their motion in the preceding time interval" (p. 225). The chief defect of Becher's book is his absolute ignorance of dialectical materialism. This ignorance frequently leads him into confusion and absurdity, on which it is impossible to dwell here

knowledge of objective reality—well then, be logical and agree with us that science has practical significance only for one sphere of human activity and that religion has *a no less real significance* for another sphere of activity; “symbolic,” Machian science has no right to deny theology. H. Poincaré was abashed by these conclusions and in his book *La valeur de la science* made a special attack on them. But just see *what* epistemological position he was obliged to adopt in order to rid himself of allies of the type of Le Roy. He writes:

“M. Le Roy regards the intellect as incurably impotent only in order to give greater place to other sources of knowledge, for instance, the heart, sentiment, instinct and faith” (pp. 214-15).

“I do not go to the limit,” he says. Scientific laws are conventions, symbols, but

“... if scientific ‘recipes’ have a value as rules of action, it is because we know that, in general at least, they are successful. But to know this is already to know something; and if so how can you say that we can know nothing?” (p. 219).

H. Poincaré resorts to the criterion of practice. But he only shifts the question without settling it; for this criterion may be interpreted in a subjective as well as in an objective way. Le Roy also admits this criterion for science and industry; all he denies is that this criterion proves *objective* truth, for such a denial suffices him for admitting the subjective truth of religion along with the subjective truth of science (*i.e.*, as not existing apart from man). Poincaré realises that one cannot limit oneself to a reference to practice in arguing against Le Roy, and he passes to the question of the objectivity of science.

“What is the criterion of its objectivity? Well, it is exactly the same as the criterion of our belief in external objects. These objects are real inasmuch as the sensations they evoke in us (*qu’ils nous font éprouver*) appear to be united by some sort of indestructible cement and not by an ephemeral accident” (pp. 269-70).

The author of such a remark may be a great *physicist*, but it is absolutely indisputable that only the Voroshilov-Yushkeviches can take him seriously as a philosopher. Materialism is declared to have been destroyed by a “theory” which at the first onslaught of

fideism takes refuge under the wing of materialism! For it is the purest materialism to say that sensations are evoked in us by real objects and that "belief" in the objectivity of science is the same as "belief" in the objective existence of external objects.

". . . It can be said for instance, that ether has no less reality than any external body" (p. 270).

What an outcry our Machians would have raised had a materialist said that! How many feeble witticisms would have been uttered at the expense of "ethereal materialism," and so forth. But five pages later the founder of recent empirio-symbolism declares:

"Everything that is not thought is pure nothing, since we can think nothing but thought" (p. 276).

You are mistaken, M. Poincaré; your works prove that there are people who can think what is entirely devoid of thought. To this class of people belongs the notorious muddler, Georges Sorel, who maintains that the "first two parts" of Poincaré's book on the value of science are written in the "spirit of Le Roy" and that therefore the two philosophers can be "reconciled" as follows: the attempt to establish an identity between science and the world is an illusion; there is no need to raise the question whether science can have knowledge of nature or not, for it is sufficient that science should correspond with the mechanisms created by us (Georges Sorel. *Les préoccupations métaphysiques des physiciens modernes*,<sup>1</sup> Paris 1907, pp. 77, 80, 81).

But while it is sufficient merely to mention the "philosophy" of Poincaré and pass on, it is imperative to dwell at some length on the work of A. Rey. We have already pointed out that the two basic trends in modern physics, which Rey calls the "conceptualist" and the "neo-mechanistic," reduce themselves to the difference between the idealist and the materialist epistemologies. We must now see how the positivist Rey solves a problem which is diametrically opposed to that undertaken by the spiritualist James Ward and the idealists Cohen and Hartmann, the problem, namely, not of seizing upon the philosophical mistakes of the new physics, its leanings towards idealism, but of rectifying these mistakes and of proving

<sup>1</sup> G. Sorel, *Metaphysical Preoccupations of the Modern Physicists*, Paris, 1907.—Trans.

the illegitimacy of the idealist (and fideist) conclusions drawn from the new physics.

A thread that runs through the whole of Rey's work is the recognition of the fact that the new theory of physics of the "conceptualists" (Machians) has been seized upon by *fideism* (pp. 11, 17, 220, 362, etc.) and "*philosophical idealism*" (p. 200), scepticism as to the rights of the intellect and the rights of science (pp. 210, 220), subjectivism (p. 311), and so forth. Therefore, Rey quite rightly makes the analysis of the "opinions of the physicists on the objective validity of physics" (p. 3) the *centre* of his work.

And what are the results of this analysis?

Let us take the basic concept, the concept of experience. Rey assures us that Mach's subjectivist interpretation (for the sake of simplicity and brevity we shall take Mach as the representative of the school which Rey terms conceptualist) is a sheer misunderstanding. It is true that one of the "outstanding new features of the philosophy of the end of the nineteenth century" is that

"empiricism, becoming ever subtler and richer in nuances, leads to fideism, to the supremacy of faith—this same empiricism that was once the great war engine of scepticism against the assertions of metaphysics.

"Has not at bottom the real meaning of the word 'experience' been distorted, little by little, by imperceptible nuances? Experience, when returned to the conditions of existence, to that experimental science which renders it exact and refined, leads us to necessity and to truth" (p. 398).

There is no doubt that all Machism, in the broad sense of the term, is nothing but a distortion, by means of imperceptible nuances, of the real meaning of the word "experience"! But how does Rey, who accuses only the fideists of distortion, but not Mach himself, correct this distortion? Listen.

"Experience is by definition a knowledge of the object. In physical science this definition is more in place than anywhere else. . . . Experience is that over which our mind has no command, that which our desires, our volition, cannot control, that which is given and which is not of our own making. Experience is the object that faces (*en face du*) the subject" (p. 314).

Here you have an example of how Rey defends Machism! What penetrating genius Engels revealed when he dubbed the latest type of adherents of philosophical agnosticism and phenomenalism "shamefaced materialists." The positivist and ardent phenome-

nalist, Rey, is a superb specimen of this type. If experience is "knowledge of the object," if "experience is the object that faces the subject," if experience means that "something external (*quelque chose du dehors*) exists and necessarily exists" (*se pose et en se posant s'impose*—p.324), this obviously amounts to materialism! Rey's phenomenalism, his ardent and emphatic assertion that nothing exists save sensations, that the objective is that which is generally valid, etc., etc.—all this is only a figleaf, an empty verbal covering for materialism, since we are told:

"The objective is that which is given from without, that which is imposed by experience; it is that which is not of our making, but which is made independently of us and which to a certain extent makes us" (p. 320).

Rey defends "conceptualism" by destroying conceptualism! The refutation of the idealist implications of Machism is achieved only by interpreting Machism after the manner of shamefaced materialism. Having himself admitted the distinction between the two trends in modern physics, Rey toils in the sweat of his brow to obliterate all distinctions in the interest of the materialist trend. Rey says of the neo-mechanist school, for instance, that it does not admit the "least doubt, the least uncertainty" as to the objectivity of physics (p. 237):

"Here [in regard to the doctrines of this school] one feels remote from the detours one was obliged to make [from the standpoint of the other theories] of physics in order to arrive at the assertion of this objectivity" (p. 237).

But it is such "detours" of Machism that Rey conceals by casting a veil over them in his exposition. The fundamental characteristic of materialism is that it *starts from* the objectivity of science, from the recognition of objective reality reflected by science, whereas idealism *needs* "detours" in order, in one way or another, to "deduce" objectivity from mind, consciousness, the "psychic."

"The neo-mechanist [i.e., the prevailing] school in physics," says Rey, "believes in the reality of the physical theory just as humanity believes in the reality of the external world" (p. 234, § 22: Thesis).

For this school "theory aims at being a copy (*le décalque*) of the object" (p. 235).

True. And this fundamental trait of the "neo-mechanist" school is nothing but the basis of *materialist* epistemology. No attempts

of Rey to dissociate himself from the materialists or to assure us that the neo-mechanists are also in essence phenomenologists, etc., can mitigate this basic fact. The essence of the difference between the neo-mechanists (materialists who are more or less shamefaced) and the Machians is that the latter *depart* from this theory of knowledge, and departing from it inevitably *fall* into fideism.

Take Rey's attitude to Mach's theory of causality and necessity in nature. Only at first glance, Rey assures us, does it appear that Mach is "approaching scepticism" and "subjectivism" (p. 76); this "ambiguity" (*équivoque*, p. 115) disappears if Mach's teaching is taken as a whole. And Rey takes it as a whole, quotes a series of passages from the *Wärmelehre* and the *Analyse der Empfindungen*, and specially deals with the chapter on causality in the former book, but . . . *he takes care not to quote the decisive passage, Mach's declaration that there is no physical necessity, but only logical necessity!* All that one can say of such a procedure is that it does not interpret Mach but adorns him, that it obliterates the differences between "neo-mechanism" and Machism. Rey's conclusion is that

"Mach adopts the conclusions of Hume, Mill and all the phenomenologists, according to whom the causal relation has no *substantiality* and is only a habit of thought. He has also adopted the fundamental thesis of phenomenism, of which the doctrine of causality is only a consequence, namely, that nothing exists save sensations.

"But he adds, along a purely objectivist line, that science, analysing sensations, discovers in them certain permanent and common elements which, although abstracted from these sensations, have the same reality as the sensations themselves, for they are taken from sensations by means of perceptual observation. And these permanent and common elements, such as energy and its various forms, are the foundation for the systematisation of physics" (p. 117).

This means that Mach accepts Hume's subjective theory of causality and interprets it in an objectivist sense! Rey is shirking the issue when he defends Mach by referring to his inconsistency, and by maintaining that in the "real" interpretation of experience the latter leads to "necessity." Now, experience is what is given to us from without; and if the necessity of nature and its laws are also given to man from without, from an objectively real nature, then, of course, all difference between Machism and materialism vanishes. Rey defends Machism against the charge of "neo-mechan-

ism" by capitulating to the latter all along the line, retaining the word phenomenalism but not the essence of that trend.

Poincaré, for instance, fully in the spirit of Mach, derives the laws of nature—including even the tri-dimensionality of space—from "convenience." But this does not at all mean "arbitrary," Rey hastens to "correct." Oh no, "convenient" here expresses "*adaptation to the object*" (Rey's italics, p. 196). What a superb differentiation between the two schools and what a superb "refutation" of materialism! . . .

"If Poincaré's theory is logically separated by an impassable gulf from the ontological interpretation of the mechanist school [i.e., from the latter's acceptance of theory as a copy of the object] . . . if Poincaré's theory lends itself to the support of philosophical idealism, in the scientific sphere, at least, it agrees very well with the general evolution of the ideas of classical physics and the tendency to regard physics as objective knowledge, as objective as experience, that is, as the sensations from which experience proceeds" (p. 200).

On the one hand we cannot but admit; on the other hand, it must be confessed. On the one hand, an impassable gulf divides Poincaré from neo-mechanism, although Poincaré stands *in between* Mach's conceptualism and neo-mechanism, while Mach it would appear is not separated by any gulf from neo-mechanism; on the other hand, Poincaré is in complete agreement with classical physics, which, according to Rey himself, completely accepts the standpoint of "mechanism." On the one hand, Poincaré's theory lends itself to the support of philosophical idealism; on the other hand, it is compatible with the objective interpretation of the word experience. On the one hand, these bad fideists have distorted the meaning of the word experience by imperceptible deviations, by departing from the correct view that "experience is the object"; on the other hand, the objectivity of experience means only that experience is sensation . . . with which both Berkeley and Fichte agree!

Rey got himself muddled because he had set himself the impossible task of "reconciling" the opposition between the materialist and the idealist schools in the new physics. He seeks to tone down the materialism of the neo-mechanist school, attributing to phenomenalism the views of physicists who regard their theory



as a copy of the object.<sup>1</sup> And he seeks to tone down the idealism of the conceptualist school by pruning away the more emphatic declarations of its adherents and interpreting the rest in the spirit of shamefaced materialism. How far-fetched and fictitious is Rey's disavowal of materialism is shown, for example, by his opinion of the theoretical significance of the differential equations of Maxwell and Hertz. In the opinion of the Machians, the fact that these physicists limit their theory to a system of equations refutes materialism: there are equations and nothing else—no matter, no objective reality, only symbols. Boltzmann refutes this view, fully aware that he is refuting phenomenalist physics. Rey refutes this view thinking he is defending phenomenism! He says:

"We could not refuse to class Maxwell and Hertz among the 'mechanists' because they limited themselves to equations similar to the differential equations of Lagrange's dynamics. This does not mean that in the opinion of Maxwell and Hertz we shall be unable to build a mechanical theory of electricity out of real elements. Quite the contrary, the fact that we represent electrical phenomena in a theory the form of which is identical with the general form of classical mechanics is proof of the possibility. . ." (p. 253).

<sup>1</sup> The "conciliator," A. Rey, not only cast a veil over the formulation of the question at issue as made by philosophical materialism but also ignored the most clearly expressed materialistic declarations of the French physicists. He did not mention, for example, Alfred Cornu, who died in 1902. That physicist met the Ostwaldian "destruction [or conquest, *Ueberwindung*] of scientific materialism" with a contemptuous remark regarding pretentious journalistic treatment of the question (See *Revue générale des sciences*, 1895, pp. 1030-31). At the international congress of physicists held in Paris in 1900, Cornu said: ". . . The deeper we penetrate into the knowledge of natural phenomena, the more does the bold Cartesian conception of the mechanism of the universe unfold and define itself, namely, that in the physical world there is nothing save matter and motion.

"The problem of the unity of physical forces . . . has again come to the fore after the great discoveries which marked the end of this century. Also the constant concern of our modern leaders, Faraday, Maxwell, Hertz (to mention only the illustrious dead), was to define nature more accurately and to unravel the properties of *this elusive matter (matière subtile)*, the receptacle of world energy. . . . The reversion to Cartesian ideas is obvious. . ." (*Rapports présentés au congrès international de physique* [Reports Made at the International Physics Congress], Paris, 1900, Vol. IV, p. 7). Lucien Poincaré, in his book *La physique moderne* [Modern Physics] (1906), justly remarks that this Cartesian idea was taken up and developed by the Encyclopædists of the eighteenth century (p. 14). But neither this physicist nor A. Cornu knew that the dialectical materialists Marx and Engels had freed this fundamental premise of materialism from the one-sidedness of *mechanistic materialism*.

The indefiniteness of the present solution of the problem "will diminish in proportion as the *nature of the quantities, i.e., elements*, that figure in the equations are more precisely determined." The fact that one or another form of material motion has not yet been investigated is not regarded by Rey as a reason for denying the materiality of motion. "The homogeneity of matter" (p. 262), not as a postulate, but as a result of experience and of the development of science, "the homogeneity of the object of physics"—this is the condition that makes the application of measurement and mathematical calculations possible.

Here is Rey's estimate of the criterion of practice in the theory of knowledge:

"Contrary to the propositions of scepticism, it seems legitimate to say that the practical value of science is derived from its theoretical value" (p. 368).

Rey prefers not to speak of the fact that these propositions of scepticism are unequivocally accepted by Mach, Poincaré and their entire school.

"They [the practical value and theoretical value of science] are the two inseparable and strictly parallel aspects of its objective value. To say that a law of nature has practical value . . . is fundamentally the same as saying that this law of nature has objectivity. To act on the object implies to modify the object; it implies a reaction on the part of the object that conforms to the expectation or anticipation contained in the proposition in virtue of which we acted on the object. Hence, this expectation or anticipation contains elements *controlled* by the object and by the action it undergoes. . . . In these diverse theories there is thus a part of objectivity" (p. 368).

This is a thoroughly materialist, and only materialist, theory of knowledge, for other points of view, and Machism in particular, deny that the criterion of practice has objective significance, *i.e.,* significance that does not depend upon man and mankind.

To sum up, Rey approached the question from an angle entirely different from that of Ward, Cohen, and Co., but he arrived at the same result, namely, the recognition that the materialist and idealist trends form the basis of the division between the two principal schools in modern physics.

## 7. A RUSSIAN "IDEALIST PHYSICIST"

Owing to certain unfortunate conditions under which I am obliged to work,<sup>1</sup> I have been almost entirely unable to acquaint myself with the Russian literature on the subject under discussion. I shall therefore confine myself to an exposition of an article that has an important bearing on my theme written by our notorious arch-reactionary philosopher, Mr. Lopatin. The article appeared in the September-October issue of *Problems of Philosophy and Psychology*, 1907, and is entitled "An Idealist Physicist." A "true-Russian" philosophical idealist, Mr. Lopatin, bears the same relation to the contemporary European idealists as, for example, the "Union of the Russian People"<sup>2</sup> does to the reactionary parties of the West. All the more instructive is it, therefore, to see how similar philosophical trends manifest themselves in totally different cultural and social surroundings. Mr. Lopatin's article is, as the French say, an *éloge*—a eulogy—of the Russian physicist, the late N. I. Shishkin (died 1906). Mr. Lopatin was fascinated by the fact that this cultured man, who was much interested in Hertz and the new physics generally, was not only a Right-wing Constitutional-Democrat but a deeply religious man, a devotee of the philosophy of Vladimir Solovyov, and so on and so forth (p. 339). However, in spite of the fact that his main line of "endeavour" lies in the borderland between philosophy and the police department, Mr. Lopatin has also furnished certain material for a characterisation of the *epistemological* views of this idealist physicist. Mr. Lopatin writes:

"He was a genuine positivist in his tireless endeavour to give the broadest possible criticism of the methods of investigation, suppositions and facts of science from the standpoint of their suitability as means and material for the construction of an integral and perfected world outlook. In this respect N. I. Shishkin was the very antipodes of many of his contemporaries. In previous articles of mine in this periodical, I have frequently endeavoured to explain the heterogeneous and often shaky materials from which the so-called scientific world outlook is made up. They include established facts, more or less bold generalisations, hypotheses that are convenient at the given moment

<sup>1</sup> Lenin was at that time living as a political exile abroad.—*Trans.*

<sup>2</sup> The extreme reactionary organisation known as the Black Hundreds.—*Trans.*

for one or another field of science, and even auxiliary scientific fictions. And all this is elevated to the dignity of incontrovertible objective truths, from the standpoint of which all other ideas and all other beliefs of a philosophical and religious nature must be judged, and everything in them that is not indicated in these truths must be rejected. Our highly talented natural scientist and thinker, Professor V. I. Vernadsky, has shown with exemplary clarity how shallow and unfounded are these claims to convert the scientific views of a given historical period into an immobile, dogmatic system obligatory for all. And it is not only the broad reading public that is guilty of making such a conversion [footnote by Mr. Lopatin: "For the broad public a number of popular books have been written, the purpose of which is to foster the conviction that there exists such a scientific catechism providing an answer to all questions. Typical works of this kind are Büchner's *Force and Matter* and Haeckel's *The Riddle of the Universe*"], and not only individual scientists in particular branches of science; what is even more strange is that this sin is frequently committed by the official philosophers, all of whose efforts are at times directed only to proving that they are saying nothing but what has been said before them by representatives of the several sciences, and that they are only saying it in their own language.

"N. I. Shishkin had no trace of prejudiced dogmatism. He was a convinced champion of the mechanical explanation of the phenomena of nature, but for him it was only a method of investigation. . ." (p. 347). (So, so . . . a familiar refrain!) "He was far from believing that the mechanical theory reveals the true nature of the phenomena investigated; he regarded it only as the most convenient and fertile method of unifying and explaining them for the purposes of science. For him, therefore, the mechanical conception of nature and the materialist view of nature by no means coincide."

Exactly as in the case of the authors of the *Studies "in" the Philosophy of Marxism!*

"Quite the contrary, it seemed to him that in questions of a higher order, the mechanical theory ought to take a very critical, even a conciliatory attitude" (p. 342).

In the language of the Machians this is called "overcoming the obsolete, narrow and one-sided" opposition between materialism and idealism.

"Questions of the first beginning and ultimate end of things, of the inner nature of our mind, of the freedom of the will, the immortality of the soul and so forth, cannot in their full breadth of meaning come within its scope—since as a method of investigation it is confined within the natural limits of its applicability solely to the facts of physical experience" (p. 342).

The last two lines are an undoubted plagiarism from Bogdanov's *Empirio-Monism*.

"Light can be regarded"—wrote Shishkin in his article "Psycho-Physical Phenomena from the Standpoint of the Mechanical Theory" (*Problems of*

*Philosophy and Psychology*, 'Bk. I, p. 127)—"as substance, as motion, as electricity, as sensation."

There is no doubt that Mr. Lopatin is absolutely right in ranking Shishkin among the positivists and in considering that this physicist belonged body and soul to the Machian school of the new physics. In his statement about light, Shishkin means to say that the various methods of regarding light are various methods of "organising experience" (in A. Bogdanov's terminology), all equally legitimate from different points of view, or that they are various "connections of elements" (in Mach's terminology), and that, in any case, the physicists' theory of light is not a copy of objective reality. But Shishkin argues very badly. "Light can be regarded as substance, as motion . . ." he says. But in nature there is neither substance without motion nor motion without substance. Shishkin's first apposition is meaningless: "as electricity. . . ." Electricity is a movement of substance, hence Shishkin is wrong here too. The electro-magnetic theory of light has shown that light and electricity are forms of motion of one and the same substance (ether). "As sensation. . . ." Sensation is an image of matter in motion. Save through sensations, we can know nothing either of the forms of substance or of the forms of motion; sensations are evoked by the action of matter in motion upon our sense-organs. . . . That is how science views it. The sensation of red reflects ether vibrations of a frequency of approximately 450 trillions per second. The sensation of blue reflects ether vibrations of a frequency of approximately 620 trillions per second. The vibrations of the ether exist independently of our sensations of light. Our sensations of light depend on the action of the vibrations of ether on the human organ of vision. Our sensations reflect objective reality, i.e., something that exists independently of humanity and of human sensations. That is how science views it. Shishkin's argument against materialism is the cheapest kind of sophistry.

## 8. THE ESSENCE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF "PHYSICAL" IDEALISM

We have seen that the question of the epistemological deductions that can be drawn from the new physics has been raised and is being discussed from the most varied points of view in English, German and French literature. There can be no doubt that we have before

us a certain international ideological current, which is not dependent upon any one philosophical system, but which is the result of certain general causes lying outside the sphere of philosophy. The foregoing review of the facts undoubtedly shows that Machism is "connected" with the new physics, but at the same time reveals that the version of this connection spread by our Machians is *fundamentally incorrect*. As in philosophy, so in physics, our Machians slavishly follow the *fashion*, and are unable from their own, Marxist, standpoint to give a general survey of particular currents and to judge the place they occupy.

A double falsity pervades all the talk about Mach's philosophy being "the philosophy of twentieth-century natural science," "the recent philosophy of the sciences," "recent natural-scientific positivism" and so forth. (Bogdanov in the introduction to *Analysis of Sensations*, pp. iv, xii; cf. also Yushkevich, Valentinov and Co.) Firstly, Machism is ideologically connected with only *one* school in *one* branch of modern science. Secondly, and *this is the main point*, what in Machism is connected with this school is *not what distinguishes it from all other trends and systems of idealist philosophy, but what it has in common with philosophical idealism in general*. It suffices to cast a glance at the ideological current in question *as a whole* in order to leave no shadow of doubt as to the truth of this statement. Take the physicists of this school: the German Mach, the Frenchman Henri Poincaré, the Belgian P. Duhem, the Englishman Karl Pearson. They have much in common: they have the same basis and are following the same direction, as each of them rightly acknowledges. But what they have in common includes neither the doctrine of empirio-criticism in general, nor Mach's doctrine, say, of the "world-elements" in particular. The three latter physicists even know nothing of either of these doctrines. They have "only" one thing in common—philosophical idealism, towards which they all, without exception, *tend* more or less consciously, more or less decisively. Take the philosophers who base themselves on *this school* of the new physics, who try to ground it epistemologically and to develop it, and you will again find the German immanentists, the disciples of Mach, the French neo-criticists and idealists, the English spiritualists, the Russian Lopatin and, in addition,

the one and only empirio-monist, A. Bogdanov. They all have only one thing in common, namely that they all—more or less consciously, more or less decisively, either with an abrupt and precipitate slant towards fideism, or with a personal aversion to it (as in Bogdanov's case)—are vehicles of philosophical idealism.

The fundamental idea of the school of the new physics under discussion is the denial that objective reality is given us in our sensation and reflected in our theories, or the doubt as to the existence of such a reality. Here this school departs from *materialism* (inaccurately called realism, neo-mechanism, hylo-kinetism, and not in any appreciable degree consciously developed by the physicists) which by *general acknowledgement* prevails among the physicists—and departs from it as a school of “physical” idealism.

To explain this last term, which sounds very strange, it is necessary to recall an episode in the history of modern philosophy and modern science. In 1866 L. Feuerbach attacked Johannes Müller, the famous founder of modern physiology, and ranked him with the “physiological idealists” (*Werke*, Vol. X, p. 197). The idealism of this physiologist consisted in the fact that when investigating the significance of the mechanism of our sense-organs in relation to sensations, showing, for instance, that the sensation of light is produced as the result of the action of various stimuli on the eye, he was inclined to arrive from this at a denial that our sensations are images of objective reality. This tendency of one school of scientists towards “physiological idealism,” *i.e.*, towards an idealist interpretation of certain data of physiology, was very accurately discerned by L. Feuerbach. The “connection” between physiology and philosophical idealism, chiefly of the Kantian kind, was for a long time after that exploited by reactionary philosophy. F. A. Lange made great play of physiology in support of Kantian idealism and in refutation of materialism; while among the immanentists (whom Bogdanov so incorrectly places midway between Mach and Kant), J. Rehmke in 1882 specially campaigned against the allegation that Kantianism was confirmed by physiology.<sup>1</sup> That a number of eminent physiologists at that time *gravitated* towards idealism and Kantianism is as indisputable as that today a number

<sup>1</sup> Johannes Rehmke. *Philosophie und Kantianismus* [*Philosophy and Kantianism*], Eisenach 1882, p. 15 *et seq.*

of eminent physicists *gravitate* towards philosophical idealism. "Physical" idealism, *i.e.*, the idealism of a certain school of physicists at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, no more "refutes" materialism, no more establishes the connection between idealism (or empirio-criticism) and natural science, than did the similar efforts of F. A. Lange and the "physiological" idealists. The deviation towards reactionary philosophy manifested in both cases by one school of scientists in one branch of science is a temporary deflection, a transitory period of sickness in the history of science, an ailment of growth, mainly brought on by the *abrupt breakdown* of old established concepts.

The connection between modern "physical" idealism and the crisis of modern physics is, as we have already pointed out, generally acknowledged. "The arguments of sceptical criticism levelled against modern physics"—writes A. Rey, who is referring not so much to the sceptics as to the outspoken adherents of fideism, like Brunetière—"essentially amount to the proverbial argument of all sceptics: a diversity of opinions" (among the physicists). But this diversity "can therefore prove nothing against the objectivity of physics."

"In the history of physics, as in history generally, one can distinguish great periods which differ in the form and general aspect of theories. . . . But as soon as a discovery is made that affects all fields of physics because it establishes some cardinal fact hitherto badly or very partially perceived, the entire aspect of physics is modified; a new period sets in. This is what occurred after Newton's discoveries, and after the discoveries of Joule-Mayer and Carnot-Clausius. . . . The same thing, apparently, is taking place since the discovery of radioactivity. . . . The historian who later sees things from the necessary distance has no trouble in discerning a steady evolution where contemporaries saw conflicts, contradictions, and divisions into various schools.

"Apparently, the crisis which physics has undergone in recent years (despite the conclusions drawn from it by philosophical criticism) is no different. It even excellently illustrates the typical crisis of growth (*crise de croissance*) occasioned by the great modern discoveries. The undeniable transformation of physics which will result (could there be evolution or progress without it?) will not perceptibly alter the scientific spirit" (*op. cit.*, pp. 370-72).

Rey the conciliator tries to unite all schools of modern physics against fideism! This is a falsity, well meant, but a falsity nevertheless; for the trend of the school of Mach-Poincaré-Pearson towards idealism (*i.e.*, refined fideism) is beyond dispute. And the



objectivity of physics that is associated with the basis of the "scientific spirit," as distinct from the fideist spirit, and that Rey defends so ardently, is nothing but a "shamefaced" formulation of materialism. The basic materialist spirit of physics, as of all modern science, will overcome all crises, but only by the indispensable replacement of metaphysical materialism by dialectical materialism.

Rey the conciliator very often tries to gloss over the fact that the crisis in modern physics consists in the latter's deviation from a direct, resolute and irrevocable recognition of the objective value of its theories. But facts are stronger than all attempts at reconciliation. The mathematicians, writes Rey,

"... in dealing with a science, the subject matter of which, apparently at least, is created by the mind of the scientist, and in which, at any rate, concrete phenomena are not involved in the investigation, have formed too abstract a conception of the science of physics. Attempts have been made to bring it ever closer to mathematics, and the general conception of mathematics has been transferred to the conception of physics. . . .

"This is an invasion of the mathematical spirit into the methods of judging and understanding physics which is denounced by all the experimenters. And is it not to this influence, none the less powerful because at times concealed, that are often due the uncertainty, the wavering of mind regarding the objectivity of physics, and the detours made or the obstacles surmounted in order to demonstrate it? . . ." (p. 227).

This is excellently said. "Wavering of mind" as to the objectivity of physics—this is the very essence of fashionable "physical" idealism.

"... The abstract fictions of mathematics seem to have interposed a screen between physical reality and the manner in which the mathematicians understand the science of this reality. They vaguely feel the objectivity of physics. . . .

"Although they desire above all to be objective when they engage in physics; although they seek to find and retain a foothold in reality, they are still haunted by old habits. So that even in the concepts of energetics, which had to be built more solidly and with fewer hypotheses than the old mechanism—which sought to copy (*décalquer*) the sensible universe and not to reconstruct it—we are still dealing with the theories of the mathematicians. . . . They [the mathematicians] have done everything to save objectivity, for they are aware that without objectivity there can be no physics. . . . But the complexity or deviousness of their theories nevertheless leaves an uneasy feeling. It is too artificial, too far-fetched, too stilted; the experimenter here does not feel the spontaneous confidence which constant contact with physical reality gives him. . . .

"This in effect is what is said by all physicists who are primarily phys-

icists or who are exclusively physicists—and their name is legion; this is what is said by the entire neo-mechanist school. . . . The crisis in physics lies in the conquest of the realm of physics by the mathematical spirit. The progress of physics on the one hand, and the progress of mathematics on the other, led in the nineteenth century to a close amalgamation between these two sciences. . . .

"Theoretical physics has become mathematical physics. . . .

"Then there began the formal period, that is to say, the period of mathematical physics, purely mathematical; mathematical physics not as a branch of physics, so to speak, but as a branch of mathematics cultivated by the mathematicians. Along this new line the mathematician, accustomed to conceptual (purely logical) elements, which furnish the sole subject matter of his work, and feeling himself cramped by crude, material elements, which he found insufficiently pliable, necessarily always tended to reduce them to abstractions as far as possible, to present them in an entirely non-material and conceptual manner, or even to ignore them altogether.

"The elements, as real, objective data, as *physical* elements, so to speak, completely disappeared. There remained only formal relations, represented by the differentials. . . . If the mathematician is not the dupe of his constructive work, if when he analyses theoretical physics . . . he can recover its ties with experience and its objective value, at first glance, and for an uninitiated person, we seem faced with an arbitrary development. . . .

"The concept, the notion, has everywhere replaced the real element. . . .

"Thus, historically, by virtue of the mathematical form assumed by theoretical physics, is explained . . . the ailment (*le malaise*), the crisis of physics, and its apparent withdrawal from objective facts" (pp. 228-32).

Such is the first cause of "physical" idealism. The reactionary attempts are engendered by the very progress of science. The great successes achieved by science, the approach to elements of matter so homogeneous and simple that their laws of motion can be treated mathematically, encouraged the mathematicians to overlook matter, "Matter disappears," only equations remain. In the new stage of development and apparently in a new manner, we get the old Kantian idea: reason prescribes laws to nature. Hermann Cohen, who, as we have seen, rejoices over the idealist spirit of the new physics, goes so far as to advocate the introduction of higher mathematics in the schools . . . in order to imbue high-school students with the spirit of idealism, which is being extinguished in our materialistic age (F. A. Lange, *Geschichte des Materialismus*, 5. Auflage, 1896, Bd. II, S. XLIX). This, of course, is the ridiculous dream of a reactionary and, in fact, there is and can be nothing here but a temporary infatuation with idealism on the part of a small number of specialists. But what is highly characteristic is the way the drowning man clutches at a straw, the subtle means whereby representatives

of the educated bourgeoisie artificially attempt to preserve, or to find a place for, the fideism which is engendered among the masses of the people by their ignorance and their down-trodden condition, and by the wild absurdities of capitalist contradictions.

Another cause which bred "physical" idealism is the principle of *relativism*, the relativity of our knowledge, a principle which, in a period of breakdown of the old theories, is taking a firm hold upon the physicists, and which, *if the latter are ignorant of dialectics*, is bound to lead to idealism.

The question of the relation between relativism and dialectics plays perhaps the most important part in explaining the theoretical misadventures of Machism. Take Rey, for instance, who like all European positivists has no conception whatever of Marxian dialectics. He employs the word dialectics exclusively in the sense of idealist philosophical speculation. As a result, although he feels that the new physics has gone astray on the question of relativism, he nevertheless flounders helplessly and attempts to differentiate between moderate and immoderate relativism. Of course, "immoderate relativism . . . logically, if not in practice, borders on actual scepticism" (p. 215), but there is no "immoderate" relativism, you see, in Poincaré. Just fancy, one can, like an apothecary, weigh out a little more or a little less relativism and thus correct Machism!

As a matter of fact, the only theoretically correct formulation of the question of relativism is given in the dialectical materialism of Marx and Engels, and ignorance of it is *bound* to lead from relativism to philosophical idealism. Incidentally, the failure to understand this fact is enough to render Mr. Berman's absurd book, *Dialectics in the Light of the Modern Theory of Knowledge*, utterly valueless. Mr. Berman repeats the ancient nonsense about dialectics, which he has entirely failed to understand. We have already seen that *all* the Machians, *at every step*, reveal a similar lack of understanding of the theory of knowledge.

All the old truths of physics, including those which were regarded as firmly established and incontestable, have proven to be relative truths—*hence*, there can be no objective truth independent of mankind. Such is the argument not only of the Machians, but of the "physical" idealists in general. That absolute truth results

from the sum-total of relative truths in the course of their development; that relative truths represent relatively faithful reflections of an object existing independently of man; that these reflections become more and more faithful; that every scientific truth, notwithstanding its relative nature, contains an element of absolute truth—all these propositions, which are obvious to anyone who has thought over Engels' *Anti-Dühring*, are for the "modern" theory of knowledge a book with seven seals.

Such works as Duhem's *Theory of Physics*,<sup>1</sup> or Stallo's *The Concepts and Theories of Modern Physics*,<sup>2</sup> which Mach particularly recommends, show very clearly that these "physical" idealists attach the most significance to the proof of the relativity of our knowledge, and that they are in reality vacillating between idealism and dialectical materialism. Both authors, who belong to different periods, and who approach the question from different points of view (Duhem's speciality is physics, in which field he has worked for twenty years; Stallo was an erstwhile orthodox Hegelian who grew ashamed of his own book on natural philosophy, written in 1848 in the old Hegelian spirit), energetically combat the atomistic-mechanical conception of nature. They point to the narrowness of this conception, to the impossibility of accepting it as the limit of our knowledge, to the petrification of many of the ideas of writers who hold this conception. And it is indeed undeniable that the *old* materialism did suffer from such a defect; Engels reproached the earlier materialists for their failure to appreciate the relativity of all scientific theories, for their ignorance of dialectics and for their exaggeration of the mechanical point of view. But Engels (unlike Stallo) was able to discard Hegelian idealism and to grasp the great and true kernel of Hegelian dialectics. Engels rejected the old metaphysical materialism for *dialectical* materialism, and not for relativism that sinks into subjectivism.

"The mechanical theory," says Stallo, for instance, "in common with all metaphysical theories, hypostasises partial, ideal, and, it may be, purely conventional groups of attributes, or single attributes, and treats them as varieties of objective reality" (p. 150).

<sup>1</sup> P. Duhem, *La théorie physique, son objet et sa structure*, Paris, 1906.

<sup>2</sup> J. B. Stallo, *The Concepts and Theories of Modern Physics*, London, 1882.

This is quite true, if you do not deny objective reality and combat metaphysics for being anti-dialectical. Stallo does not realise this clearly. He has not understood materialist dialectics and therefore frequently slips, by way of relativism, into subjectivism and idealism.

The same is true of Duhem. With an enormous expenditure of labour, and with the help of a number of interesting and valuable examples from the history of physics, such as one frequently encounters in Mach, he shows that "every law of physics is provisional and relative, because it is approximate" (p. 280). The man is hammering at an open door!—will be the thought of the Marxist when he reads the lengthy disquisitions on this subject. But that is just the trouble with Duhem, Stallo, Mach and Poincaré, that they do not perceive the door opened by dialectical materialism. Being unable to give a correct formulation of relativism, they slide from the latter into idealism. "A law of physics, properly speaking, is neither true nor false, but approximate"—writes Duhem (p. 272). And this "but" contains the beginning of the falsity, the beginning of the obliteration of the boundary between a scientific theory that approximately *reflects the object*, i.e., approaches objective truth, and an arbitrary, fantastic, and purely conventional theory, such as, for example, a religious theory or the theory of the game of chess.

Duhem carries this falsity to the point of declaring that the question whether "material reality" corresponds to perceptual phenomena is *metaphysics* (p. 10). Away with the question of reality! Our concepts and hypotheses are mere signs (p. 26), "arbitrary" (p. 27) constructions, and so forth. There is only one step from this to idealism, to the "physics of the believer," which M. Pierre Duhem preaches in the Kantian spirit (Rey, p. 162; cf. p. 169). But the good Adler (Fritz)—also a Machian would-be Marxist!—could find nothing cleverer to do than to "correct" Duhem as follows: Duhem, he claims, eliminates the "realities concealed behind phenomena only as objects of theory, but not as *objects of reality*."<sup>1</sup> This is the familiar criticism of Kantianism from the standpoint of Hume and Berkeley.

But, of course, there can be no question of any conscious Kantian-

<sup>1</sup>Translator's note to the German translation of Duhem, Leipzig 1908, J. Barth.

ism on the part of Duhem. He is merely *vacillating*, as is Mach, not knowing on what to base his relativism. In many passages he comes very close to dialectical materialism. He says that we know sound

"such as it is in relation to us but not as it is in itself, in the sound-producing bodies. This reality, of which our sensations give us only the external and the veil, is made known to us by the theories of acoustics. They tell us that where our perceptions register only this appearance which we call sound, there really exists a very small and very rapid periodic movement" (p. 7).

Bodies are not symbols of sensations, but sensations are symbols (or rather, images) of bodies.

"The development of physics gives rise to a constant struggle between nature, which does not tire of offering new material, and reason, which does not tire of cognising" (p. 32).

Nature is infinite, just as its smallest particle (including the electron) is infinite, but reason just as infinitely transforms "things-in-themselves" into "things-for-us."

"Thus, the struggle between reality and the laws of physics will continue indefinitely; to every law that physics may formulate, reality will sooner or later oppose a rude refutation in the form of a fact; but, indefatigable, physics will improve, modify, and complicate the refuted law" (p. 290).

This would be a quite correct exposition of dialectical materialism if the author firmly held to the existence of this objective reality independent of humanity.

". . . The theory of physics is not a purely artificial system which is convenient today and unsuitable tomorrow . . . it is a classification, which becomes more and more natural, a reflection, which grows clearer and clearer, of the realities that the experimental method cannot contemplate face to face" (p. 445).

In this last phrase the Machian Duhem flirts with Kantian idealism: it is as if the way is being opened for a method other than the "experimental" one, and as if we cannot know the "things-in-themselves" directly, immediately, face to face. But if the theory of physics becomes more and more natural, that means that "nature," reality, "reflected" by this theory, exists independently of our consciousness—and that is precisely the view of dialectical materialism.

In a word, the "physical" idealism of today, just as the "physiological" idealism of yesterday, merely means that one school of natural scientists in one branch of natural science has slid into a reactionary philosophy, being unable to rise directly and at once from metaphysical materialism to dialectical materialism.<sup>1</sup> This step is being made, and will be made, by modern physics; but it is making for the only true method and the only true philosophy of natural science not directly but by zigzags, not consciously but instinctively, not clearly perceiving its "final goal," but drawing closer to it gropingly, hesitatingly, and sometimes even with its back turned to it. Modern physics is in travail; it is giving birth to dialectical materialism. The process of childbirth is painful. And in addition to a living healthy being, there are bound to be produced certain dead products, refuse fit only for the garbage-heap. And the entire school of "physical idealism," the entire empirio-critical philosophy, together with empirio-symbolism, empirio-monism, and so on, and so forth, must be regarded as such refuse!

<sup>1</sup> The famous chemist, William Ramsay, says: "I have been frequently asked: 'But is not electricity a vibration? How can wireless telegraphy be explained by the passage of little particles or corpuscles?' The answer is: 'Electricity is a *thing*: it is [Ramsay's italics] these minute corpuscles, but when they leave an object, a wave, like a wave of light, spreads through the ether and this wave is used for wireless telegraphy'" (William Ramsay, *Essays, Biographical and Chemical*, London, 1908, p. 126). Having spoken about the transformation of radium into helium, Ramsay remarks: "At least one so-called element can no longer be regarded as ultimate matter, but is itself undergoing change into a simpler form of matter" (p. 159). "Now it is almost certain that negative electricity is a particular form of matter; and positive electricity is matter deprived of negative electricity—that is, minus this electric matter" (p. 176). "Now what is electricity? It used to be believed, formerly, that there were two kinds of electricity, one called positive and the other negative. At that time it would not have been possible to answer the question. But recent researches make it probable that what used to be called negative electricity is really a substance: indeed the relative weight of its particles has been measured each is about one seven-hundredth of the mass of an atom of hydrogen. . . . Atoms of electricity are named 'electrons'" (p. 196). If our Machians who write books and articles on philosophical subjects were capable of thinking, they would understand that the expression "matter disappears," "matter is reduced to electricity," etc., is only an epistemologically helpless expression of the truth that science is able to discover new forms of matter, new forms of material motion, to reduce the old forms to the new forms, and so on.

## CHAPTER SIX

### EMPIRIO-CRITICISM AND HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

THE Russian Machians, as we have already seen, are divided into two camps. Mr. V. Chernov and the collaborators of the *Russkoye Bogatstvo* are downright and consistent opponents of dialectical materialism, both in philosophy and history. The other company of Machians, in whom we are more interested here, are would-be Marxists and try in every way to assure their readers that Machism is compatible with the historical materialism of Marx and Engels. True, these assurances are for the most part nothing but assurances; not a single Machian would-be Marxist has ever made the slightest attempt to present in any systematic way the real trends of the founders of empirio-criticism in the field of the social sciences. We shall dwell briefly on this question, turning first to the statements to be found in writings of the German empirio-criticists and then to those of their Russian disciples.

#### 1. THE EXCURSIONS OF THE GERMAN EMPIRIO-CRITICISTS INTO THE FIELD OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

In 1895, when R. Avenarius was still alive, there appeared in the philosophical journal edited by him an article by his disciple, F. Blei, entitled "Metaphysics in Political Economy."<sup>1</sup> All the teachers of empirio-criticism wage war on the "metaphysics" not only of explicit and conscious philosophical materialism, but also of natural science, which instinctively adopts the standpoint of the

<sup>1</sup> *Vierteljahrsschrift für wissenschaftliche Philosophie*, 1895, Bd. XIX, S. 378-90, F. Blei, "Die Metaphysik in der Nationalökonomie" ["Metaphysics in Political Economy"].



materialist theory of knowledge. The disciple takes up arms against metaphysics in political economy. The fight is directed against the most varied schools of political economy, but we are interested only in the character of the empirio-critical argument against the school of Marx and Engels.

"The purpose of the present investigation," writes Franz Blei, "is to show that all political economy until now, in its endeavour to interpret the phenomena of economic life, operates with metaphysical premises; that it . . . 'derives' the 'laws' governing an economy from the 'nature' of the latter, and man is only an incidental factor in relation to these 'laws.' . . . In all its theories political economy has hitherto rested on metaphysical grounds; all its theories are unbiological, and therefore unscientific and worthless for knowledge. . . . The theoreticians do not know what they are building their theories on, what the soil is of which these theories are the fruit. They regard themselves as realists operating without any premises whatever, for they are, forsooth, dealing with 'sober' (*nüchterne*), 'practical' and 'tangible' (*sinnfällige*) economic phenomena. . . . And all have that family resemblance to many trends in physiology which only the same parents—*viz.*, metaphysics and speculation—can transmit to their children, in our case to the physiologists and economists. One school of economists analyses the 'phenomena' of 'economy' [Avenarius and his school put ordinary words in quotation marks in order to show that they, the true philosophers, discern the essentially "metaphysical character" of a use of words which is so vulgar and so unrefined by "epistemological analysis"] without placing what they find (*das Gefundene*) in this way into relation with the behaviour of individuals; the physiologists exclude the behaviour of the individual from their investigations as being 'actions of the soul' (*Wirkungen der Seele*), while the economists of this trend declare the behaviour of individuals to be negligible in relation to the 'immanent laws of economy'" (pp. 378-79).

"With Marx, theory established 'economic laws' from construed processes, and these 'laws' figured in the initial section (*Initialabschnitt*) of the independent vital series, while the economic processes figured in the final section (*Finalabschnitt*). . . . 'Economy' was transformed by the economists into a transcendental category, in which they discovered such 'laws' as they wished to discover: the 'laws' of 'capital' and 'labour,' 'rent,' 'wages' and 'profit.' The economists transformed man into a Platonic idea—'capitalist,' 'worker,' etc. Socialism ascribed to the 'capitalist' the character of being 'greedy for profit,' liberalism ascribed to the worker the character of being 'exacting'—and both characters were moreover explained by the 'operation of the laws of capital'" (pp. 381-82).

"Marx came to the study of French Socialism and political economy with a Socialist world outlook, and his aim as regards knowledge was to provide a 'theoretical foundation' for his world outlook in order to 'safeguard' his initial value. He found the law of value in Ricardo . . . but the conclusion which the French Socialists had drawn from Ricardo could not satisfy Marx in his endeavour to 'safeguard' his E-value brought into a vital-difference, *i.e.*, his 'world outlook,' for these conclusions had already entered as a component part into the content of his initial value in the form of 'indignation

at the robbery of the workers,' and so forth. The conclusions were rejected as 'being formally untrue economically' for they are 'simply an application of morality to political economy.'

"But what formally may be economically incorrect, may all the same be correct from the point of view of world history. If the moral consciousness of the mass declares an economic fact to be unjust, that is a proof that the fact itself has been outlived, that other economic facts have made their appearance, owing to which the former one has become unbearable and untenable. Therefore, a very true economic content may be concealed behind the formal economic incorrectness.'" (From Engels' preface to Karl Marx's *The Poverty of Philosophy*.)

Having quoted the above passage from Engels, Blei continues:

"In the above quotation the middle section (*Medialabschnitt*) of the dependent series which interests us here is detached [*abgehoben*—a technical term of Avenarius' implying: reached the consciousness, separated off]. After the 'cognition' that an 'economic fact' must be concealed behind the 'moral consciousness of injustice,' comes the final section [*Finalabschnitt*: the theory of Marx is a statement, i.e., an E-value, i.e., a vital-difference which passes through three stages, three sections, initial, middle and final: *Initialabschnitt*, *Medialabschnitt*, *Finalabschnitt*] . . . i.e., the 'cognition' of that 'economic fact.' Or, in other words, the task now is to 'find again' the initial value, his 'world outlook,' in the 'economic facts' in order to 'safeguard' the initial value. This definite variation of the dependent series already contains the Marxian metaphysics, regardless of how the 'cognised' appears in the final section (*Finalabschnitt*). 'The Socialist world outlook,' as an independent E-value, 'absolute truth,' is 'given a basis' 'retrospectively' by means of a 'special' theory of knowledge, namely, the economic system of Marx and the materialist theory of history. . . . By means of the concept of surplus value the 'subjective' 'truth' in the Marxian world outlook finds its 'objective truth' in the theory of knowledge of the 'economic categories'—the safeguarding of the initial value is completed and metaphysics has retrospectively received its critique of knowledge" (pp. 383-86).

The reader is probably fuming at us for quoting at such length this incredibly trivial rigmarole, this quasi-scientific tomfoolery decked out in the terminology of Avenarius. But *wer den Feind will verstehen, muß in Feindes Lande gehen*—who would know the enemy must go into the enemy's territory. And R. Avenarius' philosophical journal is indeed enemy territory for Marxists. And we invite the reader to restrain for a minute his legitimate aversion for the buffoons of bourgeois science and to analyse the argument of Avenarius' disciple and collaborator.

Argument number one: Marx is a "metaphysician" who did not grasp the epistemological "critique of concepts," who did not work out a general theory of knowledge and who simply inserted materialism into his "special theory of knowledge."

This argument contains nothing original to Blei personally. We have already seen scores and hundreds of times that *all* the founders of empirio-criticism and *all* the Russian Machians accuse materialism of "metaphysics," or, more accurately, they repeat the hackneyed arguments of the Kantians, Humeans and idealists against materialist "metaphysics."

Argument number two: Marxism is as "metaphysical" as natural science (physiology). And here again it is not Blei who is "responsible" for this argument, but Mach and Avenarius; for it was they who declared war on "natural-historical metaphysics," applying that name to the instinctively materialist theory of knowledge to which (on their own admission and according to the judgment of all who are in any way versed in the subject) the vast majority of scientists adhere.

Argument number three: Marxism declares that "personality" is a negligible quantity (*quantité négligeable*), that man is an "incidental factor," subject to certain "immanent laws of economics," that an analysis *des Gefundenen*, i.e., of what is found, of what is given, etc., is lacking. This argument is a *complete* repetition of the stock of ideas of the empirio-critical "principal co-ordination," i.e., of the *idealist* subterfuge in Avenarius' theory Blei is absolutely right when he says that it is impossible to find the slightest hint of such idealist nonsense in Marx and Engels, and that from the standpoint of this nonsense Marxism must be rejected *completely* from the very beginning, from its very fundamental philosophical premises.

Argument number four: Marx's theory is "unbiological," it is entirely innocent of "vital-differences" and of similar spurious biological terms which constitute the "science" of the reactionary professor, Avenarius. Blei's argument is correct from the standpoint of Machism, for the gulf between Marx's theory and Avenarius' "biological" spillikins is indeed obvious at once. We shall presently see how the Russian Machian would-be Marxists in effect followed in Blei's footsteps.

Argument number five: the partisanship, the partiality of Marx's theory and his preconceived solution. The empirio-criticists *as a whole*, and not Blei alone, claim to be non-partisan both in philoso-

phy and in social science. They are neither for Socialism nor for liberalism. They make no differentiation between the fundamental and irreconcilable trends of materialism and idealism in philosophy, but endeavour to *rise above* them. We have traced this tendency of Machism through a long series of problems of epistemology, and we ought not to be surprised when we encounter it in sociology.

"Argument" number six: ridiculing "objective" truth. Blei at once sensed, and rightly sensed, that historical materialism and Marx's entire economic doctrine are permeated through and through by a recognition of objective truth. And Blei accurately expressed the tendency of Mach's and Avenarius' doctrines, when, precisely because of the idea of objective truth, he, "from the very threshold," so to speak, rejected Marxism by at once declaring that there was absolutely nothing behind the Marxist teaching save the "subjective" views of Marx.

And if our Machians renounce Blei (as they surely will), we shall tell them: You must not blame the mirror for showing a crooked face. Blei is a mirror which *accurately* reflects the fundamental tendencies of empirio-criticism, and a renouncement by our Machians would only bear witness to their good intentions—and to their absurd eclectic endeavours to combine Marx and Avenarius.

Let us pass from Blei to Petzoldt. If the former is a mere disciple, the latter is declared by outstanding empirio-criticists, such as Lessevich, to be a master. While Blei brings up the question of Marxism explicitly, Petzoldt—who would not demean himself by dealing with a mere Marx or a mere Engels—sets forth in positive form the views of empirio-criticism on sociology, which enables us to compare them with Marxism.

The second volume of Petzoldt's *Einführung in die Philosophie der reinen Erfahrung* is entitled "*Auf dem Wege zum Dauernden*" ("Towards Stability"). The author makes the tendency towards stability the basis of his investigation.

"The main features of the ultimate (*endgültige*) state of stability of humanity can be inferred in its formal aspect. We thus arrive at the foundations of ethics, æsthetics and the formal theory of knowledge" (p. iii). "Human

development bears its goal within itself, it also tends towards a perfect (*vollkommene*) state of stability" (p. 60).

The signs of this are abundant and varied. For instance, are there many violent radicals who do not in their old age become "more sensible," more restrained? True, this "premature stability" (p. 62) is characteristic of the philistine. But do not philistines constitute the "compact majority"? (p. 62).

Our philosopher's conclusion, which he gives in italics, is this:

"The quintessential feature of all the aims of our reasoning and creative activity is stability" (p. 72).

The explanation is:

"Many cannot bear to see a key lying obliquely on the table, still less a picture hanging crooked on the wall. . . . And such people are not necessarily pedants. . . . It is only that they have *a feeling that something is not in order*" (p. 72, Petzoldt's italics).

In a word, the "tendency to stability is a striving for an extreme, by its nature ultimate, state" (p. 73). All this is taken from the fifth chapter of Volume II, entitled "*Die psychische Tendenz zur Stabilität*" ("The Psychical Tendency to Stability"). The roofs of this tendency are all very weighty. For instance:

"A striving for an extreme, highest, in the original spatial sense, is pursued by the majority of mountain climbers. It is not always the desire for a spacious view or joy in the physical exercise of climbing in fresh air and wide nature that urges them towards the peaks, but also the instinct which is deeply ingrained in every organic being to pursue an adopted path of activity until a natural aim has been achieved" (p. 73).

Another example: the amount of money people will pay to secure a complete collection of postage stamps!

"It makes one's head swim to examine the price of a dealer in postage stamps. . . . And yet nothing is more natural and comprehensible than this urge for stability" (p. 74).

The philosophically untutored can have no conception of the breadth of the principles of stability and of economy of thought. Petzoldt develops his "theory" in detail for the profane. "Sympathy is an expression of the immediate need for a state of stability," runs § 28.

"Sympathy is not a *repetition*, a *duplication* of the observed suffering, but suffering on account of this suffering. . . . The greatest emphasis must be

placed on the immediacy of sympathy. If we admit this we thereby admit that the welfare of others can concern a man just as immediately and directly as his own welfare, and we thus at the same time reject every utilitarian and eudemoniastic foundation of ethics. Thanks to its longing for stability and peace, human nature is not fundamentally evil, but anxious to help. . . .

"The immediacy of sympathy is frequently manifested in the immediacy of help. The rescuer will often fling himself without thought to save a drowning man. He cannot bear the sight of a person struggling with death; he forgets his other duties and risks his own life and the life of his near ones in order to save the useless life of some degraded drunkard; in other words, under certain circumstances sympathy can drive one to actions that are morally unjustifiable" (pp. 75-76).

And scores and hundreds of pages of empirio-critical philosophy are filled with such unutterable platitudes!

Morality is deduced from the concept "moral state of stability." (The second section of Volume II: "*Die Dauerbestände der Seele*" ["Stable States of the Soul"], Chapter I, "*Vom ethischen Dauerbestände*" ["On Ethical Stable States"].)

"The state of stability, according to the very concept of it, contains no conditions of change in any of its components. From this it at once follows that it can contain no possibility of war. . ." (p. 202). "Economic and social equality is implied in the conception of the final (*endgültig*), stable state" (p. 213).

This "state of stability" is derived not from religion but from "science." The "majority" cannot bring it about, as the Socialists suppose, nor can the power of the Socialists "help humanity" (p. 207). Oh, no!—it is "free development" that will lead to the ideal. Are not, indeed, the profits of capital decreasing and are not wages constantly increasing? (p. 223). All the assertions about "wage slavery" are untrue (p. 229). A slave's leg could be broken with impunity—but now? No, "moral progress" is beyond doubt; look at the university settlements in England, at the Salvation Army (p. 230), at the German "ethical societies." In the name of "aesthetic stability" (Chapter II, Section 2) "romanticism" is rejected. But romanticism embraces all forms of inordinate extension of the ego, idealism, metaphysics, occultism, solipsism, egoism, the "forcible coercion of the minority by the majority" and the "social-democratic ideal of the organisation of all labour by the state" (pp. 240-41).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is in the same spirit that Mach expresses himself in favour of the bureaucratic Socialism of Popper and Menger, which guarantees the "freedom

The sociological excursions of Blei, Petzoldt and Mach are but an expression of the infinite stupidity of the philistine, smugly re-tailing the most hackneyed rubbish under cover of a new "empirio-critical" systematisation and terminology. A pretentious cloak of verbal artifices, clumsy devices in syllogistic, subtle scholasticism, in a word, as in epistemology, so in sociology—the same reactionary content under the same flamboyant signboard.

Let us now turn to the Russian Machians.

## 2. HOW BOGDANOV CORRECTS AND "DEVELOPS" MARX

In his article "The Development of Life in Nature and Society" (*From the Psychology of Society*, 1902, p. 35 *et. seq.*), Bogdanov quotes the well-known passage from the *Critique of Political Economy*, where the "great sociologist," i.e., Marx, expounds the principles of historical materialism. Having quoted Marx's words, Bogdanov declares that the "old formulation of historical monism, without ceasing to be basically true, no longer fully satisfies us" (p. 37). The author wishes, therefore, to correct the theory, or to develop it, *starting, however, from the foundations of the theory*. The author's chief conclusion is as follows:

"We have shown that social forms belong to the comprehensive *genus*—biological adaptations. But we have not thereby defined the province of social forms; for a definition, not only the *genus*, but also the *species* must be established. . . . In their struggle for existence men can unite only with the help of *consciousness*: without consciousness there can be no intercourse. Hence, *social life in all its manifestations is a consciously psychical life*. . . . Society is inseparable from consciousness. *Social being and social consciousness are, in the exact meaning of these terms, identical*" (p. 51, Bogdanov's italics).

That this conclusion is absolutely alien to Marxism has been pointed out by Orthodox (*Philosophical Essays*, St. Petersburg, 1906, p. 183). But Bogdanov responded simply by abuse, picking upon an *error* in quotation: instead of "in the exact meaning of these terms," Orthodox had quoted "in the full meaning of these

of the individual," whereas, he opines, the doctrine of the Social-Democrats, which "compares unfavourably" with this Socialism, threatens a "slavery even more universal and more oppressive than that of a monarchical or oligarchical state." See *Erkenntnis und Irrtum*, 2. Auflage. S. 80-81.

terms." This error was indeed committed, and the author had every right to correct it; but to raise a cry of "mutilation," "substitution," and so forth (*Empirio-Monism*, Book III, p. xiv), is simply to *obscure* the essence of the point at issue by wretched words. Whatever "exact" meaning Bogdanov may have invented for the terms "social being" and "social consciousness," there can be no doubt that the statement we have quoted is *not correct*. "Social being" and "social consciousness" are not identical, just as being in general and consciousness in general are not identical. From the fact that in their intercourse men act as conscious beings, it does not follow that social consciousness is identical with social being. In all social formations of any complexity—and in the capitalist social formation in particular—people in their intercourse are *not conscious* of what kind of social relations are being formed, in accordance with what laws they develop, etc. For instance, a peasant when he sells his grain enters into "intercourse" with the world producers of grain in the world market, but he is not conscious of it: nor is he conscious of the kind of social relations that are formed on the basis of exchange. Social consciousness *reflects* social being that is Marx's teaching. A reflection may be an approximately true copy of the reflected, but to speak of identity is absurd. Consciousness in general *reflects* being—that is a general principle of *all* materialism. It is impossible not to see its direct and *inseparable* connection with the principle of historical materialism: social consciousness *reflects* social being.

Bogdanov's attempt imperceptibly to correct and develop Marx in the "spirit of his principles" is an obvious distortion of these *materialist* principles in the spirit of *idealism*. It would be ludicrous to deny it. Let us recall Bazarov's exposition of empirio-criticism (not empirio-monism, oh no!—there is such a wide, wide difference between these "systems"!): "sense-perception is the reality existing outside us." This is plain idealism, a plain theory of the identity of consciousness and being. Recall, further, the formulation of W. Schuppe, the immanentist (who swore and vowed as fervently as Bazarov and Co. that he was not an idealist, and who with no less vigour than Bogdanov insisted on the very "exact" meaning of his terms): "being is consciousness." Now compare this with the *refuta-*



tion of Marx's historical materialism by the immanentist Schubert-Soldern:

"Every material process of production is always an act of consciousness on the part of its observer. . . . In its epistemological aspect, it is not the external process of production that is the *primary (prius)*, but the subject or subjects; in other words, even the purely material process of production does not lead us out of the general connection of consciousness (*Bewußtseinszusammenhang*)." (See *Das menschliche Glück und die soziale Frage*, S. 293, 295-96.)

Bogdanov may curse the materialists as much as he pleases for "mutilating his thoughts," but no curses will alter the simple and plain fact. The correction of Marx's theory and the development of Marx supposedly in the spirit of Marx by the "empirio-monist" Bogdanov in no essential respect differ from the way the idealist and epistemological solipsist Schubert-Soldern endeavours to refute Marx. Bogdanov assures us that he is not an idealist. Schubert-Soldern assures us that he is a realist (Bazarov even believed him). In our time a philosopher has to declare himself a "realist" and an "enemy of idealism." It is about time you understood this, Messrs. Machians!

The immanentists, the empirio-critics and the empirio-monist all argue over particulars, over details, over the formulation of *idealism*, whereas we from the very outset reject all the principles of their philosophy common to this trinity. Let Bogdanov, accepting in the best sense and with the best of intentions *all the conclusions* of Marx, preach the "identity" of social being and social consciousness; we shall say: Bogdanov *minus* "empirio-monism" (or rather, *minus* Machism) is a Marxist. For this theory of the identity of social being and social consciousness is *sheer nonsense* and an *absolutely reactionary* theory. If certain people reconcile it with Marxism, with Marxist behaviour, we must admit that these people are better than their theory, but we cannot justify outrageous theoretical distortions of Marxism.

Bogdanov reconciles his theory with Marx's conclusions, and sacrifices elementary consistency for the sake of these conclusions. Every individual producer in the world economic system realises that he is introducing a certain change into the technique of production; every owner realises that he exchanges certain products

for others; but these producers and these owners do not realise that in doing so they are thereby changing *social being*. The sum-total of these changes in all their ramifications in capitalist society could not be grasped even by seventy Marxes. The paramount thing is that the *laws* of these changes have been discovered, that the *objective logic* of these changes and their historical development have at bottom and in the main been disclosed—objective, not in the sense that a society of conscious beings, men, could exist and develop independently of the existence of conscious beings (and it is only such trifles that Bogdanov stresses by his “theory”), but in the sense that social being is *independent of the social consciousness of men*. The fact that you live and conduct your business, beget children, produce products and exchange them, gives rise to an objectively necessary chain of events, a chain of development, which is independent of your *social* consciousness, and is never grasped by the latter completely. The highest task of humanity is to comprehend the objective logic of economic evolution (the evolution of social life) in its general and fundamental features, so that it may be possible to adapt *to it* one’s social consciousness and the consciousness of the advanced classes of all capitalist countries in as definite, clear and critical a fashion as possible.

Bogdanov admits all this. And what does this mean? It means *in effect* that his theory of the “identity of social being and social consciousness” is thrown overboard, that it becomes an empty scholastic appendage, as empty, dead and useless as the “theory of general substitution” or the doctrine of “elements,” “introjection” and the rest of the Machian rigmarole. But the “dead lay hold of the living”; the dead scholastic appendage, *in spite of and independently of the consciousness* of Bogdanov, converts his philosophy into a *serviceable tool* of the Schubert-Solderns and other reactionaries, who in a thousand different keys, from a hundred professorial chairs, disseminate *this* dead thing as a living thing, directed against the living thing and for the purpose of stifling it. Bogdanov personally is a sworn enemy of reaction in general and of bourgeois reaction in particular. Bogdanov’s “substitution” and theory of the “identity of social being and social consciousness” *serve* this reaction. It is sad, but true.

Materialism in general recognises objectively real being (matter) as independent of the mind, sensation, experience, etc., of humanity. Historical materialism recognises social being as independent of the social consciousness of humanity. In both cases consciousness is only the reflection of being, at best an approximately true (adequate, ideally exact) reflection of it. From this Marxian philosophy, which is cast from a single piece of steel, you cannot eliminate one basic premise, one essential part, without departing from objective truth, without falling a prey to a bourgeois-reactionary falsehood.

Here are further examples of how the dead philosophy of idealism lays hold of the living Marxist Bogdanov.

The article "What Is Idealism?" 1901 (*ibid.*, p. 11 *et seq.*) :

"We arrive at the following conclusion: both where people agree in their judgments of progress and where they disagree, the basic meaning of the idea of progress is the same, namely, *increasing completeness and harmony of conscious life*. This is the objective content of the concept progress. . . . If we now compare the psychological formulation of the ideas of progress thus arrived at with the previously explained biological formulation ["the biological progress is an *increase in the sum-total of life*," p. 14], we shall easily convince ourselves that the former fully coincides with the latter and can be deduced from it. . . . And since social life amounts to the psychical life of members of society, here too the content of the idea of progress is the same—the increase in the completeness and harmony of life; only we must add: the *social* life of men. And, of course, the idea of social progress never had and cannot have any other content" (p. 16).

"We have found . . . that idealism expresses the victory in the human soul of moods more social over moods less social, that a progressive ideal is a reflection of socially progressive tendencies in the idealist psychology" (p. 32).

It need hardly be said that all this play with biology and sociology contains *not a grain* of Marxism. Both in Spencer and Mikhailovsky one may find any number of definitions not a whit worse than this, defining nothing but the "good intentions" of the author and betraying a *complete lack of understanding* of "what is idealism" and what materialism.

The author begins Book III of *Empirio-Monism*, the article "Social Selection (Foundations of Method)," by refuting the "eclectic socio-biological attempts of Lange, Ferri, Woltmann and many others" (p. 1), and on page 15 we find the following conclusion of the "enquiry":

"We can formulate the fundamental connection between energetics and social selection as follows:

*"Every act of social selection represents an increase or decrease of the energy of the social complex concerned. In the former case we have 'positive selection,' in the latter 'negative selection.'"* (Author's italics.)

And such unutterable trash is served out as Marxism! Can one imagine anything more sterile, lifeless and scholastic than this string of biological and energeticist terms that contribute nothing, and can contribute nothing, in the sphere of the social sciences? There is not a shadow of concrete economic enquiry here, not a hint of the Marxian *method*, the method of dialectics and the world outlook of materialism, only a mere *invention* of definitions and attempts to fit them into the ready-made conclusions of Marxism.

"The rapid growth of the productive forces of capitalist society is undoubtedly an increase in the energy of the social whole. . . ."

The second half of the phrase is undoubtedly a simple repetition of the first half expressed in meaningless terms which seem to lend "profundity" to the question, but which in *reality in no way* differ from the eclectic biologico-sociological attempts of Lange and Co.!

". . . but the disharmonious character of this process leads to its culmination in a 'crisis,' in a vast waste of productive forces, in a sharp decrease of energy: 'positive selection' is replaced by 'negative selection'" (p. 18).

In what way does this differ from Lange? A biologico-energeticist label is tacked on to ready-made conclusions on the subject of crises, without any concrete material whatever being added and without the nature of crises being elucidated. All this is done with the very best intentions, for the author wishes to corroborate and give greater depth to Marx's conclusions; but in point of fact he only *dilutes* them with an intolerable and lifeless scholasticism. The only "Marxism" here is a *repetition* of an already known conclusion, and all the "new" proof of it, all this "*social energetics*" (p. 34) and "social selection" is but a mere *collection of words* and a sheer mockery of Marxism.

Bogdanov is not engaged in a Marxian enquiry at all; all he is doing is to reclothe results already obtained by the Marxian enquiry in a biological and energeticist terminology. The whole attempt is worthless from beginning to end, for the concepts "selection," "assimilation and dissimilation" of energy, the energetic

balance, and so forth, are, when applied to the sphere of the social sciences, but *empty phrases*. In fact, an *enquiry* into social phenomena and an elucidation of the *method* of the social sciences *cannot* be undertaken with the aid of these concepts. Nothing is easier than to tack the labels of "energetics" or "biologico-sociology" on to such phenomena as crises, revolutions, the class struggle and so forth; but neither is there anything more sterile, more scholastic and lifeless than such an occupation. The important thing is not that Bogdanov tries to fit *all* his results and conclusions into the Marxian theory—or "nearly" all (we have seen the "correction" he made on the subject of the relation of social being to social consciousness)—but that the *methods* of fitting—this "social energetics"—are thoroughly false and in no way differ from the methods of Lange.

"Herr Lange (*Ueber die Arbeiterfrage usw.*, 2. Auflage)," Marx wrote to Kugelmann on June 27, 1870, "sings my praises loudly, but with the object of making himself important. Herr Lange, you see, has made a great discovery. The whole of history can be brought under a single great natural law. This natural law is the *phrase* (in this application Darwin's expression becomes nothing but a phrase) 'the struggle for life,' and the content of this phrase is the Malthusian law of population, or, rather, over-population. So, instead of analysing the struggle for life as represented historically in varying and definite forms of society, all that has to be done is to translate every concrete struggle into the phrase 'struggle for life,' and this phrase itself into the Malthusian population fantasy. One must admit that this is a very impressive method—for swaggering, sham-scientific, bombastic ignorance and intellectual laziness."<sup>1</sup>

The basis of Marx's criticism of Lange is not that Lange foists Malthusianism in particular upon sociology, but that the transfer of biological concepts *in general* to the sphere of the social sciences is a *phrase*. Whether the transfer is undertaken with "good" intentions, or with the purpose of bolstering up false sociological conclusions, the phrase none the less remains a phrase. And Bogdanov's "social energetics," his coupling of the doctrine of social selection with Marxism, is just such a phrase.

Just as in epistemology Mach and Avenarius did not develop idealism, but only overlaid the *old* idealist errors with a bombastic terminological rigmarole ("elements," "principal co-ordination," "introjection," etc.), so in sociology, even when there is sincere

<sup>1</sup> See English translation of the *Letters to Dr. Kugelmann*, 1934, p. 111. —*Trans.*

sympathy for Marxist conclusions, empirio-criticism results in a distortion of historical materialism by means of empty and bombastic energeticist and biological verbiage.

A historical peculiarity of modern Russian Machism (or rather of the Machian epidemic among a section of the Social-Democrats) is the following. Feuerbach was a "materialist below and an idealist above"; this to a certain extent applies also to Büchner, Vogt, Moleschott and Dühring, with the essential difference that all these philosophers were pygmies and wretched bunglers compared with Feuerbach.

Marx and Engels, as they grew out of Feuerbach and matured in the fight against the bunglers, naturally paid most attention to crowning the structure of philosophical materialism, that is, not to the materialist epistemology but to the materialist conception of history. That is why Marx and Engels laid the emphasis in their works rather on *dialectical* materialism than on dialectical *materialism*, why they insisted rather on *historical* materialism than on historical *materialism*. Our would-be Machians approached Marxism in an entirely different historical period, at a time when bourgeois philosophy was particularly specialising in epistemology, and having assimilated in a one-sided and mutilated form certain of the component parts of dialectics (relativism, for instance) directed their attention chiefly to a defence or restoration of idealism below and not of idealism above. At any rate, positivism in general, and Machism in particular, have been much more concerned with subtly falsifying epistemology, assuming the guise of materialism and concealing their idealism under a pseudo-materialist terminology, and have paid comparatively little attention to the philosophy of history. Our Machians did not understand Marxism because they happened to approach it *from the other side*, so to speak, and they have assimilated—and at times not so much assimilated as learnt by rote—Marx's economic and historical theory, without clearly apprehending its foundation, *viz.*, philosophical materialism. And the result is that Bogdanov and Co. deserve to be called Russian Büchners and Dührings turned inside out. They want to be materialists above, but are unable to rid

themselves of muddled idealism below! In the case of Bogdanov, "above" there is historical materialism, vulgarised, it is true, and much corrupted by idealism, "below" there is idealism, disguised in Marxist terminology and decked out in Marxist words. "Socially organised experience," "collective labour process," and so forth are Marxist words, but they are *only words*, concealing an idealist philosophy that declares things to be complexes of "elements," of sensations, the external world to be "experience," or an "empirio-symbol" of mankind, physical nature to be a "product" of the "psychical," and so on and so forth.

An ever subtler falsification of Marxism, an ever subtler presentation of anti-materialist doctrines under the guise of Marxism—this is the characteristic feature of modern revisionism in political economy, in questions of tactics and in philosophy generally, both in epistemology and in sociology.

### 3. SUVOROV'S "FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY"

The *Studies "in" the Philosophy of Marxism*, the concluding article in which is the one by Comrade S. Suvorov mentioned above, by very reason of the collective nature of the book constitutes an unusually potent bouquet. When you have at one time and side by side the utterances of Bazarov, who says that according to Engels "sense-perception is the reality existing outside us," of Berman, who declares the dialectics of Marx and Engels to be mysticism, of Lunacharsky, who goes to the length of religion, of Yushkevich, who introduces "the Logos into the irrational stream of experience," of Bogdanov, who calls idealism the philosophy of Marxism, of Helfond, who purges J. Dietzgen of materialism, and lastly, of S. Suvorov with his article "Foundations of Social Philosophy"—you at once get the "aroma" of the new alignment. Quantity has passed into quality. The "seekers," who had heretofore been seeking separately in individual articles and books, have come out with a veritable pronunciamiento. Individual disagreements among them are obliterated by the very fact of their collective appearance against (and not "in") the philosophy of Marxism, and the reactionary features of Machism as a current become manifest.

Under these circumstances, Suvorov's article is all the more interesting for the fact that the author is neither an empirio-monist nor an empirio-criticist, but simply a "realist." What relates him, therefore, to the rest of the company is not what distinguishes Bazarov, Yushkevich and Bogdanov as philosophers, but what they all have in common *against* dialectical materialism. A comparison of the sociological arguments of this "realist" with the arguments of the empirio-monist will help us to depict their *common* tendency.

Suvorov writes:

"In the gradation of the laws that regulate the world process, the particular and complex become reduced to the general and simple, and all of them are subordinate to the universal law of development—the *law of the economy of forces*. The essence of this law is that a *system of forces is the more capable of conservation and development the less its expenditure, the greater its accumulation and the more effectively expenditure aids accumulation*. The forms of mobile equilibrium, which long ago evoked the idea of objective expediency (the solar system, the cycle of terrestrial phenomena, the process of life), arise and develop by virtue of the conservation and accumulation of the energy inherent in them—by virtue of their intrinsic economy. The law of economy of forces is the unifying and regulating principle of all development—inorganic, biological and social" (p. 293, author's italics).

With what remarkable ease do our "positivists" and "realists" turn out "universal laws"! What a pity these laws are no whit better than those turned out so easily and swiftly by Eugen Dühring. Suvorov's "universal law" is just as empty and bombastic a phrase as Dühring's universal laws. Try to apply this law to the first of the three fields mentioned by the author—inorganic development. You will see that no "economy of forces" *apart from* the law of the conservation and transformation of energy can be applied here, let alone applied "universally." And the author had already disposed of the law of the "conservation of energy," had already mentioned it (p. 292) as a separate law.<sup>1</sup> What then remained

<sup>1</sup> It is characteristic that Suvorov calls the discovery of the law of the conservation and transformation of energy "the establishment of the basic principles of *energetics*" (p. 292). Has our would-be Marxist "realist" ever heard of the fact that the vulgar materialists, Büchner and Co., and the dialectical materialist, Engels, regarded this law as the establishment of the basic principles of *materialism*? Has our "realist" ever reflected on the meaning of this difference? He has not; he has merely followed the fashion, repeated Ostwald, and that is all. That is just the trouble: "realists" like this succumb to fashion, while Engels, for instance, *assimilated the, to him, new term*, energy, and began to employ it in 1885 (Preface to the 2nd ed. of



in the field of inorganic development apart from this law? Where are the additions or complications, or new discoveries, or new facts which entitled the author to modify ("perfect") the law of the conservation and transformation of energy into the law of the "*economy of forces*"? There are no such facts or discoveries; Suvorov does not even hint at them. He simply—to make it look impressive, as Turgenev's Bazarov used to say—flourished his pen and forth came a new "universal law" of "real-monistic philosophy" (p. 292). That's the stuff we are made of! How are we worse than Dühring?

Take the second field of development—the biological. In this field, where the development of organisms takes place by the struggle for existence and selection, is it the law of the economy of forces or the "law" of the wastage of forces that is universal? But never mind! "Real-monistic philosophy" can interpret the "*meaning*" of a universal law in one field in one way and in another field in another way, for instance, as the development of *higher* organisms from lower. What does it matter if the universal law is thus transformed into an empty phrase—the principle of "monism" is preserved. And in the third field (the social), the "universal law" can be interpreted in a third sense—as the development of productive forces. That is why it is a "universal law"—so that it can be made to cover anything you please.

"Although social science is still young, it already possesses both a solid foundation and definite generalisations; in the nineteenth century it reached a theoretical level—and this constitutes Marx's chief merit. He elevated social science to the level of a social theory [Engels said that Marx transformed Socialism from a utopia into a science, but this is not enough for Suvorov. It will sound more impressive if we distinguish *theory from science* (was there a social science before Marx?)—and no harm is done if the distinction is absurd!] . . . by establishing the fundamental law of social dynamics according to which the evolution of productive forces is the determining principle of all economic and social development. But the development of productive forces corresponds to the growth of the productivity of labour, to the relative reduction in expenditure and the increase in the accumulation of energy [see how fertile the "real-monistic philosophy" is: a new, energeticist, foundation

*Anti-Dühring* and in 1888 (*Ludwig Feuerbach*), but to employ it equally with the concepts "force" and "motion" and along with them. Engels was able to enrich his *materialism* by adopting a new terminology. The "realists" and other muddleheads seized upon the new term without noticing the difference between materialism and energetics!

for Marxism has been created!) . . . this is the economic principle. Thus, Marx made the principle of the economy of forces the foundation of the social theory. . . ." (p. 294).

This "thus" is truly superb! *Because* Marx has a political economy, let us *therefore* chew the word "economy," and call the cud "real-monistic philosophy"!

No, Marx did not make any principle of the economy of forces the basis of his theory. These are absurdities invented by people who covet the laurels of Eugen Dühring. Marx gave an absolutely precise definition of the concept "growth of productive forces," and he studied the concrete process of this growth. But Suvorov invented a new word to designate the concept analysed by Marx; and his invention was a very unhappy one and only confused matters. For Suvorov did not explain what is meant by the "economy of forces," how it can be measured, how this concept can be applied, what precise and definite facts it embraces;—and that cannot be explained, because it is a muddle. Listen to this:

" . . . This law of social economy is not only the principle of the internal unity of social science [can you make anything of this, reader?], but also the connecting link between social theory and the general theory of being" (p. 294).

Well, well, here we have "the general theory of being" once more discovered by S. Suvorov, after it had already been discovered many times and in the most varied forms by numerous representatives of scholastic philosophy. We congratulate the Russian Machians on this new "general theory of being"! Let us hope that their next collective work will be entirely devoted to the demonstration and development of this great discovery!

The way our representative of realistic, or real-monistic, philosophy expounds Marx's theory will be seen from the following example:

"In general, the productive forces of men form a genetic gradation [ugh!] and consist of their labour energy, harnessed elemental forces, culturally modified nature and the instruments of labour which make up the technique of production. . . . In relation to the process of labour these forces perform a purely economic function; they economise labour energy and increase the productivity of its expenditure" (p. 298).

Productive forces perform an economic function in relation to the process of labour! This is just as though one were to say that vital forces perform a vital function in relation to the process of

life. This is not expounding Marx; this is clogging up Marxism with an incredible clutter of words.

It is impossible to enumerate all the clutter contained in Suvorov's article.

"The socialisation of a class is expressed in the growth of its collective power over both people and their property" (p. 313).

"... The class struggle aims at establishing forms of equilibrium between social forces" (p. 322).

"... Social dissension, enmity and struggle are essentially negative, anti-social phenomena. Social progress, in its basic content, is the growth of social relations, of the social connections between people" (p. 328).

One could fill volumes with collections of such banalities—and the representatives of bourgeois sociology are filling volumes with them. But to pass them off as the philosophy of Marxism—that is going too far! If Suvorov's article were an experiment in popularising Marxism, one would not judge it very severely. Everyone would admit that the author's intentions were of the best but that the experiment was unsuccessful. And that would be the end of it. But when a group of Machians present us with such stuff and call it the *Foundations of Social Philosophy*, and when we see the same methods of "developing" Marxism employed in Bogdanov's philosophical books, we arrive at the inevitable conclusion that there is an intimate connection between reactionary epistemology and reactionary efforts in sociology.

#### 4. PARTIES IN PHILOSOPHY AND PHILOSOPHICAL BLOCKHEADS

It remains for us to examine the relation between Machism and religion. But this broadens into the question of whether there are parties generally in philosophy, and what is meant by non-partisanship in philosophy.

Throughout the preceding exposition, in connection with every problem of epistemology touched upon and in connection with every philosophical question raised by the new physics, we traced the struggle between *materialism* and *idealism*. Behind the mass of new terminological devices, behind the litter of erudite scholasticism, we invariably discerned *two* principal alignments, two fundamental trends in the solution of philosophical problems. Whether nature, matter, the physical, the external world be taken as primary,

and mind, spirit, sensation (experience—as the widespread terminology of our time has it), the psychical, etc., be regarded as secondary—that is the root question which *in fact* continues to divide the philosophers into *two great camps*. The source of thousands upon thousands of mistakes and of the confusion reigning in this sphere is the fact that beneath the envelope of terms, definitions, scholastic devices and verbal artifices, these two fundamental trends are *overlooked*. (Bogdanov, for instance, refuses to acknowledge his idealism, because, you see, instead of the “metaphysical” concepts “nature” and “mind,” he has taken the “experiential” physical and psychical. A word has been changed!)

The genius of Marx and Engels consisted in the very fact that in the course of a long period, *nearly half a century*, they developed materialism, that they further advanced one fundamental trend in philosophy, that they did not confine themselves to reiterating epistemological problems that had already been solved, but consistently applied—and showed *how* to apply—*this same* materialism in the sphere of the social sciences, mercilessly brushing aside as litter and rubbish the pretentious rigmarole, the innumerable attempts to “discover” a “new” line in philosophy, to invent a “new” trend and so forth. The verbal nature of such attempts, the scholastic play with new philosophical “isms,” the clogging of the issue by pretentious devices, the inability to comprehend and clearly present the struggle between the two fundamental epistemological trends—this is what Marx and Engels persistently pursued and combated throughout their entire activity.

We said, “nearly half a century.” And, indeed, as far back as 1843, when Marx had only just become Marx, *i.e.*, the founder of scientific Socialism, the founder of *modern materialism*, which is immeasurably richer in content and incomparably more consistent than all preceding forms of materialism, even at that time Marx pointed out with amazing clarity the basic trends in philosophy. Karl Grün quotes a letter from Marx to Feuerbach dated October 30, 1843, in which Marx invites Feuerbach to write an article for the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* against Schelling. This Schelling, writes Marx, is a shallow braggart with his claims to having embraced and transcended all previous philosophical trends.

"To the French romanticists and mystics he [Schelling] says: I am the union of philosophy and theology; to the French materialists: I am the union of the flesh and the idea; to the French sceptics: I am the destroyer of dogmatism."<sup>1</sup>

That the "sceptics," be they called Humeans or Kantians (or, in the twentieth century, Machians), cry out against the "dogmatism" of both materialism and idealism, Marx at that time already realised; and, without letting himself be diverted by any one of a thousand wretched little philosophical systems, he was able with the help of Feuerbach to take the direct materialist road against idealism. Thirty years later, in the afterword to the second edition of the first volume of *Capital*, Marx just as clearly and definitely contrasted *his materialism* to *Hegel's idealism*, the most consistent and developed idealism of all; he contemptuously brushed Comtian "positivism" aside and dubbed as wretched epigoni the modern philosophers who imagine that they have destroyed Hegel when in reality they have reverted to a repetition of the pre-Hegelian errors of Kant and Hume. In the letter to Kugelmann of June 27, 1870, Marx refers contemptuously to Büchner, Lange, Dühring, Fechner, etc., because they understood nothing of Hegel's dialectics and treated him with scorn.<sup>2</sup> And finally, take the various philosophical utterances by Marx in *Capital* and other works, and you will find an *invariable* basic motif, viz., insistence upon *materialism* and contemptuous derision of all obscurantism, of all confusion and all deviations towards *idealism*. All Marx's philosophical utterances revolve within these fundamental opposites, and, in the eyes of professorial philosophy, their defect lies in this "narrowness" and "one-sidedness." As a matter of fact, this refusal to recognise the hybrid projects for reconciling materialism and idealism constitutes the great merit of Marx, who moved *forward* along a sharply-defined philosophical road.

Entirely in the spirit of Marx, and in close collaboration with

<sup>1</sup> Karl Grün, *Ludwig Feuerbach in seinem Briefwechsel und Nachlass, sowie in seiner philosophischen Charakterentwicklung*, Bd. I, Leipzig 1874, S. 361.

<sup>2</sup> Of the positivist, Beesly, Marx, in the letter of December 13, 1870, speaks as follows: "Professor Beesly is a Comtist and is as such obliged to support all sorts of crochets." Compare this with the opinion given of the positivists of the Huxley type by Engels in 1892.

him, Engels in all his philosophical works briefly and clearly contrasts the materialist and idealist lines in regard to *all* questions, without, in 1878, 1888, or 1892, taking seriously the endless attempts to "transcend" the "one-sidedness" of materialism and idealism, to proclaim a *new* trend—"positivism," "realism," or some other professorial charlatanism. Engels based his *whole* fight against Dühring on the demand for consistent adherence to materialism, accusing the materialist Dühring of verbally confusing the issue, of phrasemongering, of methods of reasoning which involved a compromise with idealism and adoption of the position of idealism. Either materialism consistent to the end, or the falsehood and confusion of philosophical idealism—such is the formulation of the question given in *every paragraph* of *Anti-Dühring*; and only people whose minds had already been corrupted by reactionary professorial philosophy could fail to notice it. And right down to 1894, when the last preface was written to *Anti-Dühring*, revised and enlarged by the author for the last time, Engels continued to follow the latest developments both in philosophy and science, and continued with all his former resoluteness to hold to his lucid and firm position, brushing away the litter of new systems, big and little.

That Engels followed the new developments in philosophy is evident from *Ludwig Feuerbach*. In the 1888 preface, mention is even made of such a phenomenon as the rebirth of classical German philosophy in England and Scandinavia, whereas Engels (both in the preface and in the text of the book) has nothing but contempt for the prevailing Neo-Kantianism and Humism. It is quite obvious that Engels, observing the repetition by *fashionable* German and English philosophy of the old pre-Hegelian errors of Kantianism and Humism, was prepared to expect some good even *from the turn to Hegel* (in England and Scandinavia), hoping that the great idealist and dialectician would help to disclose petty idealist and metaphysical errors.

Without undertaking an examination of the vast number of shades of Neo-Kantianism in Germany and of Humism in England, Engels *from the very outset* refutes their fundamental deviation from materialism. Engels declares that the *entire tendency* of these two schools is "scientifically a step backward." And what

is his opinion of the undoubtedly "positivist," according to the current terminology, the undoubtedly "realist" tendencies of these Neo-Kantians and Humeans, among whose number, for instance, he could not help knowing Huxley? That "positivism" and that "realism" which attracted, and which continue to attract, an infinite number of muddleheads, Engels declared to be *at best a philistine method of smuggling in materialism* while criticising and abjuring it publicly! One has to reflect only very little on *such* an appraisal of Thomas Huxley—a very great scientist and an incomparably more realistic realist and positive positivist than Mach, Avenarius and Co.—in order to understand how contemptuously Engels would have greeted the present infatuation of a group of Marxists with "recent positivism," the "latest realism," etc.

Marx and Engels were partisans in philosophy from start to finish; they were able to detect the deviations from materialism and concessions to idealism and fideism in each and every "new" tendency. They therefore appraised Huxley *exclusively* from the standpoint of his materialist consistency. They therefore rebuked Feuerbach for not pursuing materialism to the end, for renouncing materialism because of the errors of individual materialists, for combating religion in order to renovate it or invent a new religion, for being unable, in sociology, to rid himself of idealist phraseology and become a materialist.

And whatever particular mistakes he committed in his exposition of dialectical materialism, J. Dietzgen fully appreciated and took over this great and precious tradition of his teachers. Dietzgen sinned much by his clumsy deviations from materialism, but he never attempted to dissociate himself from it in principle, he never attempted to hoist a "new" standard, and always at the decisive moment he firmly and categorically declared: I am a materialist; our philosophy is a materialist philosophy.

"Of all parties," our Joseph Dietzgen justly said, "the middle party is the most repulsive. . . . Just as parties in politics are more and more becoming divided into two camps . . . so science too is being divided into two general classes (*Generalklassen*): metaphysicians on the one hand, and physicists, or materialists, on the other.<sup>1</sup> The intermediate elements and concilia-

<sup>1</sup> Here again we have a clumsy and inexact expression: instead of "met-

tory quacks, with their various appellations—spiritualists, sensationalists, realists, etc., etc.—fall into the current on their way. We aim at definition and clarity. The reactionaries who sound a retreat call themselves idealists,<sup>1</sup> and materialists should be the name for all who are striving to liberate the human mind from the metaphysical spell. . . . If we compare the two parties respectively to solid and liquid, between them there is a mush.”<sup>2</sup>

True! The “realists,” etc., including the “positivists,” the Machians, etc., are all a wretched mush; they are a contemptible *middle party* in philosophy, who confuse the materialist and idealist trends on every question. The attempt to escape these two basic trends in philosophy is nothing but “conciliatory quackery.”

J. Dietzgen had not the slightest doubt that the “scientific priestcraft” of idealist philosophy is simply the antechamber to open priestcraft. “Scientific priestcraft,” he wrote, “is seriously endeavouring to assist religious priestcraft” (*op. cit.*, p. 51). “In particular, the sphere of epistemology, the misunderstanding of the human mind, is such a louse-hole” (*Lausgrube*) in which both kind of priests “lay their eggs” (p. 51). “Graduated flunkies,” who with their talk of “ideal blessings” stultify the people by their sham (*geschraubte*) “idealism” (p. 53)—that is J. Dietzgen’s opinion of the professors of philosophy. “Just as the antipodes of the gold God is the devil, so the professorial priest (*Kathederpfaff*) has his opposite pole in the materialist.” “The materialist theory of knowledge is “a universal weapon against religious belief” (p. 55), and not only against the “notorious, formal and common religion of the priests, but also against the most refined, elevated professorial religion of muddled (*benebelte*) idealists” (p. 58.)

Dietzgen was ready to prefer “religious honesty” to the “half-heartedness” of freethinking professors (p. 60), for “there at least there is a system.” there we find complete people, people who do not separate theory from practice. For the Herr Professors

“philosophy is not a science, but a means of defence against Social-Democracy. . .” (p. 107). “All who call themselves philosophers, professors, and uni-

aphysicians,” he should have said “idealists.” Elsewhere Dietzgen himself contrasts the metaphysicians and the dialecticians.

<sup>1</sup> Note that Dietzgen has corrected himself and now explains more precisely which is the party of the enemies of materialism.

<sup>2</sup> See the article, “Social-Democratic Philosophy,” written in 1876, *Kleinere philosophische Schriften*, 1903, S. 135.



versity lecturers are, despite apparent freethinking, more or less immersed in superstition and mysticism . . . and in relation to Social-Democracy constitute a single . . . reactionary mass" (p. 108). "Now, in order to follow the true path, without being led astray by all the religious and philosophical gibberish (*Welsch*), it is necessary to study the falsest of all false paths (*der Holzweg der Holzwege*), philosophy" (p. 103).

Let us now examine Mach, Avenarius and their school from the standpoint of parties in philosophy. Oh, these gentlemen boast of their non-partisanship, and if they have an antipodes, it is the *materialist* . . . and *only* the materialist. A red thread that runs through *all* the writings of *all* the Machians is the stupid claim to have "risen above" materialism and idealism, to have transcended this "obsolete" antithesis; but *in fact* the whole fraternity are *continually* sliding into idealism and are conducting a steady and incessant struggle against materialism. The subtle epistemological crochets of a man like Avenarius are but professorial inventions, an attempt to form a small philosophical sect "of his own"; but, *as a matter of fact*, in the general circumstances of the struggle of ideas and trends in modern society, the *objective* part played by these epistemological artifices is in every case the same, namely, to clear the way for idealism and fideism, and to serve them faithfully. In fact, it cannot be an accident that the small school of empirio-criticists is acclaimed by the English spiritualists, like Ward, by the French neo-criticists, who praise Mach for his attack on materialism, and by the German immanentists! Dietzgen's expression, "graduated flunkies of fideism," hits the nail on the head in the case of Mach, Avenarius and their whole school.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Here is another example of how the widespread currents of reactionary bourgeois philosophy make use of Machism in practice. Perhaps the "latest fashion" in the latest American philosophy is "pragmatism" (from the Greek word "pragma"—action; that is, a philosophy of action). The philosophical journals perhaps speak more of pragmatism than of anything else. Pragmatism ridicules the metaphysics both of idealism and materialism, acclaims experience and only experience, recognises practice as the only criterion, refers to the positivist movement in general, *especially turns for support to Ostwald, Mach, Pearson, Poincaré and Duhem* for the belief that science is not an "absolute copy of reality" and . . . successfully deduces from all this a God for practical purposes, and only for practical purposes, without any metaphysics, and without transcending the bounds of experience (*cf.* William James, *Pragmatism, A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking*, New York, 1907, pp. 57 and 106 especially). From the standpoint of materialism

It is the misfortune of the Russian Machians, who undertook to "reconcile" Machism and Marxism, that they trusted the reactionary professors of philosophy and as a result slipped down an inclined plane. The methods of operation employed in the various attempts to develop and supplement Marx were not very ingenious. They read Ostwald, believe Ostwald, paraphrase Ostwald and call it Marxism. They read Mach, believe Mach, paraphrase Mach and call it Marxism. They read Poincaré, believe Poincaré, paraphrase Poincaré and call it Marxism! *Not a single one* of these professors, who are capable of making very valuable contributions in the special fields of chemistry, history, or physics, *can be trusted one iota* when it comes to philosophy. Why? For the same reason that *not a single* professor of political economy, who may be capable of very valuable contributions in the field of factual and specialised investigations, *can be trusted one iota* when it comes to the general theory of political economy. For in modern society the latter is as much a *partisan* science as is epistemology. Taken as a whole, the professors of economics are nothing but scientific salesmen of the capitalist class, while the professors of philosophy are scientific salesmen of the theologians.

The task of Marxists in both cases is to be able to master and adapt the achievements of these "salesmen" (for instance, you will not make the slightest progress in the investigation of new economic phenomena unless you have recourse to the works of these salesmen) and to be able to lop off their reactionary tendency, to pursue one's own line and to combat the *whole alignment* of forces and classes hostile to us. And this is just what our Machians were unable to do; they *slavishly* followed the lead of the reactionary professorial *philosophy*. "Perhaps we have gone astray, but we are seeking," wrote Lunacharsky in the name of the authors of the *Studies*. The trouble is that it is not *you* who are *seeking*, but you who are *being sought*! You do not go with your, *i.e.*, Marxist (for you want to be Marxists), standpoint to every

the difference between Machism and pragmatism is as insignificant and unimportant as the difference between empirio-criticism and empirio-monism. Compare, for example, Bogdanov's definition of truth with the pragmatist definition of truth, which is: "Truth for a pragmatist becomes a class-name for all sorts of definite working values in experience" (*ibid.*, p. 68).

change in the bourgeois philosophical fashion; the fashion comes to you, foists upon you its new surrogates got up in the idealist taste, one day à la Ostwald, the next day à la Mach, and the day after à la Poincaré. These silly "theoretical" devices ("energetics," "elements," "introjections," etc.) in which you so naïvely believe are confined to a narrow and tiny school, while the ideological and *social tendency* of these devices is immediately spotted by the Wards, the neo-criticists, the immanentists, the Lopatins and the pragmatists, and *serves their purposes*. The infatuation for empirio-criticism and "physical" idealism passes as rapidly as the infatuation for Neo-Kantianism and "physiological" idealism; but fideism takes its toll from every such infatuation and modifies its devices in a thousand ways for the benefit of philosophical idealism.

The attitude towards religion and the attitude towards natural science excellently illustrate the *actual* class use made of empirio-criticism by bourgeois reactionaries.

Take the first question. Do you think it is an accident that in a collective work directed *against* the philosophy of Marxism Lunacharsky went so far as to speak of the "apotheosis of the higher human potentialities," of "religious atheism," etc.?<sup>1</sup> If you do, it is only because the Russian Machians have not informed the public correctly regarding the *whole* Machian current in Europe and the attitude of this current to religion. Not only is this attitude in no way similar to the attitude of Marx, Engels, J. Dietzgen and even Feuerbach, but it is its *very opposite*, beginning with Petzoldt's statement to the effect that empirio-criticism "contradicts neither theism nor atheism" (*Einführung in die Philosophie der reinen Erfahrung*, Bd. I, S. 351), or Mach's declaration that "religious opinion is a private affair," and ending with the explicit fideism, the explicitly *arch-reactionary* views of Cornelius, who praises Mach and whom Mach praises, of Carus and of all the immanentists. The neutrality of a *philosopher* in this question

<sup>1</sup> *Studies*, pp. 157, 159. In the *Zagranichnaya Gazeta* the same author speaks of "scientific Socialism in its religious significance" (No. 3, p. 5) and in *Obrazovaniye*, 1908, No. 1, p. 164, he explicitly says: "For a long time a new religion has been maturing within me. . . ."

*is in itself* servility to fideism, and Mach and Avenarius, because of the very premises of their epistemology, do not and cannot rise above neutrality.

Once you deny objective reality, given us in sensation, you have already lost every one of your weapons against fideism, for you have slipped into agnosticism or subjectivism—and that is all fideism wants. If the perceptual world is objective reality, then the door is closed to every other “reality” or quasi-reality (remember that Bazarov believed the “realism” of the immanentists, who declare God to be a “real concept”). If the world is matter in motion, matter can and must be infinitely studied in the infinitely complex and detailed manifestations and ramifications of *this* motion, the motion of *this* matter; but beyond it, beyond the “physical,” external world, with which everyone is familiar, there can be nothing. And the hostility to materialism and the showers of abuse heaped on the materialists are all in the order of things in civilised and democratic Europe. All this is going on to this day. All this is being *concealed* from the public by the Russian Machians, who have *not once* attempted even simply to compare the attacks made on materialism by Mach, Avenarius, Petzoldt and Co. with the statements made *in favour of* materialism by Feuerbach, Marx, Engels and J. Dietzgen.

But this “concealment” of the attitude of Mach and Avenarius to fideism will not avail. The facts speak for themselves. No efforts can release these reactionary professors from the pillory in which they have been placed by the kisses of Ward, the neo-criticists, Schuppe, Schubert-Soldern, Leclair, the pragmatists, etc. And the influence of the persons mentioned, as philosophers and professors, the popularity of their ideas among the “cultured,” *i.e.*, the bourgeois, public and the specific literature they have created are ten times wider and richer than the particular little school of Mach and Avenarius. The little school serves those it should serve, and it is exploited as it deserves to be exploited.

The shameful things to which Lunacharsky has stooped are not exceptional; they are the product of empirio-criticism, both Russian and German. They cannot be defended on the grounds of the

"good intentions" of the author, or the "special meaning" of his words; if it were the direct and common, i.e., the directly fideistic meaning, we should not stop to discuss matters with the author, for most likely not a single Marxist could be found in whose eyes such statements would *not* have placed Anatole Lunacharsky *exactly* in the same category as Peter Struve. If this is not the case (and it is not the case *yet*), it is exclusively because we perceive the "special" meaning and are *fighting while there is still ground* for a fight on comradely lines. This is just the disgrace of Lunacharsky's statements—that he *could* connect them with his "good" intentions. This is just the evil of his "theory"—that it permits the use of *such* methods or of *such* conclusions in the pursuit of good intentions. This is just the trouble—that *at best* "good" intentions are the subjective affair of Tom, Dick or Harry, while the *social significance* of such statements is undeniable and indisputable, and no reservation or explanation can weaken their effect.

One must be blind not to see the ideological affinity between Lunacharsky's "apotheosis of the higher human potentialities" and Bogdanov's "general substitution" of the psychical for physical nature. This is one and the same thought; in the one case it is expressed from the æsthetic standpoint, and in the other from the epistemological standpoint. "Substitution," approaching the subject *tacitly* and from a different angle, *already deifies* the "higher human potentialities," by divorcing the "psychical" from man and by substituting an immensely extended, abstract, divinely-lifeless "psychical in general" *for all physical nature*. And what of Yushkevich's "Logos" introduced into the "irrational stream of experience"?

A single claw ensnared, and the bird is lost. And our Machians have all become ensnared in idealism, that is, in a diluted and subtle fideism; they became ensnared from the moment they took "sensation" not as the image of the external world but as a special "element." It is nobody's sensation, nobody's mind, nobody's spirit, nobody's will—this is what one inevitably comes to if one does not recognise the materialist theory that the human mind *reflects* an objectively real external world.

## 5. ERNST HAECKEL AND ERNST MACH

Let us now examine the attitude of Machism, as a *philosophical current*, towards the natural sciences. All Machism, from beginning to end, *combats* the "metaphysics" of the natural sciences, this being the name they give to *natural-scientific materialism*, i.e., to the instinctive, unwitting, unformed, philosophically-unconscious conviction shared by the overwhelming majority of scientists regarding the objective reality of the external world reflected by our consciousness. And our Machians maintain a skulking silence on this *fact* and obscure or confuse the *inseparable* connection between the instinctive materialism of the scientists and *philosophical materialism* as a trend, a trend known to Marx and Engels long ago and hundreds of times affirmed by them.

Take Avenarius. In his very first work, *Philosophie als Denken der Welt gemäß dem Prinzip des kleinsten Kraftmaßes*, published in 1876, he attacked the metaphysics of the natural sciences,<sup>1</sup> i.e., natural-scientific materialism, and, as he himself admitted in 1891 (without, however, "correcting" his views!), attacked it from the standpoint of epistemological idealism.

Take Mach. From 1872 (or even earlier) down to 1906 he waged continuous war on the metaphysics of natural science. However, he was conscientious enough to admit that his views were shared by "a number of philosophers" (the immanentists included), but by "very few scientists" (*Analyse der Empfindungen*, S. xi). In 1906 Mach also honestly admitted that the "majority of scientists adhere to materialism" (*Erkenntnis und Irrtum*, 2. Aufl., S. 4).

Take Petzoldt. In 1900 he proclaimed that the "natural sciences are thoroughly (*ganz und gar*) imbued with metaphysics." "Their 'experience' has still to be purified" (*Einführung in die Philosophie der reinen Erfahrung*, Bd. I, S. 343). We know that Avenarius and Petzoldt "purify" experience of all recognition of the objective reality given us in sensation. In 1904 Petzoldt declared:

"The mechanical world outlook of the modern scientist is essentially no better than that of the ancient Indians.... It makes no difference whether

<sup>1</sup> §§ 79, 114, etc.

the world rests on a mythical elephant or on just as mythical a swarm of molecules and atoms epistemologically thought of as real and therefore not used merely metaphorically (*bloss bildlich*)" (Bd. II, S. 176).

Take Willy, the only Machian decent enough to be ashamed of his kinship with the immanentists. Yet, in 1905 he too declared:

"... The natural sciences, after all, are also in many respects an authority of which we must rid ourselves" (*Gegen die Schulweisheit*, S. 158).

But this is all *sheer obscurantism*, out-and-out reaction. To regard atoms, molecules, electrons, etc., as an approximately true reflection in our mind of the *objectively real movement of matter* is equivalent to believing in an elephant upon which the world rests! No wonder that this *obscurantism*, decked in the cap and bells of fashionable positivism, was greeted by the immanentists *with open arms*. There is *not a single* immanentist who would not furiously attack the "metaphysics" of science, the "materialism" of the scientists, *precisely because of the recognition* by the scientists of the objective reality of matter (and its particles), time, space, laws of nature, etc., etc. Long before the new discoveries in physics which gave rise to "physical idealism" were made, Leclair, using Mach as a support, combated "The Predominant Materialist Trend (*Grundzug*) of Modern Science" (the title of § 6 of *Der Realismus usw.*, 1879). Schubert-Soldern fought "The Metaphysics of Natural Science" (the title of Chapter II of *Grundlagen einer Erkenntnistheorie*, 1884). Rehmke battled with natural-scientific "materialism," that "*metaphysics of the street*" (*Philosophie und Kantianismus*, 1882, S. 17), etc., etc.

And the immanentists quite legitimately drew *direct and outspoken* fideist conclusions from this *Machian* idea of the "metaphysical character" of natural-scientific materialism. If natural science in its theories depicts not objective reality, but *only* metaphors, symbols, forms of human experience, etc., it is beyond dispute that humanity is entitled to create for itself in another sphere a *no less "real concept,"* such as God, and so forth.

The philosophy of the scientist Mach is to science what the kiss of the Christian Judas was to Christ. Mach likewise betrays science into the hands of fideism by virtually deserting to the camp of philosophical idealism. Mach's renunciation of natural-

scientific materialism is a reactionary phenomenon in every respect. We saw this quite clearly when we spoke of the struggle of the "physical idealists" against the *majority* of scientists, who continue to maintain the standpoint of the old philosophy. We shall see it still more clearly if we compare the eminent scientist, Ernst Haeckel, with the eminent (among the reactionary philistines) philosopher, Ernst Mach.

The storm provoked by Ernst Haeckel's *The Riddle of the Universe* in every civilised country strikingly brought out, on the one hand, the *partisan character* of philosophy in modern society and, on the other, the true social significance of the struggle of materialism against idealism and agnosticism. The fact that the book was sold in *hundreds of thousands* of copies, that it was immediately translated into all languages and that it appeared in specially cheap editions, clearly demonstrates that the book has found its way to the masses, that there are *masses* of readers whom Ernst Haeckel at once won over to his side. This popular little book became a weapon in the class struggle. The professors of philosophy and theology in every country of the world set about denouncing and annihilating Haeckel in every possible way. The eminent English physicist Lodge hastened to defend God against Haeckel. The Russian physicist Mr. Chwolson went to Germany to publish a vile reactionary pamphlet attacking Haeckel and to assure the respectable philistines that not all scientists now hold the position of "naïve realism."<sup>1</sup> There is no counting the theologians who joined the campaign against Haeckel. There was no abuse not showered on him by the official professors of philosophy.<sup>2</sup> It was amusing to see how—perhaps for the first time in their lives—the eyes of these mummies, dried and shrunk in the atmosphere of lifeless scholasticism, began to glare and their cheeks to burn under the slaps which Haeckel administered them. The high-priests of pure science, and, it would appear, of

<sup>1</sup> O. D. Chwolson, *Hegel, Haeckel, Kossouth und das zwölfte Gebot* [*Hegel, Haeckel, Kossouth and the Twelfth Commandment*], 1906, Vgl. S. 80.

<sup>2</sup> The pamphlet of Heinrich Schmidt, *Der Kampf um die Welträtsel* [*The Fight Over "The Riddle of the Universe"*] (Bonn, 1900), gives a fairly good picture of the campaign launched against Haeckel by the professors of philosophy and theology. But this pamphlet is already very much out-of-date.



the most abstract theory, fairly groaned with rage. And throughout all the howling of the philosophical diarchs (the idealist Paulsen, the immanentist Rehmke, the Kantian Adickes, and the others, whose name, god wot, is legion) one underlying motif is clearly discernible: they are all directed against the "*metaphysics*" of science, against "dogmatism," against "the exaggeration of the value and significance of science," against "natural-scientific *materialism*." He is a materialist—at him! at the materialist! He is deceiving the public by not calling himself a materialist directly!—that is what particularly incenses the worthy professors.

And the noteworthy thing in all this tragi-comedy<sup>1</sup> is the fact that Haeckel himself *renounces materialism* and rejects the appellation. What is more, far from rejecting religion altogether, he has invented his own religion (something like Bulgakov's "atheistic faith" or Lunacharsky's "religious atheism"), and on grounds of *principle* advocates a union of religion and science. What then is it all about? What "fatal misunderstanding" started the row?

The point is that Haeckel's philosophical naïveté, his lack of definite partisan aims, his anxiety to respect the prevailing philistine prejudice against materialism, his personal conciliatory tendencies and proposals concerning religion, all this gave the greater salience to *the general spirit* of his book, the *ineradicability* of natural-scientific materialism and its *irreconcilability* with *all* official professorial philosophy and theology. Haeckel personally does not seek a rupture with the philistines, but what he expounds with such unshakably naïve conviction is *absolutely* incompatible with any of the shades of prevailing philosophical idealism. All these shades, from the crudest reactionary theories of a Hartmann, to Petzoldt, who fancies himself the latest, most progressive and advanced of the positivists, and the empirio-criticist Mach—all are agreed that natural-scientific materialism is "*metaphysics*," that the recognition of an objective reality underlying the theories and conclusions of science is sheer "naïve realism," etc. And for this

<sup>1</sup> The tragic element was introduced by the attempt made on Haeckel's life this spring (1908). After Haeckel had received a number of anonymous letters addressing him by such epithets as "dog," "atheist," "monkey," and so forth, some true German soul threw a stone of no mean size through the window of Haeckel's study in Jena.

doctrine, "sacred" to *all* official philosophy and theology, every page of Haeckel is a *slap in the face*. This scientist, who undoubtedly expressed the very firmly implanted, although unformed opinions, sentiments and tendencies of the overwhelming majority of the scientists of the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, instantly, easily and simply revealed what professorial philosophy tried to conceal from the people and from itself, namely, the fact that there is a foundation, growing ever wider and firmer, which shatters all the efforts and strivings of the thousand and one little schools of philosophical idealism, positivism, realism, empirio-criticism and other confusionism. This foundation is *natural-scientific materialism*. The conviction of the "naïve realists" (in other words, of all humanity) that our sensations are images of an objectively real external world is the conviction of the mass of scientists, one that is steadily growing and gaining in strength.

The cause of the founders of new philosophical schools and of the inventors of new epistemological "isms" is lost, irrevocably and hopelessly. They may flounder about in their "original" petty systems; they may strive to engage the attention of a few admirers in the interesting controversy as to who was the first to exclaim, "Eh!"—the empirio-critical Bobchinsky, or the empirio-monistic Dobchinsky;<sup>1</sup> they may even devote themselves to creating an extensive "special" literature, like the "immanentists." But the course of development of science, despite its vacillations and hesitations, despite the unwitting character of the materialism of the scientists, despite yesterday's infatuation with fashionable "physiological idealism" or to-day's infatuation with fashionable "physical idealism," is sweeping aside all the petty systems and artifices and once again bringing to the forefront the "metaphysics" of *natural-scientific materialism*.

Here is an illustration of this from Haeckel. In his *The Wonders of Life*, Haeckel compares the monistic and dualistic theories of knowledge. We give the most interesting points of the comparison:<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Characters in Gogol's *The Inspector General*.—*Trans.*

<sup>2</sup> I use the French translation, *Les Merveilles de la Vie*, Paris, Schleicher, Tables I et XVI.

## The Monistic Theory of Knowledge

3. Cognition is a physiological process, whose anatomical organ is the brain.
4. The only part of the human brain in which knowledge is engendered is a spatially limited sphere of the cortex, the phronema.
5. The phronema is a highly perfected dynamo, the individual parts of which, the phroneta, consist of millions of cells (phronetal cells). Just as in the case of every other organ of the body, so in the case of this mental organ, its function, the "mind," is the sum-total of the functions of its constituent cells.

## The Dualistic Theory of Knowledge

3. Cognition is not a physiological but a purely spiritual process.
4. The part of the human brain which appears to function as the organ of knowledge is in fact only the instrument that permits the spiritual process to manifest itself.
5. The phronema as the organ of reason is not autonomous, but, through its constituent parts (phroneta) and the cells that compose them, serves only as intermediary between the non-material mind and the external world. Human reason differs absolutely from the mind of the higher animals and from the instinct of the lower animals.

This typical quotation from his works shows that Haeckel does not attempt an analysis of philosophical problems and is not able to contrast the materialist theory of knowledge with the idealist theory of knowledge. He *ridicules all* idealist philosophies—more broadly, all peculiarly philosophical artifices—from the standpoint of natural science, *without even permitting the idea* that any other theory of knowledge but *natural-scientific materialism* is possible. He ridicules the philosophers from the standpoint of a materialist, *without himself realising* that his standpoint is that of a materialist!

The impotent wrath aroused in the philosophers by this almighty materialism is comprehensible. We quoted above the opinion of the "true Russian" Lopatin. And here is the opinion of Mr. Rudolph Willy, the most progressive of the "empirio-criticists," who is irreconcilably hostile to idealism (don't laugh!).

"Haeckel's monism is a very heterogeneous mixture: it unites certain natural-scientific laws, such as the law of the conservation of energy . . . with certain scholastic traditions about substance and the thing-in-itself into a chaotic jumble" (*Gegen die Schulweisheit*, S. 128).

What has annoyed this most worthy "recent positivist"? Well, how could he help being annoyed when he immediately realised

that from Haeckel's standpoint all the great doctrines of his teacher Avenarius—for instance, that the brain is not the organ of thought, that sensations are not images of the external world, that matter ("substance") or "the thing-in-itself" is not an objective reality, and so forth—are nothing but *sheer idealist gibberish*? Haeckel did not say it in so many words because he did not concern himself with philosophy and was not acquainted with "empirio-criticism" *as such*. But Rudolph Willy could not help realising that a hundred thousand Haeckel readers meant as many people spitting in the face of the *philosophy* of Mach and Avenarius. Willy wipes his face in advance, *in the Lopatin manner*. For the *essence* of the arguments which Mr. Lopatin and Mr. Willy marshal against materialism in general, and natural-scientific materialism in particular, is essentially the same in both. To us Marxists the difference between Mr. Lopatin and Messrs. Willy, Petzoldt, Mach and Co. is no greater than the difference between the Protestant theologians and the Catholic theologians.

The "war" on Haeckel *has proven* that this view of ours corresponds to *objective reality*, i.e., to the class nature of modern society and its class ideological tendencies.

Here is another little example. The Machian Kleinpeter has translated from English into German, under the title of *Das Weltbild der modernen Naturwissenschaft* (Leipzig 1905), a work by Carl Snyder well known in America.<sup>1</sup> This work gives a clear and popular account of a number of recent discoveries in physics and other branches of science. And the Machian Kleinpeter felt himself called upon to supply the book with a preface in which he makes certain *reservations*, such as, for example, that Snyder's epistemology is not "satisfactory" (p. v). Why so? Because Snyder never entertains the slightest doubt that the world picture is a picture of how matter moves and of how "*matter thinks*" (p. 228). In his next book, *The World Machine* (London, 1907), Snyder, referring to the fact that his book is dedicated to the memory of Democritus of Abdera, who lived about 460-360 B.C., says:

"Democritus has often been styled the grandsire of materialism. It is a school of philosophy that is a little out of fashion nowadays; yet it is worthy

<sup>1</sup> Carl Snyder, *New Conceptions in Science*, London and New York, 1903.—*Trans.*

of note that practically all of the modern advance in our ideas of this world has been grounded upon his conceptions. Practically speaking, materialistic assumptions are simply unescapable in physical investigations" (p. 140).

"... If he like, he may dream with good Bishop Berkeley that it is all a dream. Yet comforting as may be the legerdmain of an idealised idealism, there are still few among us who, whatever they may think regarding the problem of the external world, doubt that they themselves exist; and it needs no long pursuit of the will-o'-the-wisps of the *Ich* and *non-Ich* to assure oneself that if in an unguarded moment we assume that we ourselves have a personality and a being, we let in the whole procession of appearances which come of the six gates of the senses. The nebular hypothesis, the light-bearing ether, the atomic theory, and all their like, may be but convenient 'working hypotheses,' but it is well to remember that, in the absence of negative proof, they stand on more or less the same footing as the hypothesis that a being you call 'you.' Oh, Indulgent Reader, scans these lines" (pp. 31-32).

Imagine the bitter lot of a Machian when his favourite subtle constructions, which reduce the categories of science to mere working hypotheses, are laughed at by the scientists on both sides of the ocean as sheer nonsense! Is it to be wondered that Rudolph Willy, in 1905, combats Democritus as though he were a living enemy, thereby providing an excellent illustration of the *partisan character of philosophy* and once more exposing the real position he himself takes up in this partisan struggle? He writes:

"Of course, Democritus was not conscious of the fact that atoms and the void are only fictitious concepts which perform mere accessory services (*blosse Handlangerdienste*), and maintain their existence only by grace of expediency, just as long as they prove useful. Democritus was not free enough for this; but neither are our modern natural scientists, with few exceptions. The faith of old Democritus is the faith of our scientists" (*op. cit.*, p. 57).

And there is good reason for despair! The "empirio-criticists" have proven in quite a "new way" that both space and atoms are "working hypotheses"; and yet the natural scientists deride this *Berkeleianism* and follow Haeckel. We are by no means idealists, this is a slander; we are only striving (together with the idealists) to refute the epistemological position of Democritus; we have been striving to do so for more than 2,000 years, but all in vain! And nothing better remains for our leader Ernst Mach to do than to dedicate his last work, the outcome of his life and philosophy, *Erkenntnis und Irrtum*, to Wilhelm Schuppe and to remark ruefully in the text that the majority of scientists are materialists and that "we also" sympathise with Haeckel . . . for his "freethinking" (p. 14).

And there he completely betrays himself, this ideologist of reactionary philistinism who *follows* the arch-reactionary Schuppe and "*sympathises*" with Haeckel's freethinking. They are all like this, these humanitarian philistines in Europe, with their freedom-loving sympathies and their ideological (political and economic) captivity to the Wilhelm Schuppes.<sup>1</sup> Non-partisanship in philosophy is only wretchedly masked servility to idealism and fideism.

Let us, in conclusion, compare this with the opinion of Haeckel held by Franz Mehring, who not only wants to be, but who knows how to be a Marxist. The moment *The Riddle of the Universe* appeared, towards the end of 1899, Mehring pointed out that

"Haeckel's work, both in its less good and its very good aspects, is eminently adapted to help clarify the apparently rather confused views prevailing in the party as to the significance for it of *historical* materialism, on the one hand, and *historical materialism*, on the other."<sup>2</sup>

Haeckel's defect is that he has not the slightest conception of *historical* materialism, which leads him to utter the most woeful nonsense about politics, about "monistic religion," and so on and so forth. "He (Haeckel) is a materialist and monist, not a *historical* but a natural-scientific materialist" (*ibid.*).

"He who wants to perceive this inability [of natural-scientific materialism to deal with social problems] tangibly, he who wants to be convinced that natural-scientific materialism must be broadened into historical materialism if it truly desires to become an invincible weapon in the great struggle for the liberation of mankind, let him read Haeckel's book.

"But let him not read it for this purpose alone! Its uncommonly weak side is inseparably bound up with its uncommonly strong side, *viz.*, with the comprehensible and luminous description (which after all takes up by far the greater and more important part of the book) given by Haeckel of the development of the natural sciences in this country, or, in other words, of the *triumphant march of natural-scientific materialism.*"<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Plekhanov in his criticism of Machism was less concerned with refuting Mach than with dealing a factional blow at Bolshevism. For this petty and miserable exploitation of fundamental theoretical differences he has been already deservedly punished—with two books by Machian Mensheviks.

<sup>2</sup> Franz Mehring, "*Die Welträtsel*" [*The Riddle of the Universe*], *Neue Zeit*, 1899-1900, Bd. XVIII, 1, S. 418.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 419.

## CONCLUSION

THERE are four standpoints from which a Marxist must proceed to form a judgment of empirio-criticism.

First and foremost, the ~~theoretical foundations of this philosophy~~ must be compared with those of dialectical materialism. Such a comparison, to which the first three chapters were devoted, reveals, *along the whole line* of epistemological problems, the *thoroughly reactionary* character of empirio-criticism, which uses new artifices, terms and subtleties to disguise the old errors of *idealism and agnosticism*. Only utter ignorance of the nature of philosophical materialism generally and of the nature of Marx's and Engels' dialectical method can lead one to speak of a "union" of empirio-criticism and Marxism.

Secondly, the place of empirio-criticism, as one very small school of specialists in philosophy, in relation to the other modern schools of philosophy must be determined. Both Mach and Avenarius started with Kant and, leaving him, proceeded not towards materialism, but in the opposite direction, towards Hume and Berkeley. Imagining that he was "purifying experience" generally, Avenarius was in fact only purifying agnosticism of Kantianism. The whole school of Mach and Avenarius is more and more definitely moving towards idealism, hand in hand with one of the most reactionary of the idealist schools, *viz.*, the so-called immanentists.

Thirdly, the indubitable connection between Machism and one school in one branch of modern science must be borne in mind. The vast majority of scientists, both generally and in this special branch of science in question, *viz.*, physics, are invariably on the side of materialism. A minority of new physicists, however, influenced by the breakdown of old theories brought about by the great discoveries of recent years, influenced by the crisis in the new physics, which has very clearly revealed the relativity of our knowledge,

have, owing to their ignorance of dialectics, slipped into idealism by way of relativism. The physical idealism in vogue today is as reactionary and transitory an infatuation as the fashionable physiological idealism of the recent past.

Fourthly, behind the epistemological scholasticism of empirio-criticism it is impossible not to see the struggle of parties in philosophy, a struggle which in the last analysis reflects the tendencies and ideology of the antagonistic classes in modern society. Recent philosophy is as partisan as was philosophy two thousand years ago. The contending parties essentially, although concealed by a pseudo-erudite quackery of new terms or by a feeble-minded non-partisanship, are materialism and idealism. The latter is merely a subtle, refined form of fideism, which stands fully armed, commands vast organisations and steadily continues to exercise influence on the masses, turning the slightest vacillation in philosophical thought to its own advantage. The objective, class role played by empirio-criticism entirely consists in rendering faithful service to the fideists in their struggle against materialism in general and historical materialism in particular.



## SUPPLEMENT TO CHAPTER FOUR, SECTION I

### FROM WHAT ANGLE DID N. G. CHERNYSHEVSKY CRITICISE KANTIANISM?

IN the first section of Chapter IV we showed in detail that the materialists have been criticising Kant from a standpoint diametrically opposite to that from which Mach and Avenarius criticise him. It would not be superfluous to add here, albeit briefly, an indication of the epistemological position held by the great Russian Hegelian and materialist, N. G. Chernyshevsky.

Shortly after Albrecht Rau, the German disciple of Feuerbach, had published his criticism of Kant, the great Russian writer N. G. Chernyshevsky, who was also a disciple of Feuerbach, first attempted an explicit statement of his attitude towards both Feuerbach and Kant. N. G. Chernyshevsky had appeared in Russian literature as a follower of Feuerbach as early as the 'fifties, but our censorship did not allow him even to mention Feuerbach's name. In 1888, in the preface to the projected third edition of his *The Æsthetic Attitude of Art to Reality*, N. G. Chernyshevsky attempted to allude directly to Feuerbach, but even in 1888 the censor refused to allow even a mere reference to Feuerbach! It was not until 1906 that the preface saw the light (see N. G. Chernyshevsky, *Collected Works*, Vol. X, Part II, pp. 190-97). In this preface N. G. Chernyshevsky devotes half a page to criticising Kant and the scientists who follow Kant in their philosophical conclusions.

Here is the excellent argument given by Chernyshevsky in 1888:

"Natural scientists who imagine themselves to be builders of all-embracing theories are really disciples, and usually poor disciples, of the ancient thinkers who evolved the metaphysical systems, usually thinkers whose systems had already been partially destroyed by Schelling and finally destroyed by Hegel. One need only point out that the majority of the natural scientists who endeavour to construct broad theories of the laws of operation of human thought only repeat Kant's metaphysical theory regarding the subjectivity of our knowledge. . . ."

(For the benefit of the Russian Machians who manage to muddle everything, let us say that Chernyshevsky is below Engels in so far as in his terminology he confuses the opposition between materialism and idealism with the opposition between metaphysical thought and dialectical thought; but Chernyshevsky is entirely on Engels' level in so far as he takes Kant to task not for realism, but for agnosticism and subjectivism, not for recognition of the "thing-in-itself," but for inability to derive our knowledge from this objective source.)

"... they argue from Kant's words that the forms of our sense-perception have no resemblance to the forms of the actual existence of objects. . . ."

(For the benefit of the Russian Machians who manage to muddle everything, let us say that Chernyshevsky's criticism of Kant is the diametrical opposite of the criticism of Kant by Mach, Avenarius and the immanentists. because for Chernyshevsky, as for every materialist, the forms of our sense-perception do resemble the form of the actual—i.e., objectively-real—existence of objects.)

"... that, therefore, really existing objects, their real qualities, and the real relations between them are unknowable to us. . . ."

(For the benefit of the Russian Machians who manage to muddle everything, let us say that for Chernyshevsky, as for every materialist, objects, or to use Kant's ornate language, "things-in-themselves," *really* exist and are *fully* knowable to us, knowable in their existence, their qualities and the real relations between them.)

"... and if they were knowable they could not be the object of our thought, which shapes all the material of knowledge into forms totally different from the forms of actual existence, that, moreover, the very laws of thought have only a subjective significance. . . ."

(For the benefit of the Machian muddlers, let us say that for Chernyshevsky, as for every materialist, the laws of thought have not merely a subjective significance; in other words, the laws of thought reflect the forms of actual existence of objects, fully resemble, and do not differ from these forms.)

"... that in reality there is nothing corresponding to what appears to us to be the connection of cause and effect, for there is neither antecedent nor subsequent, neither whole nor parts, and so on and so forth. . . ."

(For the benefit of the Machian muddlers, let us say that for Chernyshevsky, as for every materialist, there does exist in reality what appears to us to be the connection between cause and effect, there is objective causality or natural necessity.)

"... When natural scientists stop uttering such and similar metaphysical nonsense, they will be capable of working out, and probably are already working out, on the basis of science, a system of concepts more exact and complete than those propounded by Feuerbach. . . ."

(For the benefit of the Machian muddlers, let us say that Chernyshevsky regards as metaphysical nonsense *all* deviations from materialism, both in the direction of idealism and in the direction of agnosticism.)

"... But meanwhile, the best statement of the scientific concepts of the so-called fundamental problems of man's inquisitiveness remains that made by Feuerbach" (pp. 195-26).

By the fundamental problems of man's inquisitiveness Chernyshevsky means what in modern language are known as the fundamental problems of the theory of knowledge, or epistemology. Chernyshevsky is the only really great Russian writer from the 'fifties until 1888 who was able to maintain the level of an integral philosophical materialism and who spurned the wretched nonsense of the Neo-Kantians, positivists, Machians and other muddleheads. But Chernyshevsky did not succeed in rising, or, rather, owing to the backwardness of Russian life, was unable to rise to the level of the dialectical materialism of Marx and Engels.



### **PART III**

## **PROBLEMS OF THE MATERIALIST CONCEPTION OF HISTORY**



## WHAT THE "FRIENDS OF THE PEOPLE" ARE AND HOW THEY FIGHT THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATS

(A Reply to Articles in "*Russkoye Bogatstvo*" Opposing  
the Marxists)

### PART I

RUSSKOYE BOGATSTVO has started a campaign against the Social-Democrats. Last year, in issue No. 10, one of the chiefs of this journal, Mr. N. Mikhailovsky, announced a forthcoming "polemic" against "our so-called Marxists, or Social-Democrats." Then followed an article by Mr. S. Krivenko entitled "Our Cultural Freelances" (in No. 12), and one by Mr. N. Mikhailovsky entitled "Literature and Life" (in Nos. 1 and 2, *Russkoye Bogatstvo*, 1894). As to the views of the magazine itself on our economic realities, these have been most fully expounded by Mr. S. Yuzhakov in an article entitled "Problems of the Economic Development of Russia" (in Nos. 10 and 12). While in general claiming to present in their magazine the ideas and tactics of the true "friends of the people,"<sup>1</sup> these gentlemen are arch-enemics of the Social-Democrats. Let us examine these "friends of the people," their criticism of Marxism, their ideas and their tactics.

Mr. N. Mikhailovsky devotes his attention chiefly to the theoretical principles of Marxism and therefore specially stops to examine the materialist conception of history. Having given a general outline of the contents of the voluminous Marxist literature devoted to this doctrine, Mr. Mikhailovsky opens his criticism with the following tirade:

"First of all," he says, "the question naturally arises: in which of his works did Marx set forth his materialist conception of history? In *Capital* he gave us a model of logical force combined with erudition and a painstaking

<sup>1</sup> That is what the Narodniks (Populists) sometimes called themselves in the legal literature of the 'nineties.—Ed.

investigation both of all the economic literature and of the pertinent facts. He brought to light theoreticians of economic science who had been long forgotten or who are not known to anybody today, and did not overlook the most minute details in the reports of factory inspectors or the evidence given by experts before various special commissions; in a word, he overhauled an overwhelming amount of factual material, partly in order to provide arguments for and partly to illustrate his economic theories. If he has created a 'completely new' conception of the historical process, if he has explained the whole past of mankind from a new point of view and has summarised all philosophico-historical theories that have hitherto existed, he of course did so with equal thoroughness: he in fact examined and subjected to critical analysis all the known theories regarding the historical process and analysed a mass of facts of world history. The comparison with Darwin, which is so customary in Marxist literature, serves still more to confirm this idea. What does Darwin's whole work amount to? Certain closely inter-connected generalising ideas crowning a veritable Mont Blanc of factual material. Where is the corresponding work by Marx? It does not exist. And not only does no such work by Marx exist, but it is not to be found in all Marxist literature, in spite of its voluminousness and extensiveness."

This whole tirade is highly characteristic and helps us to realise how little the public understand *Capital* and Marx. Overwhelmed by the vast amount of evidence adduced in support of the exposition, they bow and scrape before Marx, laud him, and at the same time entirely lose sight of the basic content of his doctrine and unconcernedly continue to chant the old songs of "subjective sociology." In this connection one cannot help recalling the pointed epigraph Kautsky selected for his book on the economic teachings of Marx:

Wer wird nicht einen Klopstock loben?  
Doch wird ihn jeder lesen? Nein.  
Wir wollen weniger erhoben  
Und fleissiger gelesen sein! <sup>1</sup>

Just so! Mr. Mikhailovsky should praise Marx less and read him more diligently, or, better still, put a little more thought into what he is reading.

"In *Capital* Marx gave us a model of logical force combined with erudition," says Mr. Mikhailovsky. In this phrase Mr. Mikhailovsky has given us a model of brilliant phrasemongering combined with absence of meaning—a certain Marxist observed. And

<sup>1</sup> Who would not praise a Klopstock? But will everybody read him? No. We would like to be exalted less, but read more diligently. (*Lessing.*)



the observation is an entirely just one. For, indeed, how did this logical force of Marx's manifest itself? What were its effects? Reading Mr. Mikhailovsky's tirade just quoted one might think that this force was entirely concentrated on "economic theories," in the narrowest sense of the term—and nothing more. And in order still further to emphasise the narrow limits of the field in which Marx displayed his logical force, Mr. Mikhailovsky lays stress on the "most minute details," on the "painstakingness," on the "theoreticians who are not known to anybody," and so forth. It would appear that Marx contributed nothing essentially new or noteworthy to the methods of constructing these theories, that he left the limits of economic science just as they had been with the earlier economists, not extending them and not contributing a "completely new" conception of the science itself. Yet anybody who has read *Capital* knows that this is absolutely untrue. In this connection one cannot refrain from recalling what Mr. Mikhailovsky wrote about Marx sixteen years ago when arguing with the petty-bourgeois Mr. Y. Zhukovsky. Perhaps the times were different, perhaps sentiments were fresher—at any rate, the tone and content of Mr. Mikhailovsky's articles were entirely different.

"... It is the ultimate aim of this work to lay bare the economic law of development [in the original: *das ökonomische Bewegungsgesetz*—the economic law of motion] of modern society,' Karl Marx said in reference to his *Capital*, and he adhered to this programme with strict consistency." So said Mr. Mikhailovsky in 1877. Let us more closely examine this programme, which—as the critic admits—has been adhered to with strict consistency. It is "to lay bare the economic law of development of modern society."

This very formulation confronts us with certain questions that require elucidation. Why does Marx speak of "modern" society, when all the economists who preceded him spoke only of society in general? In what sense does he use the word "modern," by what tokens does he distinguish this modern society? And further, what is meant by the economic law of motion of society? We are accustomed to hear from economists—and this, by the way, is one of the favourite ideas of the publicists and economists of the milieu to which the *Russkoye Bogatstvo* belongs—that only the produc-

tion of values is subject to economic laws, whereas distribution, they declare, depends on politics, on the nature of the influence exercised on society by the government, the intelligentsia, and so forth. In what sense, then, does Marx speak of the economic law of motion of society, even referring to this law as a *Naturgesetz*—a law of nature? How is this to be understood, when so many of our native sociologists have covered reams of paper with asseverations to the effect that the sphere of social phenomena is distinct from the sphere of natural-historical phenomena, and that therefore an absolutely distinct “subjective method of sociology” must be applied in the investigation of the former?

These perplexities arise naturally and necessarily, and, of course, one must be utterly ignorant to evade them when dealing with *Capital*. In order to understand these questions, let us first quote one more passage from the Preface to *Capital*—only a few lines lower down:

“[From] my standpoint,” says Marx, “the evolution of the economic formation of society is viewed as a process of natural history.”

One has merely to compare, say, the two passages just quoted from the Preface in order to see that this is precisely the basic idea of *Capital* and that it is pursued, as we have heard, with strict consistency and with rare logical force. In connection with all this, let us first note two circumstances: Marx speaks only of one “economic formation of society,” the capitalist formation; that is, he says that he investigated the law of development of this formation only and of no other. That, in the first place. And in the second place, let us note the methods used by Marx in working out his deductions. These methods consisted, as we have just heard from Mr. Mikhailovsky, in a “painstaking investigation . . . of the pertinent facts.”

Let us now proceed to examine this basic idea of *Capital*, which our subjective philosopher so adroitly tries to evade. In what, in fact, does the concept economic formation of society consist, and in what sense must the development of this formation be regarded as a process of natural history?—such are the questions that confront us. I have already pointed out that from the stand-

point of the old economists and sociologists (not old for Russia), the concept economic formation of society is entirely superfluous: they talk of society in general, they argue with Spencer and his like about the nature of society in general, about the aims and essence of society in general, and so forth. In their reasonings, these subjective sociologists rely on such arguments as that the aim of society is to benefit all its members, that therefore justice demands such and such an organisation, and that a system that does not correspond with this ideal organisation ("Sociology must start from some utopia"—these words of one of the authors of the subjective method, Mr. Mikhailovsky, are eminently characteristic of the very essence of their methods) is abnormal and should be set aside.

"The essential task of sociology," Mr. Mikhailovsky, for instance, argues, "is to ascertain the social conditions under which any particular requirement of human nature is satisfied."

As you see, this sociologist is interested only in a society that satisfies human nature, and is not at all interested in social formations—social formations, moreover, that may be based on phenomena that do not correspond with "human nature," such as the enslavement of the majority by the minority. You also see that from the standpoint of this sociologist there can even be no question of regarding the development of society as a process of natural history. ("Having recognised something to be desirable or undesirable, the sociologist must discover the conditions whereby the desirable can be realised, or the undesirable eliminated"—"whereby such and such ideals can be realised"—this same Mr. Mikhailovsky reasons.) Not only so, but there can even be no question of development, but only of deviations from the "desirable," of "defects" that may have occurred in history as a result . . . as a result of the fact that people were not clever enough, did not properly understand what human nature demands, were unable to discover the conditions required for the realisation of such a rational system. It is obvious that Marx's basic idea that the development of the economic formation of society is a process of natural history cuts the ground from under this childish morality which lays claim to the title of sociology. By what method did

Marx arrive at this basic idea? He arrived at it by selecting from the various spheres of social life the economic sphere, by selecting from all social relations the "production relations," as being the basic and prime relations that determine all other relations. Marx himself has described the course of his reasoning on this question as follows:

"The first work which I undertook for a solution of the doubts which assailed me was a critical review of the Hegelian philosophy of law. . . . My investigation led to the result that legal relations . . . are to be grasped neither from themselves nor from the so-called general development of the human mind, but rather have their roots in the material conditions of life, the sum total of which Hegel, in accordance with the procedure of the Englishmen and Frenchmen of the eighteenth century, combines under the name of 'civil society.' And the anatomy of civil society is to be sought in political economy. . . . The general result at which I arrived . . . can be briefly formulated as follows: In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations . . . these relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material forces of production. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society—the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production . . . determines the social, political and intellectual life processes in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the . . . forces of production . . . come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or—what is but a legal expression for the same thing—with the property relations within which they have been at work before. From forms of development of the forces of production these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations a distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, æsthetic or philosophic—in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as our opinion of an individual is not based on what he thinks of himself, so can we not judge of such a period of transformation by its own consciousness; on the contrary this consciousness must be explained rather from the contradictions of material life, from the existing conflict between the social forces of production and the relations of production. . . . In broad outlines we can designate the Asiatic, the ancient, the feudal, and the modern bourgeois modes of production as so many epochs in the progress of the economic formation of society."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Preface. See Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, Eng. ed., 1935, Vol. I, pp. 355-57.—*Trans.*

This idea of materialism in sociology was in itself a piece of genius. Naturally, "*for the time being*" it was only an hypothesis, but it was the first hypothesis to create the possibility of a strictly scientific approach to historical and social problems. Hitherto, being unable to descend to such simple and primary relations as the relations of production, the sociologists proceeded directly to investigate and study the political and legal forms. They stumbled on the fact that these forms arise out of certain ideas held by men in the period in question—and there they stopped. It appeared as if social relations were established by man consciously. But this deduction, which was fully expressed in the idea of the *Contrat Social* (traces of which are very noticeable in all systems of utopian Socialism), was in complete contradiction to all historical observations. Never has it been the case, nor is it the case now, that the members of society are aware of the sum-total of the social relations in which they live as something definite, integral, as something pervaded by some principle. On the contrary, the mass of people adapt themselves to these relations unconsciously, and are unaware of them as specific historical social relations; so much so, in fact, that the explanation, for instance, of the relations of exchange, under which people have lived for centuries, was discovered only in very recent times. Materialism has removed this contradiction by carrying the analysis deeper, to the very origin of these social ideas of man; and its conclusion that the course of ideas depends on the course of things is the only deduction compatible with scientific psychology. Moreover, this hypothesis was the first to elevate sociology to the level of a science from yet another aspect. Hitherto, sociologists had found difficulty in distinguishing in the complex network of social phenomena which phenomena were important and which unimportant (that is the root of subjectivism in sociology) and had been unable to discover any objective criterion for such a distinction. Materialism provided an absolutely objective criterion by singling out the "relations of production" as the structure of society, and by making it possible to apply to these relations that general scientific criterion of repetition whose applicability to sociology the subjectivists denied. As long as they confined themselves to ideological social relations

(i.e., such as, before taking shape, pass through man's consciousness—we are, of course, referring all the time to the consciousness of "social relations" and no others) they were unable to observe repetition and order in the social phenomena of the various countries, and their science was at best only a description of these phenomena, a collection of raw material. The analysis of material social relations (i.e., such as take shape without passing through man's consciousness; when exchanging products men enter into relations of production without even realising that social relations of production are involved in the act) made it at once possible to observe repetition and order and to generalise the systems of the various countries so as to arrive at the single fundamental concept: the "formation of society." It was this generalisation that alone made it possible to proceed from the description of social phenomena (and their evaluation from the standpoint of an ideal) to their strictly scientific analysis, which, let us say by way of example, selects "what" distinguishes one capitalist country from another and investigates "what" is common to all of them.

Thirdly and finally, another reason why this hypothesis was the first to make a "scientific" sociology possible was that the reduction of social relations to relations of production, and the latter to the level of forces of production, provided a firm basis for the conception that the development of the formations of society is a process of natural history. And it goes without saying that without such a view there can be no social science. (For instance, the subjectivists, although they admitted that historical phenomena conform to law, were incapable of regarding the evolution of historical phenomena as a process of natural history precisely because they confined themselves to the social ideas and aims of man and were unable to reduce these ideas and aims to material social relations.)

And Marx, having expressed this hypothesis in the 'forties, set out to study the factual (*nota bene*) material. He took one of the economic formations of society—the system of commodity production—and on the basis of a vast mass of data (which he studied for not less than twenty-five years) gave a most detailed analysis of the laws governing the functioning of this formation and its development. This analysis is strictly confined to the relations of

production between the members of society: without ever resorting to factors other than relations of production to explain the matter, Marx makes it possible to discern how the commodity organisation of social economy develops, how it becomes transformed into capitalist economy, creating the antagonistic (within the bounds now of relations of production) classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, how it develops the productivity of social labour and how it thereby introduces an element which comes into irreconcilable contradiction to the very foundations of this capitalist organisation itself.

Such is the "skeleton" of *Capital*. But the whole point of the matter is that Marx did not content himself with this skeleton, that he did not confine himself to an "economic theory" in the ordinary sense of the term, that, while "explaining" the structure and development of the given formation of society "exclusively" in terms of relations of production, he nevertheless everywhere and always went on to trace the superstructure corresponding to these relations of production and clothed the skeleton in flesh and blood. *Capital* has enjoyed such tremendous success precisely because this book of the "German economist" exhibited the whole capitalist social formation to the reader as a live thing—with its everyday aspects, with the actual social manifestation of the antagonism of classes inherent in the relations of production, with the bourgeois political superstructure which preserves the domination of the capitalist class, with the bourgeois ideas of liberty, equality and so forth, with the bourgeois family relations. It will now be clear that the comparison with Darwin is an absolutely just one: *Capital* is nothing but "certain closely inter-connected generalising ideas crowning a veritable Mont Blanc of factual material." And if anybody who has read *Capital* has failed to notice these generalising ideas, that is not the fault of Marx, who pointed to these ideas even in the Preface, as we have seen. And that is not all; such a comparison is just not only from the external aspect (which for some unknown reason particularly interested Mr. Mikhailovsky), but from the internal aspect too. Just as Darwin put an end to the view that the species of animals and plants are unconnected among themselves, fortuitous, "created by God" and immutable, and was the

first to put biology on an absolutely scientific basis by establishing the mutability and succession of species, so Marx put an end to the view that society is a mechanical aggregation of individuals, which will tolerate any kind of modification at the will of the powers that be (or, what amounts to the same thing, at the will of society and the government) and which arises and changes in a fortuitous way, and was the first to put sociology on a scientific footing by establishing the concept of the economic formation of society as the sum-total of the given relations of production and by establishing the fact that the development of these formations is a process of natural history.

Now—since the appearance of *Capital*—the materialist conception of history is no longer an hypothesis, but a scientifically demonstrated proposition. And as long as no other attempt is made to give a scientific explanation of the functioning and development of any social formation—social formation, and not the customs and habits of any country or people, or even class, etc.—an attempt which would be just as capable as materialism of introducing order into the “pertinent facts” and of presenting a living picture of a given formation and at the same time of explaining it in a strictly scientific way, until then the materialist conception of history will be synonymous with social science. Materialism is not “primarily a scientific conception of history,” as Mr. Mikhailovsky thinks, but the only scientific conception of history.

And now, can one imagine anything funnier than that people, having read *Capital*, are unable to discover materialism in it! Where is it?—asks Mr. Mikhailovsky in sincere perplexity.

He read *The Communist Manifesto* and failed to notice that the explanation it gives of modern systems—legal, political, family, religious and philosophical—is a materialist one, and that even the criticism of the Socialist and Communist theories seeks for and finds their roots in definite relations of production.

He read *The Poverty of Philosophy* and failed to notice that its examination of Proudhon's sociology is made from a materialist point of view, that its criticism of the solution to the various historical problems propounded by Proudhon is based on the prin-



ciples of materialism, and that the indications given by the author himself as to where the data for the solution of these problems is to be sought all amount to references to relations of production.

He read *Capital* and failed to notice that what he had before him was a model scientific analysis, in accordance with the materialist method, of one—the most complex—of the social formations, a model recognised by all and surpassed by none. And here he sits and exercises his mighty brain over the profound question: "In which of his works did Marx set forth his materialist conception of history?"

Anybody acquainted with Marx would answer this question by another: in which of his works did Marx not set forth his materialist conception of history? But Mr. Mikhailovsky will most likely learn of Marx's materialist investigations only when they are classified and suitably indexed in some historico-sophistical work of some Kareyev or other under the heading "Economic Materialism."

But what is funniest of all is that Mr. Mikhailovsky accuses Marx of not having "examined [*sic!*] all the known theories of the historical process." That is funny indeed. Of what did nine-tenths of these theories consist? Of purely *a priori*, dogmatic, abstract constructions, such as: what is society? what is progress? and so on. (I purposely take examples which are dear to the heart and mind of Mr. Mikhailovsky.) Why, these theories are useless because of the very thing to which they owe their existence, they are useless because of their basic methods, because of their utter and unrelieved metaphysics. To begin by asking what is society and what is progress, is to begin from the very end. Whence are you to get your concept of society and progress in general when you have not studied a single social formation in particular, when you have been unable even to establish this concept, when you have been unable even to undertake a serious factual investigation, an objective analysis of social relations of any kind? That is the most obvious earmark of metaphysics, with which every science began: as long as people were unable to make a study of the facts, they always invented *a priori* general theories, which were always sterile. The metaphysical chemist who was still unable to investigate real

chemical processes would invent a theory about the force of chemical affinity. The metaphysical biologist would talk about the nature of life and the vital force. The metaphysical psychologist would reason about the nature of the soul. The method itself was an absurd one. You cannot argue about the soul without having explained the psychical processes in particular: here progress must consist in abandoning general theories and philosophical constructions about the nature of the soul, and in being able to put the study of facts which characterise any particular psychical process on a scientific footing. And therefore Mr. Mikhailovsky's accusation is exactly as though a metaphysical psychologist, who all his life has been writing "inquiries" into the nature of the soul (without knowing precisely the explanation of a single psychical phenomenon, even the simplest), were to accuse a scientific psychologist of not having examined all the known theories of the soul. He, the scientific psychologist, discarded all philosophical theories of the soul and set about making a direct study of the material substratum of psychical phenomena—the nervous processes—and gave, let us say, an analysis and explanation of such and such psychological processes. And our metaphysical psychologist reads this work and praises it: the description of the processes and the study of the facts, he says, are good. But he is not satisfied. "Pardon me," he exclaims excitedly, hearing people around him speak of the absolutely new conception of psychology given by this scientist, of his special method of scientific psychology: "Pardon me," the philosopher cries heatedly, "in what work is this method expounded? Why, this work contains 'only facts.' It does not even hint at an examination of 'all the known philosophical theories of the soul.' This is not the corresponding work by any means!"

In the same way, of course, *Capital* is also not the corresponding work for a metaphysical sociologist who does not observe the sterility of *a priori* discussions about the nature of society and who does not understand that such methods, instead of studying and explaining, only serve to foist on the concept society either the bourgeois ideas of a British shopkeeper or the philistine Socialist ideals of a Russian democrat—and nothing more. That is why all these philosophico-historical theories arose and burst like soap

bubbles, being at best but a symptom of the social ideas and relations of their time, and not advancing one iota man's "understanding" of even a few, but real, social relations, (and not such as "correspond to human nature"). The gigantic forward stride which Marx made in this respect consisted precisely in the fact that he discarded all these discussions about society and progress in general and gave a "scientific" analysis of "one" society and of "one" progress—capitalist society and capitalist progress. And Mr. Mikhailovsky condemns him for having begun from the beginning and not from the end, for having begun with an analysis of the facts and not with final conclusions, with a study of partial, historically-determined social relations and not with general theories about the nature of social relations in general! And he asks: where is the corresponding work? O, sapient subjective sociologist!

If our subjective sociologist had confined himself to expressing his perplexity as to where, in which work, materialism is proved, that would not be quite so bad. But in spite of the fact (and perhaps for the very reason) that he has nowhere found even an exposition of the materialist conception of history, let alone a proof of it, he begins to ascribe to this doctrine claims which it has never made. He quotes a passage from Bloss to the effect that Marx had proclaimed an entirely new "conception" of history, and without further ado goes on to declare that this theory claims that it has "explained to humanity its past," explained "the whole [*sic!*] past of mankind," and so on. But this is utterly false! The theory claims to explain only the capitalist organisation of society, and no other. If the application of materialism to the analysis and explanation of one social formation yielded such brilliant results, it is quite natural that materialism in history has already ceased to be a mere hypothesis and has become a scientifically tested theory; it is quite natural that the necessity for such a method should be extended to the other social formations, even though they have not been subjected to special factual investigation and to detailed analysis—just as the idea of transformism, which has been proved in relation to a sufficiently large number of facts, is extended to the whole sphere of biology, even though it has not yet been possible definitely to establish the transforma-

tion of certain species of animals and plants. And just as transformism does not claim to have explained the "whole" history of the formation of species, but only to have placed the methods of this explanation on a scientific basis, so materialism in history has never claimed to explain everything, but only to have pointed out the "only scientific," to use Marx's expression (*Capital*), method of explaining history. One can therefore judge how ingenious, weighty or seemingly are the methods of controversy employed by Mr. Mikhailovsky when he first falsifies Marx by ascribing to materialism in history the absurd claim of "explaining everything," of finding "the key to all historical locks" (claims, of course, which were refuted by Marx immediately and in a very venomous form in his "Letter" on Mikhailovsky's articles), then makes game of these claims, which he himself invented, and, finally, accurately quoting certain of Engels' ideas—accurately, because in this case a quotation and not a paraphrase is given—to the effect that political economy as the materialists understand it "has still to be created" and that "everything we have received from it is confined to" the history of capitalist society—comes to the conclusion that "these words extremely narrow the scope of economic materialism"! What infinite naïveté, or what infinite conceit a man must have to believe that such tricks will pass unnoticed! He first falsifies Marx, then makes game of his own falsification, then accurately quotes certain ideas—and has the insolence to declare that the latter narrow the scope of economic materialism! The nature and quality of Mr. Mikhailovsky's game may be seen from the following example: "Marx nowhere proves them"—i.e., the foundations of the theory of economic materialism—says Mr. Mikhailovsky. True, Marx, together with Engels, thought of writing a work of a philosophico-historical and historico-philosophical character, and even did write one (1845-47), but it was never printed. Engels says:

"The completed portion [of this work] consists of an exposition of the materialist conception of history which proves only how incomplete our knowledge of economic history was at that time."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Frederick Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach*, Foreword, Eng. ed., 1934.—*Trans.*

Thus—concludes Mr. Mikhailovsky—the fundamental points of "scientific Socialism" and of the "theory of economic materialism" were discovered, and were then expounded in the *Manifesto*, at a time when, as is admitted by one of the authors himself, "their knowledge for such a work was still meagre."

A charming manner of criticism, is it not? Engels says that their knowledge of economic "history" was still meagre and that for this reason they did not print their work of a "general" historico-philosophical character. Mr. Mikhailovsky interprets this to mean that their knowledge was meagre "for such a work" as the elaboration of "the fundamental points of scientific Socialism," i.e., a scientific criticism of the "bourgeois" system, which had already been given in the *Manifesto*. One or the other: either Mr. Mikhailovsky cannot grasp the difference between an attempt to embrace the whole philosophy of history and an attempt to explain the bourgeois regime scientifically, or he thinks that Marx and Engels did not possess sufficient knowledge for a criticism of political economy. And in the latter case it is very cruel of him not to acquaint us with his reasons for assuming this deficiency of knowledge, and not to give his amendments and additions. Marx's and Engels' decision not to publish the historico-philosophical work and to concentrate their efforts on a scientific analysis of one social organisation only indicates a very high degree of scientific scrupulousness. Mr. Mikhailovsky's decision to make game of this by a little addition, namely, that Marx and Engels expounded their views when they themselves confessed that their knowledge was inadequate to elaborate them, is only indicative of methods of controversy which testify neither to wisdom nor to a sense of decency.

Here is another example:

"More was done by Marx's *alter ego*, Engels," says Mr. Mikhailovsky, "to prove economic materialism as a theory of history. He has written a special historical work, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* in connection (*im Anschluss*) with the views of Morgan."

This *Anschluss* is very remarkable. The book of the American Morgan appeared many years after Marx and Engels had announced the principles of economic materialism and absolutely inde-

pendently of the latter. "And we find the economic materialists associating themselves" with this book and, since there was no struggle of classes in pre-historic times, introducing an "amendment" to the formula of the materialist conception of history to the effect that, in addition to the production of material values, a determining factor is the production of man himself, i.e., procreation, which played a primary role in the primitive era, when the productivity of labour was still very undeveloped.

Engels says that it is to the great credit of Morgan that he found in the tribal ties of the North American Indians "the key to all the great and hitherto unfathomable riddles of ancient Greek, Roman and German history."

"And so," pronounces Mr. Mikhailovsky in this connection, "at the end of the 'forties there was discovered and proclaimed an absolutely new, materialist and truly scientific conception of history, which did for historical science what Darwin's theory did for modern natural science."

But this conception—Mr. Mikhailovsky once more repeats—was never scientifically proved.

"It was not only never tested in a large and varied field of factual material [*Capital* is "not the corresponding" work: it contains only facts and painstaking researches!], but was not even sufficiently justified, if only by the criticism and exclusion of other philosophico-historical systems."

Engels' book—*Herrn E. Dührings Umwälzung der Wissenschaft*<sup>1</sup>—represents "only clever attempts made in passing," and Mr. Mikhailovsky therefore considers it possible to evade the vast number of essential questions dealt with in that work, in spite of the fact that these "clever attempts" very cleverly show the emptiness of sociologies which "begin with utopias," and in spite of the fact that this book contains a detailed criticism of the "force theory," which asserts that political and legal systems determine economic systems and which is so fervently professed by the journalistic gentlemen of *Russkoye Bogatstvo*. And, indeed, it is much easier to say a few meaningless phrases about the work than to make a serious analysis of even one question materialistically dealt with in it. And it is also safe—for the censor will probably never pass

<sup>1</sup> *Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science.—Trans*

a translation of the book, and Mr. Mikhailovsky may call it clever without danger to his subjective philosophy.

Even more characteristic and edifying is his comment on Marx's *Capital* (a comment which serves as an illustration to the saying that man was given a tongue to conceal his thoughts—or to lend lack of thought the form of thought):

"There are brilliant pages of history in *Capital*, but [that wonderful "but"! It is not so much a "but," as that famous *mais*, which translated means "the poor fellow can only do his best"]], by the very purpose of the book, they concern only one definite historical period; they do not so much affirm the basic propositions of economic materialism as simply deal with the economic aspect of a certain group of historical phenomena."

In other words, *Capital*—which is devoted only to a study of capitalist society—gives a materialist analysis of this society and its superstructures, "but" Mr. Mikhailovsky prefers to say nothing about this analysis. It deals, don't you see, with only "one" period, whereas he, Mr. Mikhailovsky, wants to embrace all periods, and to embrace them in such a way as not to say anything about any one of them in particular. Of course, this aim—viz., of embracing all periods without touching on any one essentially—can be achieved only in one way—by general talk and phrasemongering, "brilliant" but empty. And nobody can compare with Mr. Mikhailovsky in the art of phrasemongering. It turns out that it is not worth dealing (separately) with the essence of Marx's researches for the reason that he, Marx, "not so much affirms the basic propositions of economic materialism as simply deals with the economic aspect of a certain group of historical phenomena." What profundity! He "does not affirm," but "simply deals with"! How easy it is to confuse any issue by phrasemongering! For instance, if Marx repeatedly shows how the relations of the commodity producers form the basis of civil equality, free contract and similar foundations of the law-governed state—what of that? Does he thereby affirm materialism, or "simply" deal with it? With his inherent modesty, our philosopher refrains from giving a reply on the essence of the question and directly proceeds to draw conclusions from his "clever attempts" to talk brilliantly and say nothing.

"It is not surprising," the conclusion runs, "that for a theory which claimed to elucidate world history, forty years after its announcement ancient Greek, Roman and German history remained unfathomable riddles; and the key to these riddles was provided, firstly, by a man who had absolutely no connection with the theory of economic materialism and knew nothing about it, and, secondly, with the help of a factor which was not economic. A rather amusing impression is produced by the term 'production of man himself,' i.e., procreation, on which Engels seizes in order to preserve at least a verbal connection with the basic formula of economic materialism. He was, however, obliged to admit that for many years the life of mankind did not proceed in accordance with this formula."

Indeed, Mr. Mikhailovsky, the way you argue is "not suprising" at all. The theory was that in order to "elucidate" history one must seek for the foundations in material social relations and not in ideological relations. The inadequacy of factual material made it impossible to apply this method to an analysis of certain very important phenomena in very ancient European history—for instance, tribal organisation—which in consequence remained a riddle. (And here too Mr. Mikhailovsky does not miss an opportunity of making game: how is that—a scientific conception of history, and yet ancient history remains a riddle! Mr. Mikhailovsky, take any textbook and you will find that tribal organisation is one of those very difficult problems in explanation of which a mass of theories has arisen.) But along comes Morgan in America and the wealth of material he collected enables him to analyse the nature of tribal organisation; and he comes to the conclusion that one must seek for its explanation in material relations, and not in ideological relations (e.g., legal or religious). Obviously, this fact is a brilliant confirmation of the materialist method, and nothing more. And when Mr. Mikhailovsky "rebukes" this doctrine on the grounds, firstly, that the key to most difficult historical riddles was found by a man "who had absolutely no connection" with the theory of economic materialism, one can only wonder at the extent to which people can fail to distinguish what speaks in their favour from what cruelly contradicts them. Secondly—our philosopher argues—procreation is not an economic factor. But where have you read in Marx or in Engels that they necessarily spoke of economic materialism? When they described their world outlook they called it simply materialism. Their basic idea (which was quite



definitely expressed, for instance, in the passage from Marx above quoted) was that social relations are divided into material relations and ideological relations. The latter merely constitute a superstructure on the former, arising apart from the volition and consciousness of man as (a result) a form of man's activity which aims at the preservation of his existence. The explanation of political and legal forms—Marx says in the passage quoted above—must be sought for in "the material relations of life." Mr. Mikhailovsky surely does not think that the relations of procreation are ideological relations? The explanation given by Mr. Mikhailovsky in this connection is so characteristic that it deserves to be dwelt on.

"However much we exercise our ingenuity on the question of 'procreation,' " he says, "and endeavour to establish if only a verbal connection between it and economic materialism, however much it may be interwoven in the complex web of phenomena of social life with other phenomena, including economic phenomena, it has its own physiological and psychical roots. [Is it suckling infants you are telling, Mr. Mikhailovsky, that procreation has physiological roots!? What sort of blarney is this?] And this reminds us that the theoreticians of economic materialism have not settled accounts not only with history, but also with psychology. There can be no doubt that tribal ties have lost their significance in the history of civilised countries, but this can hardly be said with the same assurance of direct sexual and family ties. They have of course undergone considerable change under the pressure of the increasing complexity of life in general, but with a certain amount of dialectical dexterity it might have been shown that not only legal, but also economic relations themselves constitute a 'superstructure' on sexual and family relations. We shall not dwell on this, but nevertheless would point to the institution of inheritance."

At last our philosopher has been happy enough to leave the sphere of empty phrasemongering (how else, indeed, can one characterise it, when he accuses materialists of not having settled accounts with history without attempting to examine "literally a single one" of the numerous materialist explanations of various historical questions given by the materialists, or when he says that a thing can be proved, but that he will not dwell on it?) for facts, definite facts, which can be verified and which make it less easy to "blarney" about the substance of the matter. Let us then see how our critic of Marx proves that the institution of inheritance is a superstructure on sexual and family relations.

"It is the products of economic production ["the products of economic production"! How literary! How euphonious! How elegant!] that are trans-

mitted by inheritance, and the institution of inheritance itself is to a certain extent determined by the fact of economic competition. But, firstly, non-material values are also transmitted by inheritance—as expressed in the concern to educate children in the spirit of their fathers . . .”

And so the education of children is part of the institution of inheritance! For example, the Russian Civil Code contains a clause to the effect that “parents must endeavour by home education to train their [*i.e.*, their children’s] morals and to further the views of the government.” Is it this that our philosopher calls the institution of inheritance?—

“and, secondly, even though we confine ourselves to the economic sphere, if the institution of inheritance is unthinkable without the products of production that are transmitted by inheritance, it is just as unthinkable without the products of ‘procreation’—without them and without that complex and intense psychology which directly borders on them.”

(Do pay attention to the style: a complex psychology “borders on” the products of procreation! That is really exquisite!) And so the institution of inheritance is a superstructure on family and sexual relations, because inheritance is unthinkable without procreation! Why, this is a veritable discovery of America! Until now everybody had assumed that procreation can explain the institution of inheritance just as little as the necessity for taking food can explain the institution of property. Until now everybody had thought that if, for instance, in Russia, in the era when the manorial system flourished, land could not be transmitted by bequest (because it was regarded only as conditional property), the explanation for this was to be sought in the peculiarities of the social organisation of the time. Mr. Mikhailovsky presumably thinks that the matter is to be explained simply by the fact that the psychology which bordered on the products of procreation of the landlord of that time was distinguished by insufficient complexity.

Scratch the “spirit of the people”—one might say, paraphrasing the proverb—and you will find a bourgeois. And, indeed, what other meaning can be attached to Mr. Mikhailovsky’s reflections on the connection between the institution of inheritance and the education of children, the psychology of procreation, and so on, except that the institution of inheritance is as eternal, essential and sacred as the education of children? True, Mr. Mikhailovsky tried

to leave himself a loophole by declaring that "the institution of inheritance is to a certain extent determined by the fact of economic competition." But that is nothing but an attempt to avoid giving a definite answer to the question, and a bad attempt at that. How can we take cognizance of this statement when not a word is said about what exactly is the "certain extent" to which inheritance depends on competition, when absolutely no explanation is given of what exactly this connection between competition and the institution of inheritance is due to? As a matter of fact, the institution of inheritance presumes the existence of private property, and the latter arises only with the appearance of exchange. It is based on the already incipient specialisation of social labour and the alienation of products in the market. For instance, as long as all the members of the primitive Indian community produced in common all the articles they required, private property was impossible. But when division of labour appeared in the community and each of its members began to produce separately some one article or other and to sell it in the market, this material isolation of the commodity producer found expression in the institution of private property. Both private property and inheritance are categories of a social order in which separate, small (monogamous) families have already arisen and exchange has begun to develop. Mr. Mikhailovsky's example proves precisely the opposite of what he wanted to prove.

Mr. Mikhailovsky gives another factual reference—and this too in its way is a gem!

"As regards tribal ties," he says, continuing to put materialism right, "they paled in the history of civilised peoples partially, it is true, under the rays of the influence of the forms of production [another subterfuge, only this time more obvious. What forms of production precisely? An empty phrase!], but partially they also became dissolved in their own continuation and generalisation—national ties."

And so, national ties are a continuation and generalisation of tribal ties! Mr. Mikhailovsky, evidently, borrows his ideas on the history of society from the fairy tale that is taught to high school students. The history of society—this copy-book maxim runs—is that first there was the family, that nucleus of all society

(this is a purely bourgeois idea: separate, small families came to predominate only under the bourgeois regime; they were entirely non-existent in prehistoric times. Nothing is more characteristic of the bourgeois than the ascription of the features of the modern system to all times and peoples), then the family grew into the tribe, and the tribe grew into the state. If Mr. Mikhailovsky impressively repeats this childish nonsense, it only goes to show—apart from everything else—that he has not the slightest inkling of the course even of Russian history. While one might speak of tribal life in ancient Russia, there can be no doubt that by the Middle Ages, the era of the Muscovite tsars, these tribal ties no longer existed, that is to say, the state was based on local unions and not on tribal unions: the landlords and the monasteries took peasants from various localities, and the communities thus formed were purely territorial unions. However, one could hardly at that time speak of national ties in the true sense of the word: the state was divided into separate territories, often even principalities, which preserved living traces of former autonomy, peculiarities of administration, at times their own troops (the local boyars went to war at the head of their own regiments), their own customs frontiers, and so forth. It is only the modern period of Russian history (beginning approximately with the seventeenth century) that is marked by an actual amalgamation of all such regions, territories and principalities into a single whole. This amalgamation, highly esteemed Mr. Mikhailovsky, was not brought about by tribal ties, nor even by their continuation and generalisation, but by the growth of exchange between regions, the steady growth of commodity circulation and the concentration of the small local markets into a single, all-Russian market. Since the leaders and masters of this process were the merchant capitalists, the creation of these national ties was nothing but the creation of bourgeois ties. By both his factual references Mr. Mikhailovsky has only defeated his own purpose and has given us nothing but examples of bourgeois puerility. “Puerility,” because he explained the institution of inheritance by procreation and its psychology, and nationality by tribal ties; “bourgeois,” because he accepted the categories and

superstructures of one historically-defined social formation (based on exchange) as equivalent to categories just as general and eternal as the education of children and "direct" sexual ties.

What is most characteristic here is that as soon as our subjective philosopher tried to pass from phrasemongering to concrete factual references he got himself into a mess. And apparently he feels very much at ease in this not over-clean position: there he sits, preening himself and splashing mud all around him. For instance, he wants to refute the thesis that history is a succession of episodes of the classe struggle, and, declaring with an air of profundity that this is "extreme," he says:

"The formation by Marx of the International Workingmen's Association, which was organised for the purposes of the class struggle, did not prevent the French and German workers from cutting each others' throats and despoiling each other."

Which, he asserts, proves that materialism has not settled accounts "with the demon of national vanity and national hatred." Such a statement reveals on the critic's part a profound lack of realisation of the fact that the very real interests of the commercial and industrial bourgeoisie constitute the principal basis for this hatred, and that to speak of national sentiment as an independent factor is only to gloss over the real facts of the case. But then we have already seen what a profound idea of nationality our philosopher has. Mr. Mikhailovsky cannot refer to the International except with the irony of a Burenin:

"Marx is the head of the International Workingmen's Association, which, it is true, has fallen to pieces, but which is due to be resurrected."

Of course, if one discerns the *nec plus ultra* of international solidarity in a system of "just" exchange, as the chronicler of home affairs in No. 2 of *Russkoye Bogatstvo* with philistine banality asserts, and if one does not understand that exchange, just and unjust, invariably presumes and includes the domination of the bourgeoisie, and that, unless the economic organisation which is based on exchange is destroyed, international collisions are inevitable, this incessant sneering at the International is understandable. It is then understandable that Mr. Mikhailovsky cannot grasp the

simple truth that there is no other way of combating national hatred than by organising and welding the class of the oppressed for a struggle against the class of the oppressors in every single country, and by the amalgamation of such national working class organisations into a single international working class army for combating international capital. As to the statement that the International did not prevent the workers from cutting each others' throats, it is enough to remind Mr. Mikhailovsky of the events of the Commune, which revealed the true attitude of the organised proletariat to the ruling classes who were waging the war.

But what is most disgusting in Mr. Mikhailovsky's polemic is the methods he employs. If he is dissatisfied with the tactics of the International, if he does not share the ideas on behalf of which the European workers are organising, let him at least criticise them bluntly and openly and set forth his own idea of what would be more expedient tactics and more correct views. As it is, no definite and clear objections are made, and all we get are senseless jibes amidst an ocean of phrasemongering. What can one call this but filth, especially when one bears in mind that a defence of the ideas and tactics of the International is not legally allowed in Russia? Such too are the methods Mr. Mikhailovsky employs when he argues against the Russian Marxists: without giving himself the trouble to formulate any of their theses conscientiously and accurately, in order to refute them by direct and definite criticism, he prefers to seize hold of fragments of Marxist arguments he happens to have heard and to garble them. Judge for yourselves:

"Marx was too clever and too learned to think that it was he who discovered the idea of the historical necessity of social phenomena and their conformity to law. . . . The lower rungs [of the Marxist ladder<sup>1</sup>] do not know this [that "the idea of historical necessity is not something new invented

<sup>1</sup> In connection with this meaningless term it should be stated that Mr. Mikhailovsky singles out Marx (who is too clever and too learned—for our critic to be able to criticise any of his propositions directly and openly), after whom he places Engels ("not such a creative mind"), next more or less independent men like Kautsky—and then the other Marxists. Well, can such a classification have any serious value? If the critic is dissatisfied with the popularisers of Marx, what prevents him from correcting them on the basis of Marx? He does nothing of the kind. He evidently wanted to be witty—but it fell flat.

or discovered by Marx, but a long-established truth" ], or, at least, they have only a vague idea of the centuries of mental power and energy that were spent on the establishment of this truth."

Of course, statements of this kind may very well produce an effect on people who hear of Marxism for the first time, and in the case of such people the aim of the critic may be easily achieved, namely, to distort, make game of and "win" (such, it is said, is the way contributors to *Russkoye Bogatstvo* speak of Mr. Mikhailovsky's articles). Anybody who has any knowledge of Marx at all will immediately perceive the falsity and sham of such methods. One may not agree with Marx, but one cannot deny that those of his views which constitute "something new" in relation to those of the earlier Socialists he did formulate very definitely. The something new consisted in the fact that the earlier Socialists thought it enough to prove their views by pointing to the oppression of the masses under the existing regime, by pointing to the superiority of a system under which every man would receive what he himself had produced, by pointing to the harmony between this ideal system and "human nature," the conception of a sensible and moral life, and so forth. Marx deemed it impossible to be contented with such a Socialism. He did not confine himself to describing the existing system, giving a judgment of it and condemning it; he gave a scientific explanation of it, reducing the existing system, which differs in the various European and non-European countries, to a common basis—the capitalist social formation, the laws of the functioning and development of which he subjected to an objective analysis (he showed the "necessity" of exploitation under such a system). In just the same way, he did not deem it possible to be contented with the assertion that only the Socialist system accords with human nature, as was asserted by the great utopian Socialists and by their wretched offspring, the subjective sociologists. By this same "objective" analysis of the capitalist system, he proved the "necessity" of its transformation into the Socialist system. (Precisely how he proved this and how Mr. Mikhailovsky objected to it is a question we shall have to revert to.) Here we have the source of those references to necessity which we may frequently meet with among Marxists. The distortion which Mr.

Mikhailovsky introduced into the question is obvious: he dropped the whole factual content of the theory, its whole essence, and presented the matter as though the whole theory were contained in the one word "necessity" ("one cannot refer to it alone in complex practical affairs"), as though the "proof" of this theory consists in the fact that historical necessity demands it. In other words, saying nothing about the contents of the doctrine, he seized on its label only, and again started to make game of that "simply flat circle," into which he had himself endeavoured to transform Marx's teaching. We shall not, of course, endeavour to follow this game, because we are already sufficiently acquainted with that sort of thing. Let him cut capers for the amusement and satisfaction of Mr. Burenin (who not without good reason patted Mr. Mikhailovsky on the back in *Novoye Vremya*), let him pay his respects to Marx and then yelp at him from round the corner: "His polemic against the utopians and idealists is in any case [i.e., even without the Marxists repeating its arguments] one-sided." We cannot call such sallies anything else but yelping, because he literally does not bring a "single" factual, definite and verifiable objection against this polemic, so that—however willing we might be to discuss the subject, for we consider this controversy extremely important for the settlement of Russian Socialist questions—we simply cannot reply to yelping, and can only shrug our shoulders and say: "The lapdog must be strong indeed if he barks at an elephant!"

Not without interest is Mr. Mikhailovsky's next argument, on the subject of historical necessity, because it reveals, if only partially, the real ideological baggage of "our well-known sociologist" (the epithet which Mr. Mikhailovsky, equally with Mr. V. V.,<sup>1</sup> enjoys among the liberal representatives of our "cultured society"). He speaks of "the conflict between the idea of historical necessity and the importance of individual activity": socially active figures err in regarding themselves as active figures, when as a matter of fact they are "activated." "marionettes, manipulated from a mysterious cellar by the immanent laws of historical ne-



cessity"—such, he claims, is the conclusion to be drawn from this idea, which he therefore characterises as "sterile" and "diffuse." Probably not every reader knows where Mr. Mikhailovsky got all this nonsense about marionettes and the like. The fact is that this is one of the favourite hobby-horses of the subjective philosopher—the idea of the conflict between determinism and morality, between historical necessity and the importance of the individual. He has filled piles of paper on the subject and has uttered an infinite amount of sentimental, philistine rubbish in order to settle this conflict in favour of morality and the importance of the individual. As a matter of fact, there is no conflict here at all; it has been invented by Mr. Mikhailovsky, who feared (not without reason) that determinism would cut the ground from under the philistine morality he so loves. The idea of determinism, which establishes the necessity of human acts and rejects the absurd fable of freedom of will, in no way destroys man's reason or conscience, or the judgment of his actions. Quite the contrary, the determinist view alone makes a strict and correct judgment possible, instead of attributing everything one fancies to freedom of will. Similarly, the idea of historical necessity in no way undermines the role of the individual in history: all history is made up of the actions of individuals, who are undoubtedly active figures. The real question that arises in judging the social activity of an individual is: what conditions ensure the success of this activity, what guarantee is there that this activity will not remain an isolated act lost in a welter of contrary acts? This also involves a question which is answered differently by Social-Democrats and by the other Russian Socialists, namely, in what way must activity which aims at bringing about the Socialist system enlist the masses in order to secure real results? Obviously, the answer to this question depends directly and immediately on the conception of the grouping of social forces in Russia, of the class struggle out of which the actualities of Russian life arise. And here too Mr. Mikhailovsky dances around the question without even attempting to state it precisely and to furnish an answer to it. The Social-Democratic answer to the question, as we know, is based on the view that the Russian economic system is a bourgeois society, from which there can be only one

way out, one that necessarily follows from the very nature of the bourgeois system, namely, the class struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. It is obvious that any serious criticism ought to be directed either against the view that our system is a bourgeois system or against the conception of the nature of this system and the laws of its development. But Mr. Mikhailovsky does not even think of dealing with serious questions. He prefers to confine himself to meaningless phrasemongering about necessity being too general a parenthesis, and so forth. Yes, Mr. Mikhailovsky, any idea will be too general a parenthesis if you first take all the insides out of it, as though it were a dried herring, and then begin to play about with the skin. This skin, which covers really serious and burning questions of the day, is Mr. Mikhailovsky's favourite sphere; for instance, he stresses with particular pride the fact that "economic materialism ignores or throws a wrong light on the question of heroes and the crowd." Don't you see, the question—which are the classes whose struggle gives rise to modern Russian actuality, and on what grounds?—is probably too general for Mr. Mikhailovsky, and he avoids it. On the other hand, the question—what relations exist between the hero and the crowd, irrespective of whether it is a crowd of workers, peasants, manufacturers or landlords?—is a question that interests him extremely. These may be really "interesting" questions, but anybody who rebukes the materialists for directing all their efforts to the settlement of problems which directly concern the liberation of the toiling class is an amateur philistine scientist, and nothing more. Concluding his "criticism" (?) of materialism, Mr. Mikhailovsky makes one more attempt to present facts falsely and performs one more manipulation. Having expressed doubt as to the correctness of Engels' opinion that *Capital* was hushed up by the official economists (a doubt he justifies on the curious grounds that there are numerous universities in Germany!), Mr. Mikhailovsky says:

"Marx did not have this circle of readers [workers] in view at all and expected something from men of science."

That is absolutely untrue. Marx understood very well how little he could expect impartiality and scientific criticism from the bourgeois

representatives of science, and in the Postscript to the second edition of *Capital* he expressed himself very positively on this point. He there says:

"The understanding which *Capital* rapidly met with among wide circles of the German working class is the best reward for my labour. Herr Meyer, a man who on economic questions adheres to the bourgeois standpoint, aptly stated in a pamphlet which appeared during the Franco-Prussian War that the great capacity for theoretical thinking (*der grosse theoretische Sinn*) which was regarded as the heritage of the Germans has completely disappeared among the so-called educated classes of Germany, but, on the other hand, is being born anew in her working class."

The manipulation also concerns materialism and is entirely in the spirit of the first sample. "The theory [of materialism] has never been scientifically proved and verified." Such is the thesis. Here is the proof:

"Individual good pages of historical content in Engels, Kautsky and certain others also (as in the esteemed work of Bloss) could get along without the label economic materialism, since [note the "since"!], in fact [sic!], they take the sum total of social life into account, although the economic strings predominate in the chord."

And the conclusion—"Economic materialism has not justified itself in science."

A familiar trick! In order to prove that the theory lacks foundation, Mr. Mikhailovsky first distorts it by attributing to it the absurd intention of not taking the sum-total of social life into account, whereas quite the opposite is the case: the materialists (Marxists) were the first Socialists to insist on the need of analysing all aspects of social life, and not only the economic.<sup>1</sup> Then he

<sup>1</sup> This has been quite clearly expressed in *Capital* and in the tactics of the Social-Democrats, as compared with those of the earliest Socialists. Marx directly demanded that we should not confine ourselves to the economic aspect. In 1843, when drafting the programme for a projected magazine, Marx wrote to Ruge: "The Socialist principle as a whole is again only one aspect. . . . We, on our part, must devote equal attention to the other aspect, the theoretical existence of man, and consequently must make religion, science, and so forth an object of our criticism. . . . Just as religion represents a table of contents of the theoretical conflicts of mankind, the political state represents a table of contents of its practical conflicts. Thus, the political state, within the limits of its form, expresses *sub specie rei publicæ* [from the political standpoint] all social conflicts, needs and interests. Hence to make a most special political question—e.g., the difference between the estate system and

declares that "in fact" the materialists have "well" explained the sum-total of social life by economics (a fact which obviously destroys the author)—and finally he comes to the conclusion that materialism has not justified itself! But, on the other hand, Mr. Mikhailovsky, your manipulation has justified itself magnificently! And this is all that Mr. Mikhailovsky brings forward in "refutation" of materialism. I repeat, there is no criticism here, it is nothing but vapid and pretentious verbosity. If we were to ask any person what objections Mr. Mikhailovsky has brought against the view that the relations of production form the basis of all others, how he has disproved the concept of social formations and the natural-historical process of development of these formations worked out by Marx with the help of the materialist method, how he has proved the fallacy of the materialist explanations of various historical questions given, for instance, by the writers he has mentioned—that person would have to answer that he has brought no objections, has in no way disproved, and has pointed out no fallacies. He has merely danced around the subject, trying to confuse its real meaning by phrasemongering, and in passing has invented various piffing subterfuges.

It is hard to expect anything serious of such a critic when he continues to refute Marxism in No. 2 of *Russkoye Bogatstvo*. The only difference is that he has already exhausted his own power of inventing manipulations and begins to avail himself of those of others.

He starts out by declaiming about the "complexity" of social life: why, even galvanism is connected with economic materialism, because the experiments of Galvani "produced an impression" on Hegel. Astonishingly clever! One could just as easily connect Mr. Mikhailovsky with the Chinese emperor! What are we to deduce from this—apart from the fact that there are people who find pleasure in talking nonsense?! The nature of the historical course

the representative system—an object of criticism by no means implies descending from the *hauteur des principes* [the height of principles—*Ed.*], since this question expresses in political language the difference between the rule of man and the rule of private property. This means that the critic not only can but must deal with these political questions (which the inveterate Socialist considers unworthy of attention),"

of things—Mr. Mikhailovsky continues—which is generally ungraspable, has not been grasped by the doctrine of economic materialism, although the latter apparently rests on two pillars: the discovery of the all-determining significance of the forms of production and exchange and the “unquestionableness of the dialectical process.”

And so, the materialists rest their case on the “unquestionableness” of the dialectical process! In other words, they base their sociological theories on Hegelian triads. Here we have the stereotyped accusation that Marxism is Hegelian dialectics which one thought had already been worn sufficiently threadbare by Marx’s bourgeois critics. Unable to bring anything against the doctrine itself, these gentlemen fastened on Marx’s method of expression and attacked the origin of the theory, thinking thereby to undermine the theory itself. And Mr. Mikhailovsky makes no bones about resorting to similar methods. He uses a chapter from Engels’ *Anti-Dühring* as a pretext. Replying to Dühring, who had attacked Marx’s dialectics, Engels says that Marx never even thought of “proving” anything by means of Hegelian triads, that Marx only studied and investigated the real process, and that he regarded the conformity of a theory to reality as its only criterion. If, however, it sometimes transpired that the development of any particular social phenomenon conformed with the Hegelian scheme, namely, thesis—negation—negation of the negation, there is nothing at all surprising in this, for it is no rare thing in nature generally. And Engels proceeds to cite examples from the field of natural history (the development of a seed) and from the social field—for instance, that first there was primitive Communism, then private property, and then the capitalist socialisation of labour; or that first there was primitive materialism, then idealism, and then scientific materialism, and so forth. It is clear to everybody that the main burden of Engels’ argument is that materialists must depict the historical process correctly and accurately, and that insistence on dialectics, the selection of examples which demonstrate the correctness of the triad, is nothing but a relic of the Hegelianism out of which scientific Socialism has grown, a relic of its method of expression. And, indeed, once it has been categorically declared

that to attempt to "prove" anything by triads is absurd, and that nobody even thought of doing so, what significance can examples of "dialectical" processes have? Is it not obvious that they merely point to the origin of the doctrine, and nothing more? Mr. Mikhailovsky himself feels this when he says that the theory should not be blamed for its origin. But in order to discern in Engels' arguments something more than the origin of the theory, it was obviously necessary to prove that the materialists had settled at least one historical "problem" by means of triads, and not on the basis of the appropriate facts. Did Mr. Mikhailovsky attempt to prove this? Not a bit of it. On the contrary, he was himself obliged to admit that "Marx filled the empty dialectical scheme with a factual content to such an extent" that "it could be removed from this content like a lid from a bowl without anything being changed" (as to the exception which Mr. Mikhailovsky makes here—regarding the future—we shall deal with it below). If that is so, why is Mr. Mikhailovsky so eagerly concerned with this lid that changes nothing? What is the point of asserting that the materialists "rest" their case on the unquestionableness of the dialectical process? Why, when he is combating this lid, does he declare that he is combating one of the "pillars" of scientific Socialism, which is a direct untruth?

I shall not, of course, examine how Mr. Mikhailovsky analyses the examples of triads, because, I repeat, this has no connection whatever either with scientific materialism or with Russian Marxism. But the interesting question arises: what grounds did Mr. Mikhailovsky have for so distorting the attitude of Marxists to dialectics? Twofold grounds: firstly, Mr. Mikhailovsky heard something, but did not quite grasp what it was all about; secondly, Mr. Mikhailovsky performed another piece of juggling (or, rather, borrowed it from Dühring).

As to the first point, when reading Marxist literature Mr. Mikhailovsky constantly came across the phrases "the dialectical method" in social science, "dialectical thought," again in the sphere of social questions, "which is alone in question," and so forth. In his simplicity of heart (it were well if it were only simplicity) he took it for granted that this method consists in solving all sociological

problems in accordance with the laws of the Hegelian triad. If he had been just a little more attentive to the matter in hand he could not but have become convinced of the stupidity of this notion. What Marx and Engels called the dialectical method—in contradistinction to the metaphysical method—is nothing more or less than the scientific method in sociology, which consists in regarding society as a living organism in a constant state of development (and not as something mechanically concatenated and therefore permitting any arbitrary combination of individual social elements), the study of which requires an objective analysis of the relations of production that constitute the given social formation and an investigation of its laws of functioning and development. We shall endeavour below to illustrate the relation between the dialectical method and the metaphysical method (to which concept the subjective method in sociology undoubtedly belongs) by an example taken from Mr. Mikhailovsky's own arguments. For the present we shall only observe that anyone who reads the definition and description of the dialectical method given either by Engels (in the polemic against Dühring: *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*) or by Marx (various remarks in *Capital* and in the Postscript to the second edition; *The Poverty of Philosophy*), will see that the Hegelian triads are not even mentioned, and that it all amounts to regarding social evolution as a natural-historical process of development of social-economic formations. In confirmation of this I shall cite *in extenso* the description of the dialectical method given in the *Vestnik Evropy* (*European Messenger*), 1872, No. 5 (in the article, "The Standpoint of the Political and Economic Critique of Karl Marx"), which is quoted by Marx in the Postscript to the second edition of *Capital*. Marx there says that the method employed in *Capital* had been little understood.

"German reviewers, of course, shriek out at 'Hegelian sophistics.'"

And in order to illustrate his method more clearly, Marx quotes the description of it given in the article mentioned.

"The one thing which is of moment to Marx," it is there stated, "is to find the law of the phenomena with whose investigation he is concerned. . . . Of still greater moment to him is the law of their variation, of their develop-

ment, i.e., of their transition from one form into another, from one series of connections into a different one. . . . Consequently, Marx only troubles himself about one thing: to show, by rigid scientific investigation, the necessity of successive determinate orders of social conditions, and to establish, as impartially as possible, the facts that serve him for fundamental starting points. For this it is quite enough, if he proves, at the same time, both the necessity of the present order of things, and the necessity of another order into which the first must inevitably pass over; and this all the same, whether men believe or do not believe it, whether they are conscious or unconscious of it. Marx treats the social movement as a process of natural history, governed by laws not only independent of human will, consciousness and intelligence, but rather, on the contrary, determining that will, consciousness and intelligence. [To be noted by Messieurs the subjectivists, who separate social evolution from the evolution of natural history because man sets himself conscious 'aims' and is guided by definite ideals.] If in the history of civilisation the conscious element plays a part so subordinate, then it is self-evident that a critical inquiry whose subject matter is civilisation, can, less than anything else, have for its basis any form of, or any result of, consciousness. That is to say, that not the idea, but the material phenomenon alone can serve as its starting point. Such an inquiry will confine itself to the confrontation and the comparison of a fact, not with ideas, but with another fact. For this inquiry, the one thing of moment is, that both facts be investigated as accurately as possible, and that they actually form, each with respect to the other, different momenta of an evolution; but most important of all is the rigid analysis of the series of successions, of the sequences and concatenations in which the different stages of such an evolution present themselves. But it will be said, the general laws of economic life are one and the same, no matter whether they are applied to the present or the past. This Marx directly denies. According to him, such abstract laws do not exist. On the contrary, in his opinion every historical period has laws of its own. . . . Economic life offers a phenomenon analogous to the history of evolution in other branches of biology. The old economists misunderstood the nature of economic laws when they likened them to the laws of physics and chemistry. A more thorough analysis of phenomena shows that social organisms differ among themselves as fundamentally as plants or animals. . . . Whilst Marx sets himself the task of following and explaining from this point of view the economic system established by the sway of capital, he is only formulating, in a strictly scientific manner, the aim that every accurate investigation into economic life must have. The scientific value of such an inquiry lies in the disclosing of the special laws that regulate the origin, existence, development, and death of a given social organism and its replacement by another and higher one."

Such is the description of the dialectical method which Marx fished out of the bottomless pit of magazine and newspaper comments on *Capital*, and which he translated into German, because this description of the method, as he himself says, is entirely correct. One asks, is there any mention here, even a single



word, about triads, trichotomies, the unquestionableness of the dialectical (method) process and suchlike nonsense, against which Mr. Mikhailovsky jousts in so knightly a fashion? And after giving this description, Marx directly says that his method is the "direct opposite" of Hegel's method. According to Hegel the development of the idea, in conformity with the dialectical laws of the triad, defines the development of the real world. And it is of course only in this sense that one can speak of the importance of the triads and of the unquestionableness of the dialectical process. "With me, on the contrary," Marx says, "the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected. . . ." And the whole matter thus amounts to an "affirmative recognition of the existing state of things" and of its inevitable development. No other role remains for the triads than as a lid and a skin ("I . . . coquetted with the modes of expression" of Hegel, Marx says in this same Postscript), in which only philistines could be interested. How, one now asks, should we judge a man who set out to criticise one of the "pillars" of scientific materialism, *i.e.*, dialectics, and began to speak of anything you like, even of frogs and Napoleon, except of the nature of dialectics, except of the question whether the development of society is really a process of natural history, whether the materialist conception of economic formations of society as special social organisms is correct, whether the methods of objective analysis of these formations are right ones, whether social ideas really do not define social development but are themselves defined by it, and so forth? Can one merely assume a lack of understanding in this case?

As to the second point: after such a "criticism" of dialectics, Mr. Mikhailovsky attributes to Marx these methods of proof "by means of" Hegelian triads, and, of course, victoriously combats them.

"Regarding the future," he says, "the immanent laws of society follow exclusively dialectical lines." (This is the exception referred to above.)

Marx's arguments on the subject of the inevitability of the expropriation of the expropriators by virtue of the laws of development of capitalism bear an "exclusively dialectical character."

Marx's "ideal" of the common ownership of land and capital "in the sense of its inevitability and unquestionableness rests entirely on the end of an Hegelian three-term chain."

This argument is "entirely taken" from Dühring, who adduces it in his *Kritische Geschichte der Nationalökonomie und des Sozialismus* (3. Aufl., 1879, S. 486-87).<sup>1</sup> But Mr. Mikhailovsky says not a word about Dühring. Perhaps the idea of garbling Marx in this way occurred to him independently?

Engels gave a splendid reply to Dühring, and since he also quotes Dühring's criticism we shall confine ourselves to Engels' reply. The reader will see that it fits Mr. Mikhailovsky entirely.

"This historical sketch (of the genesis of the so-called primitive accumulation of capital in England) is relatively the best part of Marx's book [says Dühring], and would be even better if it had not relied on dialectical crutches to help out its scholarly basis. The Hegelian negation of the negation, in default of anything better and cleaner, has in fact to serve here as the midwife to deliver the future from the womb of the past. The abolition of individual property, which since the sixteenth century has been effected in the way indicated by Marx, is the first negation. It will be followed by a second, which bears the character of a negation of the negation, hence the restoration of "individual property," but in a higher form, based on common ownership of the land and of the instruments of labour. Herr Marx also calls this new "individual property"—"social property," and in this we have the Hegelian higher unity, in which the contradiction is resolved [*aufgehoben*—a specific Hegelian term], that is to say, in the Hegelian verbal jugglery, it is both overcome and preserved. . . . According to this, the expropriation of the expropriators is as it were the automatic result of historical reality in its material and external relations. . . . It would be difficult to convince a sensible man of the necessity of the common ownership of land and capital, on the basis of Hegelian word-juggling such as the negation of the negation. . . . The nebulous hybrids of Marx's conceptions will however surprise no one who realises what phantasies can be built up with the Hegelian dialectics as the scientific basis, or rather what monstrosities necessarily spring from it. For the benefit of the reader who is not familiar with these artifices, it must be pointed out that Hegel's first negation is the idea of the fall from grace, which is taken from the catechism, and his second is the idea of a higher unity leading to redemption. The logic of facts can hardly be based on this nonsensical analogy borrowed from the religious sphere. . . . Herr Marx remains cheerfully in the nebulous world of his property which is at the same time both individual and social and leaves it to his adepts to solve for themselves this profound dialectical enigma.' Thus far Herr Dühring.

"So [Engels concludes] Marx has no other way of proving the necessity of the social revolution and the establishment of a social system based on the

<sup>1</sup> *A Critical History of National Economy and Socialism*, third edition, 1879, pp. 486-87. — *Trans.*

common ownership of land and of the means of production produced by labour, except by using the Hegelian negation of the negation; and because he bases his Socialist theory on these nonsensical analogies borrowed from religion, he arrives at the result that in the society of the future there will be ownership which is at the same time both individual and social, as the Hegelian higher unity of the sublated contradiction."

(That this formulation of Dühring's views entirely fits Mr. Mikhailovsky too is proved by the following passage in his article "Karl Marx Before the Court of Mr. J. Zhukovsky." Objecting to Mr. Zhukovsky's assertion that Marx is a defender of private property, Mr. Mikhailovsky refers to this scheme of Marx's and explains it in the following manner. "In his scheme Marx performed two well-known tricks of the Hegelian dialectics: firstly, the scheme is constructed in accordance with the laws of the Hegelian triad; secondly, the synthesis is based on the identity of opposites—individual and social property. This means that the word 'individual' here has the specific, purely arbitrary meaning of a term of the dialectical process, and absolutely nothing can be based on it." This was said by a man of the most estimable intentions, defending, in the eyes of the Russian public, the "sanguine" Marx from the bourgeois Mr. Zhukovsky. And with these estimable intentions he explains Marx in such a way as to represent him as basing his conception of the process on "tricks"! Mr. Mikhailovsky may draw from this the for him not unprofitable moral that, whatever the matter in hand may be, estimable intentions alone are not quite enough.)

"Let us for the moment leave the negation of the negation to look after itself, and let us have a look at the 'ownership which is at the same time both individual and social.' Herr Dühring characterises this as a 'nebulous world,' and curiously enough he is really right on this point. Unfortunately, however, it is not Marx but on the contrary Herr Dühring himself who is in this nebulous world . . . he can put Marx right à la Hegel, by foisting on him the higher unity of property, of which there is not a word in Marx. [Marx says:]

"It is the negation of negation. This does not re-establish private property for the producer, but gives him individual property based on the acquisitions of the capitalist era; i.e., on co-operation and the possession in common of the land and of the means of production.

"The transformation of scattered private property, arising from individual labour, into capitalist private property is, naturally, a process, incomparably more protracted, violent, and difficult, than the transformation of capitalistic

private property, already practically resting on socialised production, into socialised property.”

“That is all. The state of things brought about through the expropriation of the expropriators is therefore characterised as the re-establishment of individual property, but *on the basis* of the social ownership of the land and of the means of production produced by labour itself. To anyone who understands German [and Russian too, Mr. Mikhailovsky, because the translation is absolutely correct] this means that social ownership extends to the land and the other means of production, and private ownership to the products, that is, the articles of consumption. And in order to make this comprehensible even to children of six, Marx assumes on page 90 ‘a community of free individuals, carrying on their work with the means of production in common, in which the labour power of all the different individuals is consciously applied as the combined labour power of the community,’<sup>2</sup> that is, a society organised on a Socialist basis; and he says: ‘The total product of our community is a social product. One portion serves as fresh means of production and *remains social*. But another portion is consumed by the members as means of subsistence. *A distribution of this portion among them is consequently necessary.*’ And surely that is clear enough even for Herr Dühring. . . .

“The property which is at the same time both private and social, this hybrid, this nonsense which necessarily springs from Hegelian dialectics, this nebulous world, this profound dialectical enigma, which Marx leaves his adepts to solve for themselves—is yet another free creation and imagination on the part of Herr Dühring. . . .

“But what role [Engels continues] does the negation of the negation play in Marx? On page 834<sup>3</sup> and the following pages he sets out the conclusions which he draws from the preceding fifty pages of economic and historical investigation into the so-called primitive accumulation of capital. Before the capitalist era, at least in England, petty industry existed on the basis of the private property of the labourer in his means of production. The so-called primitive accumulation of capital consisted in this case in the expropriation of these immediate producers, that is, in the dissolution of private property based on the labour of its owner. This was possible because the petty industry referred to above is compatible only with a system of production, and a society, moving within narrow and primitive bounds, and at a certain stage of its development it brings forth the material agencies for its own annihilation. This annihilation, the transformation of the individual and scattered means of production into socially concentrated ones, forms the pre-history of capital. As soon as the labourers are turned into proletarians, their means of labour into capital, as soon as the capitalist mode of production stands on its own feet, the further socialisation of labour and further transformation of the land and other means of production [into capital], and therefore the further expropriation of private proprietors takes a new form.

“That which is now to be expropriated is no longer the labourer working for himself, but the capitalist exploiting many labourers. This expropriation is accomplished by the action of the immanent laws of capitalistic production

<sup>1</sup> *Capital*, Vol. I. p. 837. — *Trans.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90. — *Trans.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 834. — *Trans.*

itself, by the centralisation of capital. One capitalist always kills many. Hand in hand with this centralisation, or this expropriation of many capitalists by few, develop, on an ever extending scale, the co-operative form of the labour process, the conscious technical application of science, the methodical cultivation of the soil, the transformation of the instruments of labour into instruments of labour only usable in common, the economising of all means of production by their use as the means of production of combined, socialised labour. . . . Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolise all advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the working class, a class always increasing in number, and disciplined, united, organised by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself. The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production, which has sprung up and flourished along with, and under it. Centralisation of the means of production and socialisation of labour at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated.<sup>1</sup>

"And now I ask the reader: where are the dialectical frills and mazes and intellectual arabesques; where the mixed and misconceived ideas as a result of which everything is all one in the end; where the dialectical miracles for his faithful followers; where the mysterious dialectical rubbish and the contortions based on the Hegelian Logos doctrine, without which Marx, according to Herr Dühring, is quite unable to accomplish his development? Marx merely shows from history, and in this passage states in a summarised form, that just as the former petty industry necessarily, through its own development, created the conditions of its annihilation, i.e., of the expropriation of the small proprietors, so now the capitalist mode of production has likewise itself created the material conditions which will annihilate it. The process is a historical one, and if it is at the same time a dialectical process, this is not Marx's fault, however annoying it may be for Herr Dühring.

"It is only at this point, after Marx has completed his proof on the basis of historical and economic facts, that he proceeds: 'The capitalist mode of production and appropriation, and hence capitalist private property, is the first negation of individual private property founded on the labours of the proprietor. But capitalist production begets, with the inexorability of a law of Nature, its own negation. It is the negation of the negation'—and so on (as quoted above).

"In characterising the process as the negation of the negation, therefore, Marx does not dream of attempting to prove by this that the process was historically necessary. On the contrary: after he has proved from history that in fact the process has partially already occurred, and partially must occur in the future, he then also characterises it as a process which develops in accordance with a definite dialectical law. That is all. It is therefore once again a pure distortion of the facts by Herr Dühring, when he declares that the negation of the negation has to serve here as the midwife to deliver the future from the womb of the past, or that Marx wants anyone to allow him-

<sup>1</sup> *Capital*, pp. 836-37. — *Trans.*

self to be convinced of the necessity of the common ownership of land and capital . . . on the basis of the negation of the negation.”<sup>1</sup>

The reader will see that the whole of Engels' excellent rebuttal of Dühring given here applies in all respects to Mr. Mikhailovsky who also asserts that with Marx the future rests exclusively on the end of an Hegelian chain and that the conviction of its inevitability can be founded only on faith. (It would not be superfluous to note in this connection that this entire explanation is contained in that same chapter in which Engels discusses the seed, the teaching of Rousseau, and other examples of the dialectical process. It would seem that a mere comparison of these examples with the clear and categorical statements of Engels [and of Marx, who had preliminarily read the manuscript of this work] to the effect that there can be no question of “proving” anything by triads or of inserting in the depiction of the real process the “conditional terms” of these triads, should be quite sufficient to make clear the absurdity of accusing Marxism of Hegelian dialectics.)

The whole difference between Dühring and Mr. Mikhailovsky reduces itself to the following two small points: firstly, Dühring, despite the fact that he cannot speak of Marx without foaming at the mouth, nevertheless considered it necessary to mention in the next paragraph of his *History* that Marx in the Postscript categorically repudiated the accusation of being an Hegelian, whereas Mr. Mikhailovsky remains silent as to this (above quoted) absolutely definite and clear statement by Marx of what he conceives the dialectical method to be.

Secondly, another peculiarity of Mr. Mikhailovsky's is that he concentrated all his attention on the use of tenses. Why, when he speaks of the future, does Marx use the present tense?—our philosopher demands with an air of triumph. The answer to this you will find in any grammar, most worthy critic: you will find that the present tense is used in place of the future tense when the future is regarded as inevitable and unquestionable. But why so, why is it unquestionable?—asks Mr. Mikhailovsky uneasily,

<sup>1</sup> Frederick Engels, *Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science*, Eng. ed., Moscow, 1934, pp. 147-52. — *Trans.*

desiring to depict so profound a state of perturbation that it will justify even a distortion. And on this point, too, Marx gave an absolutely definite reply. You may consider it inadequate or wrong, but in that case you must show "how exactly" and "why exactly" it is wrong, and not talk nonsense about Hegelianism.

There was a time when Mr. Mikhailovsky not only knew himself what this reply was, but taught it to others. Mr. Zhukovsky, he wrote in 1877, might with good grounds have regarded Marx's construction concerning the future as enigmatical, but "he had no moral right" to ignore the question of the socialisation of labour, "to which Marx attributes vast importance." Well, of course! Zhukovsky in 1877 had no moral right to ignore the question, but Mr. Mikhailovsky in 1894 has this moral right. Perhaps, *quod licet Jovi, non licet bovi?* !<sup>1</sup>

At this point I cannot help recalling a curious fact regarding the conception of this socialisation which was at one time expressed in *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*. In No. 7, 1883, this magazine printed a "Letter to the Editor" from a certain Mr. Postoronny<sup>2</sup> who, just like Mr. Mikhailovsky, regarded Marx's "construction" about the future as enigmatical.

"Essentially," this gentleman argues, "the social form of labour under capitalism amounts to this, that several hundred or thousand workers grind, hammer, turn, lay on, lay under, pull and perform numerous other operations under one roof. The general character of this regime is excellently expressed by the proverb: 'Each for himself, and God for all.' What social form of labour is this?"

Well, you can see at once that the man has grasped what it is all about! "The social form of labour . . . amounts to . . . working under one roof"! And when such preposterous ideas are expressed in one of the best of the Russian magazines, they want to assure us that the theoretical part of *Capital* is generally recognised by science. Yes, as it was unable to adduce any objection to *Capital* of any serious weight, "generally recognised science" began to bow and scrape before it, at the same time continuing to betray the most elementary ignorance and to repeat

<sup>1</sup> What is permissible to Jove is not permissible to the bull. — *Trans.*

<sup>2</sup> A pseudonym used by N. K. Mikhailovsky. — *Ed.*

the old banalities of school economics. We shall have to dwell a little on this question in order to make clear to Mr. Mikhailovsky the real meaning of the matter, which, according to his usual custom, he has entirely ignored.

The socialisation of labour by capitalist production does not consist in the fact that people work under one roof (that is only a small part of the process), but in the fact that concentration of capital is accompanied by specialisation of social labour, by a reduction in the number of capitalists in any given branch of industry and an increase in the number of special branches of industry—in the fact that many divided processes of production are merged into one social process of production. When, in the era of handicraft weaving, for example, the small producers themselves spun the yarn and made it into cloth, we had only a few branches of industry (spinning and weaving were merged). But when production becomes socialised by capitalism, the number of special branches of industry increases: cotton spinning and cotton weaving are separated; this division and concentration of production in their turn give rise to new branches—the production of machines, coal mining, and so forth. In each branch of industry, which has now become more specialised, the number of capitalists steadily decreases. This means that the social tie between the producers becomes increasingly stronger and the producers become welded into a single whole. The separate small producers each performed a few operations at one time, and were therefore relatively independent of each other: if, for instance, a handicraftsman himself sowed flax, and himself spun and wove, he was almost independent of others. It was this (and only this) regime of small, disunited commodity producers that justified the proverb: “Each for himself, and God for all,” that is, the anarchy of market fluctuations. But the case is entirely different under the socialisation of labour achieved by capitalism. The manufacturer who produces fabrics depends on the cotton yarn manufacturer; the latter on the capitalist planter who grows the cotton, on the owner of the machine-building works, the coal mine, and so on and so forth. The result is that no capitalist can get along without others. It is quite clear that the



proverb "each for himself" is quite inapplicable to such a regime: here each works for all and all for each (and no room is left for God—either as a supermundane fantasy or as a mundane "golden calf"). The nature of the regime completely changes. If during the regime of small, separate enterprises work came to a standstill in any one of them, this affected only a small number of members of society, did not cause any general perturbation, and therefore did not arouse general attention and did not provoke social interference. But if work comes to a standstill in a large enterprise, devoted to a highly specialised branch of industry, and therefore working almost for the whole of society and, in its turn, dependent on the whole of society (for the sake of simplicity I assume that socialisation has attained its culminating point), work is then bound to come to a standstill in all the other enterprises of society, because they can obtain the necessary products only from this enterprise and can dispose of all their commodities only provided the commodities of this enterprise are available. The whole of production thus becomes fused into a single social process of production; yet each enterprise is conducted by a separate capitalist, is dependent on his will and turns over the social products to him as his private property. Is it then not clear that the form of production comes into irreconcilable contradiction with the form of appropriation? Is it not evident that the latter is bound to adapt itself to the former and is also bound to become social, that is, Socialist? And the wise philistine of the *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* reduces the whole thing to the performance of work under one roof. Could anything be wider of the mark! (I have described only the material process, only the change in the relations of production, without touching on the social aspect of the process, the amalgamation, welding and organisation of the workers, since that is a derivative and subsidiary phenomenon.)

The reason that such elementary things have to be explained to the Russian "democrats" is that they are immersed to their very ears in petty-bourgeois ideas and are positively unable to imagine any system but a petty-bourgeois one.

But let us return to Mr. Mikhailovsky. What objections did he

level against the facts and considerations on which Marx based the conclusion that the Socialist system was inevitable by virtue of the very laws of development of capitalism? Did he show that in reality—under a commodity organisation of social economy—there is no growing specialisation of the social process of labour, concentration of capital and enterprises and socialisation of the whole labour process? No, he did not cite a single instance in refutation of these facts. Did he shake the proposition that anarchy, which is irreconcilable with social labour, is inherent in capitalist society? He said nothing about this. Did he prove that the amalgamation of the labour processes of all the capitalists into a single social labour process is compatible with private property, or that a solution to the contradiction other than that indicated by Marx is possible and thinkable? No, he did not say a single word about this.

On what then does his criticism rest? On twistings and distortions and on a spate of words, words that are nothing but sound and wind.

And, indeed, how else are we to characterise such methods when the critic, having first talked a lot of nonsense about triple successive steps of history, demands of Marx with a serious air: "And what next?"—that is, how will history proceed beyond that final stage of the process which he has described. Please note that from the very outset of his literary and revolutionary activity Marx most definitely demanded that sociological theory should accurately depict the real process—and nothing more (*cf.*, for instance, *The Communist Manifesto* on the Communists' criterion of theory). He strictly adhered to this demand in his *Capital*: he made it his task to give a scientific analysis of the capitalist formation of society—and there he stopped, having shown that the development of this organisation going on under our eyes really has such and such a tendency, that it must inevitably perish and become transformed into another, a higher organisation. But Mr. Mikhailovsky, overlooking the whole meaning of Marx's doctrine, puts his stupid question: "And what next?" And he profoundly adds: "I must frankly confess that I do not quite understand Engels' reply." But we must frankly confess,

Mr. Mikhailovsky, that we quite understand the spirit and methods of such "criticism."

Or take the following argument:

"In the Middle Ages, Marx's individual property based on the individual's own labour was neither the only nor the predominating factor, even in the realm of economic relations. There was much more alongside of it, to which, however, the dialectical method in Marx's interpretation [and not in Mr. Mikhailovsky's garbled version of it?] does not propose to return. . . . It is evident that all these schemes do not present a picture of historical reality, or even of its proportions, but simply satisfy the tendency of the human mind to think of every object in its past, present and future states."

Even your methods of garbling, Mr. Mikhailovsky, are stereotyped to the point of nausea. First he insinuates into Marx's scheme, which claims to formulate the actual process of development of capitalism (other features of the economic system of the Middle Ages are omitted for the very reason that they belonged to the feudal social formation, whereas Marx investigates only the "capitalist" formation. In its pure form the process of development of capitalism actually did begin—for instance, in England—with the regime of small, separate commodity producers and their individual labour property), and nothing else, the intention of proving everything by triads; then he establishes the fact that Marx's scheme does not conform to this plan foisted on it by Mr. Mikhailovsky (the third stage restores only "one" aspect of the first stage, omitting all the others); and then in the coolest manner possible he comes to the conclusion that "the scheme evidently does not present a picture of historical reality"!

Is any serious controversy thinkable with such a man, a man who (as Engels said of Dühring) is incapable of quoting accurately even by way of exception? Can one here "object" when the public is assured that the scheme "evidently" does not conform to reality, while not even an attempt is made to prove its falsity in any particular? Instead of criticising the real contents of Marxist views, Mr. Mikhailovsky exercises his ingenuity on the subject of the categories past, present and future. Arguing against the "eternal truths" of Herr Dühring, Engels, for instance, says that

"we are at present being preached a threefold morality; feudal christian, bourgeois and proletarian, so that the past, present and future have their own theories of morality."

In this connection, Mr. Mikhailovsky reasons as follows:

"I think that it is the categories past, present and future that lie at the basis of all triple divisions of history into periods."

What profundity! Who does not know that if any social phenomenon whatever is examined in its process of development there will always be discovered in it relics of the past, the foundations of the present and the germs of the future? But did Engels, for instance, think of asserting that the history of morality (he was speaking, you know, only of the "present") was confined to the three factors indicated, that feudal morality, for example, was not preceded by slave morality, and the latter by the morality of the primitive Communist community? Instead of seriously criticising Engels' attempt to analyse the modern trends of moral ideas by explaining them materialistically Mr. Mikhailovsky treats us to the most empty phrasemongering.

In connection with the methods of "criticism" Mr. Mikhailovsky resorts to, a criticism which begins with the statement that he does not know where, in what work, the materialist conception of history is expounded, it would perhaps not be unprofitable to recall that there was a time when the author knew one of these works and was able to appraise it correctly. In 1877, Mr. Mikhailovsky expressed the following opinion of *Capital*:

"If we remove from *Capital* the heavy, clumsy and unnecessary lid of Hegelian dialectics [how strange? How is it that "the Hegelian dialectics" was "unnecessary" in 1877, while in 1894 it appears that materialism rests on "the unquestionableness of the dialectical process"?], we shall observe in it, aside from the other merits of this work, excellently elaborated material for an answer to the general question of the relation of forms to the material conditions of their existence, and an excellent formulation of this question for a given sphere."

"The relation of forms to the material conditions of their existence"—why, this is precisely that question of the inter-relation of the various aspects of social life, of the superstructure of ideological social relations resting on material relations; in the answer to which the doctrine of materialism consists. Let us proceed.

"In point of fact, *the whole of 'Capital'* [my italics] is devoted to an inquiry into how the social form, once arisen, continues to develop and so

centuates its typical features, subjecting to itself and assimilating discoveries, inventions, improvements in methods of production, new markets and science itself, compelling them to work for it, and how, finally, the given form cannot tolerate further changes in material conditions."

An astonishing thing! In 1877, *the whole of "Capital"* was devoted to a materialist inquiry into the given social form (in what else can materialism consist if not in explaining social forms by material conditions), yet in 1894 it turns out that it is not even known where, in what work, an exposition of this materialism is to be sought!

In 1877, *Capital* contained an "inquiry" into how "the given form [the capitalist form, is that not so?] cannot tolerate further changes in material conditions" (mark that!)—whereas in 1894 it turns out that there was no inquiry at all, and that the conviction that the capitalist form cannot tolerate a further development of productive forces—rests "exclusively on the end of an Hegelian triad"! Mr. Mikhailovsky wrote in 1877 that "the analysis of the relations of the given social form to the material conditions of its existence will *forever* [my italics] remain a memorial to the logical powers and the vast erudition of the author"—whereas in 1894 he declares that the doctrine of materialism has never and nowhere been verified and proved scientifically.

An astonishing thing! What can this mean? What has happened?

Two things have happened: firstly, the "Russian" peasant Socialism of the 'seventies—which "snorted" at freedom because of its bourgeois character, which opposed the "highbrow liberals" who carefully glossed over the antagonisms of Russian life and which dreamed of a peasant revolution—has completely decayed and has begotten that vulgar philistine liberalism which discerns an "encouraging" impression in the progressive trends of peasant economy, forgetting that they are accompanied (and determined) by the wholesale expropriation of the peasantry. Secondly, in 1877 Mr. Mikhailovsky became so absorbed in his task of defending the "sanguine" (i.e., revolutionary Socialist) Marx from the liberal critics that he failed to observe the incompatibility of Marx's method with his own method. Well, this irreconcilable

antagonism between dialectical materialism and subjective sociology was explained to him—explained by Engels' articles and books, explained by the Russian Social-Democrats (in Plekhanov one frequently meets with very apt comments on Mr. Mikhailovsky)—and Mr. Mikhailovsky, instead of seriously sitting down to reconsider the whole question, simply swallowed the bait. Instead of welcoming Marx, as he did in 1872 and 1877, he now yelps at him under the guise of dubious praises, and shouts and fumes against the Russian Marxists who do not want to rest content with "the defence of the economically weak," with warehouses and improvements in the countryside, museums and artels for handicraftsmen and similar well-meaning philistine ideas of progress, and who do want to remain "sanguine" advocates of a social revolution, and to teach, guide and organise the really revolutionary social elements.

After this brief excursion into the realm of the long-ago, one may, we think, conclude this examination of Mr. Mikhailovsky's "criticism" of Marx's theory. Let us then endeavour to review and summarise the critic's "arguments."

The doctrine he designed to destroy rests firstly on the materialist conception of history, and secondly on the dialectical method.

As to the first, the critic began by declaring that he does not know where, in what work materialism is expounded. Not having found this exposition anywhere, he began to invent a definition of materialism himself. In order to give an idea of the excessive claims of this materialism, he invented the story that the materialists claim to have explained the entire past, present and future of mankind—and when it subsequently transpired from a reference to authentic statements of the Marxists that only one social formation is regarded as having been explained, the critic decided that the materialists are narrowing the scope of materialism, whereby, he asserts, they are destroying their own position. In order to give an idea of the methods by which this materialism was worked out, he invented the story that the materialists themselves confessed to the inadequacy of their knowledge for such a purpose as the working out of scientific Socialism, in spite of the fact that Marx and Engels (1845-47) admitted this in

relation to economic history generally, and in spite of the fact that they never published the work which testified to the inadequacy of their knowledge. After these preludes, he treated us to the criticism itself: *Capital* was annihilated by the fact that it deals with only one period, whereas the critic wants to have all periods, and also by the fact that *Capital* does not affirm economic materialism, but simply deals with it—arguments, evidently, so weighty and cogent as to compel the recognition that materialism had never been scientifically proved. Then the fact was brought against materialism that a man who had absolutely no connection with this doctrine, having studied pre-historic times in an entirely different country, arrived at materialist conclusions. Further, in order to show that it is absolutely wrong to associate procreation with materialism, that this is nothing but a verbal artifice, the critic began to prove that economic relations are a superstructure on sexual and family relations. The statements made in the course of this cogent criticism designed for the edification of the materialists enriched us with the profound verity that inheritance is impossible without procreation, that a complex psychology "borders" on the products of this procreation, and that children are educated in the spirit of their fathers. In passing, we also learnt that national ties are a continuation and generalisation of tribal ties.

Continuing his theoretical researches into materialism, the critic noted that the content of many of the arguments of the Marxists consists in the assertion that oppression and exploitation of the masses are "necessary" under the bourgeois regime and that this regime must "necessarily" become transformed into a Socialist regime—and thereupon he hastened to declare that necessity is too general a parenthesis (if it is not stated what exactly people consider necessary) and that therefore Marxists are mystics and metaphysicians. The critic also declared that Marx's polemic against the idealists is "one-sided," yet he did not say a word explaining the relation of the views of these idealists to the subjective method and the relation of Marx's dialectical materialism to these views.

As to the second pillar of Marxism—the dialectical method—one push by the brave critic was enough to cast it to the ground. And the push was very well aimed: the critic wrought and laboured

with incredible zeal to deny that anything can be proved by triads, hushing up the fact that the dialectical method does not consist of triads, that it in fact consists in rejecting the methods of idealism and subjectivism in sociology. Another push was specially aimed at Marx: with the help of the valorous Herr Dühring, the critic ascribed to Marx the incredible absurdity of trying to prove by means of triads the necessity of the doom of capitalism—and then victoriously combated this absurdity.

Such is the epos of brilliant "victories" of "our well-known sociologist"! How "edifying" (Burenin) is the contemplation of these victories, is it not?

We cannot refrain at this point from touching on another circumstance, one which has no direct bearing on the criticism of Marx's doctrine, but which is extremely significant in elucidating the critic's ideals and idea of reality, namely, his attitude to the working class movement in Western Europe.

Above we quoted a statement by Mr. Mikhailovsky in which he says that materialism has not justified itself in "science" (in the science of the German "friends of the people," perhaps?); but this materialism, argues Mr. Mikhailovsky, "is really spreading very rapidly among the working class." How does Mr. Mikhailovsky explain this fact? He says:

"As to the success which economic materialism enjoys in breadth, so to speak, its widespread acceptance in a critically unverified form, this success chiefly lies, not in science, but in common practice established by prospects in the direction of the future."

What other meaning can there be to this clumsy phrase about practice "established" by prospects in the direction of the future than that materialism is spreading not because it correctly explained reality, but because it turned away from reality in the direction of prospects? And he goes on to say:

"These prospects demand of the German working class which is adopting them and of those who take a warm interest in the fate of the German working class neither knowledge nor an effort of critical thought. They demand only faith."

In other words, the wide spread of materialism and scientific Socialism is due to the fact that this doctrine promises the work-



ers a better future! Anybody with even the most elementary acquaintance with the history of Socialism and of the working class movement in the West will realise the utter absurdity and falsity of this explanation. Everybody knows that scientific Socialism never depicted any prospects for the future: it confined itself to analysing the present bourgeois regime, to studying the trends of development of the capitalist social organisation—and that is all.

"We do not say to the world." Marx said in 1843, and he fulfilled this programme to the letter—"We do not say to the world: 'Cease your struggle; your whole struggle is futile.' We supply it with a true slogan for the struggle. We only show the world what it is really struggling for, and realisation is a thing which the world must acquire for itself, whether it likes it or not."

Everybody knows that *Capital*, for instance—that prime and basic work expounding scientific Socialism—restricts itself to the most general allusions to the future and examines only those already existing elements from which the future system is springing. Everybody knows that as regards the prospects for the future incomparably more was contributed by the earlier Socialists, who described the future society in every detail, desiring to interest mankind in a picture of a system under which people will get along without conflict and under which their social relations will be based not on exploitation but on true principles of progress, conforming to the conditions of human nature. Nevertheless, in spite of the whole phalanx of highly talented people who expounded these ideas, and in spite of the most convinced Socialists, their theories stood aloof from life and their programmes from the political movements of the people until large-scale machine industry drew the mass of the working class proletariat into the vortex of political life, and until a true slogan for their struggle was found. This slogan was found by Marx, not a "utopian, but a strict and, in places, even dry scientist" (as Mr. Mikhailovsky called him in long bygone days—1872), and it was not found by virtue of prospects, but by virtue of a scientific analysis of the present bourgeois regime, by virtue of an explanation of the "necessity" of exploitation under this regime, by virtue of an investigation of the laws of its development. Mr. Mikhailovsky, of course, may assure the readers of *Russkoye Bogatstvo* that neither

knowledge nor mental effort is required to understand this analysis, but we have already seen in his own case (and shall see it no less in the case of his economist collaborator) such a gross lack of understanding of the elementary truths established by this analysis that such a statement, of course, can only provoke a smile. It remains an indisputable fact that the spread and development of the working class movement are proceeding precisely where large-scale capitalist machine industry is developing, and in proportion to its development, and that the Socialist doctrine is successful only when it stops arguing about social conditions corresponding to human nature and starts to make a materialist analysis of present social relations and to elucidate the necessity of the present regime of exploitation.

Having tried to evade the real reasons for the success of materialism among the workers with the aid of a description of the relation of this doctrine to the prospects, a description that is the direct contrary of the truth, Mr. Mikhailovsky now begins to scoff in the most vulgar and philistine manner at the ideas and tactics of the West European working class movement. As we have seen, he was unable to bring literally a single argument against Marx's proofs of the inevitability of the transformation of the capitalist system into a Socialist system as a result of the socialisation of labour. Yet he ironically declares in the most offhand manner that "the army of proletarians" is preparing to expropriate the capitalists, "whereupon all class conflict will cease and peace on earth and good-will to men will reign." He, Mr. Mikhailovsky, knows of far simpler and surer ways of achieving Socialism than this: All that is required is that the "friends of the people" should explain in greater detail the "clear and undeniable" ways of achieving "the desired economic evolution"—and then these friends of the people will most likely "be called" to "solve the practical economic problems" (see the article, "Problems of the Economic Development of Russia," by Mr. Yuzhakov, in *Russkoye Bogatstvo*, No. 10), and meanwhile . . . meanwhile the workers must wait, rely on the friends of the people and not undertake, with "unjustified self-reliance," an independent struggle against the exploiters. Desiring utterly to demolish this

"unjustified self-reliance," our author expressed his fervent disgust at "this science which can almost be contained in a vest-pocket dictionary." How terrible, indeed: science . . . and penny Social-Democratic pamphlets that can be put in one's pocket!! Is it not obvious how unjustifiably self-reliant are the people who value science only to the extent that it teaches the exploited to wage an independent struggle for their emancipation—teaches them to hold aloof from all friends of the people who gloss over class antagonism and desire to take the whole matter upon themselves—and who therefore expound this science in penny publications which so shock the philistines? How different it would be if the workers entrusted their destiny to the friends of the people! They would give them a real, many-tomed, university, philistine science; they would acquaint them with the details of a social organisation which corresponds to human nature, provided only . . . the workers consented to wait and did not themselves begin the struggle with such unjustified self-reliance!

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Before passing to the second part of Mr. Mikhailovsky's "criticism," which this time is directed not against Marx's theory in general but against the Russian Social-Democrats in particular, we shall have to make a little digression. The fact of the matter is that just as, when criticising Marx, Mr. Mikhailovsky not only made no attempt to give an accurate description of Marx's theory but directly distorted it, so now he most unscrupulously garbles the ideas of the Russian Social-Democrats. The truth must be restored. This can be done most conveniently by comparing the ideas of the earlier Russian Socialists with the ideas of the Social-Democrats. I borrow an account of the former from an article by Mr. Mikhailovsky in *Russkaya Mysl*, 1892, No. 6, in which he also spoke of Marxism (and spoke of it—let it be said in reproach—in a decent tone, without dealing with questions which can be treated in a censored press only in the Burenin manner, and without confusing the Marxists with all sorts of sordid types) and, as against Marxism—or, at least, if not against, then parallel with Marxism—set forth his own views. Of course, I

have not the least desire to offend either Mr. Mikhailovsky, by reckoning him among the Socialists, or the Russian Socialists, by putting them on a par with Mr. Mikhailovsky; but I think that the "course of argument" is essentially the same in both cases, the difference being only in the degree, straightforwardness and consistency of their convictions.

Describing the ideas of the *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*, Mr. Mikhailovsky wrote:

"We have included the ownership of the land by the cultivator and of the implements of labour by the producer among the moral and political ideals."

The point of departure, you see, is most well-intentioned, full of the best wishes.

"The still mediæval forms of labour existing in our country [“By mediæval forms of labour”—the author explains in another place—“must be understood not only communal land ownership, handicraft industry and artel organisation. These are undoubtedly all mediæval forms, but to them must be added all forms of ownership of land or implements of production by the worker.”] have been seriously shaken, but we saw no reason to put a complete end to them for the benefit of any doctrines whatsoever, liberal or non-liberal.”

A strange argument! Why, “forms of labour” of any kind can be shaken only by replacing them by other forms; yet we do not find our author (nor would we find any of his co-thinkers) even attempting to analyse and explain these new forms, or to explain the causes by which these new forms oust the old forms. Still more strange is the second half of the tirade:

“We saw no reason to put an end to these forms for the benefit of any doctrines.”

What means do we (i.e., the Socialists—see the above reservation) possess of “putting an end” to forms of labour, that is, of reconstructing the given relations of production of the members of society? Is not the idea that these relations can be remade in accordance with a doctrine really absurd? Listen to what comes next:

“Our task is not to rear at all costs a ‘peculiar’ civilisation from out of our own national depths; but neither is it to transplant to our country the Western civilisation *in toto*, with all the contradictions that are rending it; we must take what is good from wherever we can; and whether it be our own or foreign is not a matter of principle, but of practical convenience. Apparently this is so simple, clear and comprehensible that there is even nothing to talk about.”

And how simple it is, indeed! “Take” what is good from every-

where—and there you are! From the mediæval forms “take” the ownership of the means of production by the worker, and from the new (*i.e.*, the capitalist) forms “take” liberty, equality, enlightenment and culture. And there is even nothing to talk about! Here you have the whole subjective method in sociology in a nutshell: sociology begins with a utopia—the ownership of the land by the worker—and points out the conditions for realising the desirable, namely, “take” what is good from here and take what is good from there. This philosopher regards social relations from a purely metaphysical standpoint, as a simple mechanical aggregation of various institutions, as a simple mechanical concatenation of various phenomena. He plucks out one of these phenomena—the ownership of the land by the cultivator in mediæval forms—and thinks that it can be transplanted to all other forms, just as a brick can be transferred from one building to another. Yes, but this is not studying social relations; it is mutilating the material to be studied. In reality, there is no such thing as the ownership of the land by the cultivator, existing individually and independently, as you have taken it. This was only one of the links in the relations of production of that time, which consisted in the land being divided up among large landed proprietors, landlords, and that the landlords allocated this land to the peasants in order to exploit them. So that the land was, as it were, wages in kind: it provided the peasant with necessary produce, so that he might be able to produce surplus product for the landlord; it was a fund that enabled the peasants to perform services for the landlord. Why did the author not follow up this system of relations of production, instead of confining himself to plucking out one phenomenon and thus presenting it in an absolutely false light? Because the author does not know how to handle social problems: he (I repeat, I am using Mr. Mikhailovsky’s arguments only as an example in order to criticise Russian Socialism “as a whole”) does not even make it his business to explain the “forms of labour” of that time and to present them as a definite system of relations of production, as a definite social formation. The dialectical method, which obliges us to regard society as a living organism in its functioning and development, to use Marx’s expression, is alien to him.

Without even asking himself why the old forms of labour were squeezed out by the new forms, he repeats exactly the same error when he discusses these new forms. It is enough for him to note that these forms are "shaking" the ownership of the land by the cultivator—that is, speaking more generally, are finding expression in the separation of the producer from the means of production—and to condemn this for not conforming to the ideal. And here again his argument is utterly absurd: he plucks out one phenomenon (loss of land), without even attempting to represent it as a term of a now different system of relations of production, based on "commodity production," which necessarily begets competition among the commodity producers, inequality, the impoverishment of some and the enrichment of others. He noted one phenomenon, the impoverishment of the masses, and put aside the other, the enrichment of the minority, and thereby deprived himself of the possibility of comprehending either.

And such methods he calls "seeking answers to the questions of life in their flesh and blood form" (*Russkoye Bogatstvo*, 1894, No. 1), when as a matter of fact quite the contrary is the case: unable and unwilling to explain reality, to look it straight in the face, he shamefully fled from these questions of life, with its struggle of the haves against the have-nots, to the realm of pious utopias. This he calls "seeking answers to the questions of life in the ideal setting of their actual burning and complex reality" (*Russkoye Bogatstvo*, No. 1), when as a matter of fact he did not even attempt to analyse and explain this actual reality.

Instead, he presented us with a utopia contrived by senselessly plucking individual elements from various formations of society—taking one thing from the mediæval formation, another from the "modern" formation, and so on. It is obvious that a theory based on this was bound to stand aloof from actual social evolution, for the simple reason that our utopians had to live and act not under social relations formed from elements taken from here and from there, but under such as determine the relation of the peasant to the kulak (the thrifty muzhik), the handicraftsman to the merchant, the worker to the manufacturer, and which they completely failed to comprehend. Their attempts and efforts to remould these

uncomprehended relations in accordance with their ideal were bound to end in a fiasco.

Such, in very general outline, was the position of Socialism in Russia when "the Russian Marxists appeared."

It was precisely with a criticism of the subjective methods of the earlier Socialists that they began. Not satisfied with merely establishing the fact of exploitation and condemning it, they desired to "explain" it. Realising that the whole post-Reform history of Russia consisted in the impoverishment of the masses and the enrichment of a minority, observing that the colossal expropriation of the small producers proceeded side by side with universal technical progress, noting that these polar tendencies developed and became accentuated wherever, and to the extent that, commodity production developed and became accentuated, they could not but conclude that they were confronted with a bourgeois (capitalist) organisation of social economy, which "necessarily" gave rise to the expropriation and oppression of the masses. Their practical programme was now directly determined by this conviction: this programme was, to join up with the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, the struggle of the propertyless classes against the propertied classes, which constitutes the principal content of economic reality in Russia, from the most out-of-the-way village to the most up-to-date and perfected factory. How were they to join up? The answer was again suggested by real life. Capitalism had advanced the principal branches of industry to the stage of large-scale machine industry; by thus socialising production it had created the material conditions for a new system and had at the same time created a new social force—the workers of the mills and factories, the urban proletariat. Subjected to the same kind of bourgeois exploitation as the exploitation of the whole toiling population of Russia is in its economic essence, this class, however, has been placed, as far as its emancipation is concerned, in rather favourable circumstances: it has no longer any connection with the old society, which was wholly based on exploitation; the very conditions of its labour and circumstances of its life organise it, compel it to think and enable it to step into the arena of the political struggle. It was only natural that the

Social-Democrats should direct all their attention to, and base all their hopes on, this class, that they should make the development of its class consciousness their programme, that they should direct all their activities towards helping it to rise and wage a direct political struggle against the present regime and towards enlisting the whole Russian proletariat in this struggle.

\* \* \*

Let us now see how Mr. Mikhailovsky fights the Social-Democrats. What arguments does he bring against their theoretical views, against their political, Socialist activity?

The theoretical views of the Marxists are set forth by the critic in the following manner:

"The truth [the Marxists are represented as declaring] is that in accordance with the immanent laws of historical necessity Russia will develop her capitalist production, with all its intrinsic contradictions and the swallowing up of the small capitalists by the large capitalists, and meanwhile the muzhiks, divorced from the land, will become transformed into proletarians, unite, become 'socialised'—and the job is done... to the joy of mankind."

Don't you see, the Marxists do not differ in any way from the friends of the people in their conception of reality; they differ only in their idea of the future: they are not in the least concerned with the present, it appears, but only with "prospects." There can be no doubt that this is precisely Mr. Mikhailovsky's idea: the Marxists, he says, "are fully convinced that there is nothing utopian in their forecasts of the future, and that everything has been weighed and measured in accordance with the strict dictates of science." And, finally, he says, even more clearly still, that the Marxists "believe in and preach the immutability of the abstract historical scheme."

In a word, what we find levelled at the Marxists is that most banal and vulgar accusation to which everybody who has nothing substantial to bring against their views has long resorted.

"Marxists preach the immutability of the abstract historical scheme"!

Why, this is a sheer lie and invention!

Nowhere has any Marxist ever argued that there "must be" capitalism in Russia "because" there was capitalism in the West.



and so forth. No Marxist has ever regarded Marx's theory as a general and compulsory philosophical scheme of history, or as anything more than an explanation of a particular economic formation of society. Only Mr. Mikhailovsky, the subjective philosopher, has managed to betray such a lack of understanding of Marx as to attribute to him a general philosophical theory, in reply to which he received from Marx the absolutely definite explanation that he was knocking at the wrong door. Not a single Marxist has ever based his Social-Democratic views on anything but their conformity with reality and the history of the given facts, that is, Russian social and economic relations; and he could not have done so, because this demand on theory has been quite definitely proclaimed and made the cornerstone of the whole doctrine by Marx himself, the founder of "Marxism."

Of course, Mr. Mikhailovsky may refute these assertions as much as he pleases on the grounds that he has heard "with his own ears" the preaching of an abstract historical scheme. But what does it matter to us, the Social-Democrats, or to anybody else for that matter, that Mr. Mikhailovsky has had to hear all sorts of absurd nonsense from the people he converses with? Does it not only go to show that he is very fortunate in the choice of the people he converses with, and nothing more? It is very possible, of course, that the sapient people with whom the sapient philosopher converses call themselves Marxists. Social-Democrats, and so forth—but who does not know that at the present time (as was long ago pointed out) every blackguard likes to deck himself in a "red" cloak? (All this is said on the assumption that Mr. Mikhailovsky did indeed hear abstract historical schemes preached, and has not prevaricated. But I consider it absolutely imperative in this connection to make the reservation that I give this only for what it is worth.) And if Mr. Mikhailovsky is so penetrating that he cannot distinguish these "mummers" from Marxists, or if he has understood Marx so profoundly that he has never noted this criterion of his doctrine (the formulation of "what is going on under our eyes") that Marx so emphatically stressed, it only again shows that Mr. Mikhailovsky is not very intelligent, and nothing else.

At any rate, if he undertook to conduct a polemic in the press against the "Social-Democrats," he should have dealt with the group of Socialists who have long borne that name and who alone bear it (so that others should not be confused with them), and who have their literary representatives—Plekhanov and his circle.<sup>1</sup> And had he done so—and that obviously is the way anybody with any decency should have acted—and had he referred at least to the first<sup>2</sup> Social-Democratic work, Plekhanov's book *Our Differences*, he would have found in its very first pages a categorical declaration made by the author in the name of all the members of the circle:

"We in no case desire to shelter our programme under the authority of a great name" (i.e., the authority of Marx).

Do you understand Russian, Mr. Mikhailovsky? Do you understand the difference between preaching abstract schemes and entirely denying the authority of Marx when passing judgment on Russian affairs?

Do you realise that, by presenting the first judgment you happened to hear from the people you converse with as a Marxist judgment, and by ignoring the published declaration of one of the prominent members of Social-Democracy made in the name of the whole group, you acted dishonestly?

And then the declaration becomes even more definite:

"I repeat," Plekhanov says, "that differences of opinion regarding modern Russian realities are possible among the most consistent Marxists . . . [our doctrine] is the first attempt to apply this scientific theory to the analysis of very complex and intricate social relations."

It would seem difficult to say anything more clearly: the Marxists undoubtedly borrow from Marx's theory only its priceless methods, without which an explanation of social relations is impossible, and consequently they consider the criterion of their judgment of these relations to lie in its fidelity and conformity to reality, and not in abstract schemes and suchlike nonsense.

Perhaps you think the author actually meant something else

<sup>1</sup> I.e., the "Emancipation of Labour" Group.—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> I.e., the first Russian.—Ed.

by these statements? But that is not so. The question he was dealing with was—"must Russia pass through the capitalist phase of development?" Therefore the question was not formulated in a Marxist way but in accordance with the subjective methods of sundry native philosophers, for whom the criterion of this "must" lies in the policy of the higher-ups, or in the activities of "society," or in the ideal of a society which "corresponds to human nature," and similar nonsense. One asks, how would a man who preaches abstract schemes have answered such a question? Obviously, he would have begun to speak of the unquestionableness of the dialectical process, of the general philosophical importance of Marx's theory, of the inevitability of every country passing through the phase of . . . and so on and so forth.

And how did Plekhanov answer it?

In the only way in which a Marxist could answer it.

He entirely left aside the question of what must be, considering it an idle question, one that could interest only the subjectivists, and spoke only of real social and economic relations and of their real evolution. He therefore did not give a direct answer to such a wrongly-formulated question, but instead replied: "*Russia has entered on the capitalist path.*"

But Mr. Mikhailovsky, with the air of a connoisseur, talks about preaching abstract historical schemes, about the immanent laws of necessity, and similar incredible nonsense. And he calls this "a polemic against the Social-Democrats"!!

If this is a polemicist, then I simply fail to understand—who is a windbag?!

One must observe in connection with Mr. Mikhailovsky's argument quoted above that he represents the views of the Social-Democrats as being that "Russia will 'develop' her own capitalist production." Evidently, in the opinion of this philosopher Russia, has not got "her own" capitalist production. The author apparently holds the opinion that Russian capitalism is confined to one and a half million workers. We shall later on again meet with this childish idea of our "friends of the people," who class all the other forms of exploitation of free labour under heaven knows what heading.

"Russia will develop her own capitalist production with all its intrinsic contradictions . . . and meanwhile the muzhiks, divorced from the land, will become transformed into proletarians."

The deeper the forest, the thicker the trees! So there are no "intrinsic contradictions" in Russia? Or, to put it plainly, there is no exploitation of the masses of the people by a handful of capitalists; there is no impoverishment of the vast majority of the population and no enrichment of a few; the muzhik has still to be torn from the land? In what then does the whole post-Reform history of Russia consist, if not in the wholesale expropriation of the peasantry on a hitherto unparalleled scale? One must possess great courage indeed to say such things publicly. And Mr. Mikhailovsky possesses that courage:

"Marx dealt with a ready-made proletariat and a ready-made capitalism, whereas we have still to create them."

Russia has still to create a proletariat?! In Russia, in which alone can be found such hopeless poverty of the masses and such shameless exploitation of the toilers; which in respect to the condition of her poor has been compared (and legitimately) with England, in which the starvation of millions of people is a permanent phenomenon existing side by side, for instance, with a steady increase in the export of grain—in Russia there is no proletariat!

I think Mr. Mikhailovsky deserves to have a memorial erected to him while still alive for these classic words!

(But perhaps here too Mr. Mikhailovsky may try to wriggle out of it by declaring that he did not intend to say that there is no proletariat in Russia in general, but only that there is no capitalist proletariat? Is that so? Then why did you not say so? Why, "the whole question" is whether the Russian proletariat is a proletariat characteristic of the bourgeois organisation of social economy, or of some other. Who is to blame if in the course of two whole articles you did not say "a word" about this, the only serious and important question, but preferred to utter all sorts of nonsense and to talk yourself blue?)

But we shall see later that this is a constant and consistent tactical manœuvre of the "friends of the people," namely, pharisaically to close their eyes to the intolerable condition of the toilers in Rus-

sia, to depict it as having been only "shaken," so that all that is required is an effort by "cultured society" and by the government to put everything on the right track. These knights in shining armour think that if they close their eyes to the fact that the condition of the toiling masses is bad not because it has been shaken, but because the masses are being shamelessly robbed by a handful of exploiters, that if they bury their heads like ostriches so as not to see these exploiters, the exploiters will disappear. And when the Social-Democrats tell them that it is shameful cowardice to fear to look reality in the face; when they take the fact of exploitation as their starting point and say that its only possible explanation lies in the bourgeois organisation of Russian society, which is splitting the people into proletariat and bourgeoisie, and in the class character of the Russian state, which is nothing but the organ of domination of the bourgeoisie, and that therefore "the only way out" lies in a class war of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie—these "friends of the people" begin to howl that the Social-Democrats want to deprive the people of land, that they want to destroy our national economic organisation!

We now come to the most outrageous part of all this indecent, to say the least of it, "polemic," namely, Mr. Mikhailovsky's "criticism" (?) of the political activities of the Social-Democrats. Everybody realises that the activities carried on among the workers by Socialists and agitators cannot be honestly discussed in our legal press, and that the only thing a decent censored press can do in this connection is to "maintain a tactful silence." Mr. Mikhailovsky has forgotten this very elementary rule and has not scrupled to take advantage of his monopoly contact with the reading public in order to sling mud at the Socialists.

However, means of combating this unscrupulous criticism will be found outside of the legal publications.

"As I understand it," Mr. Mikhailovsky says with assumed naïveté, "the Russian Marxists can be divided into three categories: Marxist observers (who look on but take no part in the process), passive Marxists (they only 'allay the pains of childbirth'; they 'are not interested in the people on the land, and direct their attention and hopes to those who are already divorced from the means of production'), and active Marxists (who bluntly insist on the further ruin of the countryside)."

What is this! Mr. Critic must surely know that the Russian Marxists are Socialists who base themselves on the view that the reality around us is a capitalist society, and that there is only one way out of it—the class struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie? How and on what grounds can he mix them up so with such senseless vulgarity? What right (moral, of course) has he to extend the term Marxists to people who obviously do not accept the most elementary and fundamental propositions of Marxism, people who have never and nowhere appeared as a special group and have never and nowhere proclaimed a programme of their own?

Mr. Mikhailovsky has left himself a whole series of loopholes for justifying such monstrous methods.

"Perhaps," he says with the nonchalance of a society fop, "these are not real Marxists, but they regard and proclaim themselves as such."

Where have they proclaimed it, and when? In the liberal and radical salons of St. Petersburg? In private letters? Be it so. Well then, talk to them in your salons and in your correspondence! But you come out publicly and in print against people who have never come out publicly anywhere (under the banner of Marxism). And under these circumstances you dare to declare that you are arguing against "Social-Democrats," knowing that this name is borne only by "one" group of revolutionary Socialists, and that nobody else must be confused with them!

(I shall dwell on at least one "factual" reference which occurs in Mr. Mikhailovsky's article. Anybody who has read this article will have to admit that he also includes Mr. Skvortsov—the author of *The Economic Causes of Starvation*—among the "Marxists." But as a matter of fact this gentleman does not call himself a Marxist, and one needs only a most elementary acquaintance with the works of the Social-Democrats to see that from their standpoint he is nothing but a vulgar bourgeois. What sort of a Marxist is he when he does not understand that the social environment for which he projects his progressive measures is a bourgeois environment, and that therefore all "cultural improvements," which are indeed to be observed even in peasant economy, are bourgeois progress, which is improving the position of a minority but is proletarianising the

masses! What sort of a Marxist is he when he does not understand that the state to which he appeals with his projects is a class state, capable only of supporting the bourgeoisie and oppressing the proletariat!) Mr. Mikhailovsky wriggles and squirms, like a schoolboy who has been caught red-handed: "I am absolutely not to blame here"—he tries to prove to the reader—"I 'heard it with my own ears and saw it with my own eyes.'" Excellent! We are quite willing to believe that there is nobody in your field of vision but vulgarians and rascals. But what is that to us, the Social-Democrats? Who does not know that "at the present time, when" not only Socialist activity, but all social activity that is in the least independent and honest, is subject to political persecution—that for every single person who is actually working under one or another banner—be it Narodovolism, Marxism, or even, let us say, constitutionalism—there are several score phrasemongers who under that name conceal their liberal cowardice, and in addition, perhaps, several downright rascals who are arranging their own shady affairs? Is it not obvious that it requires the lowest kind of vulgarity to blame any of these trends for the fact that its banner is being besmirched (privately and on the quiet, at that) by all sorts of riffraff? Mr. Mikhailovsky's argument is one chain of distortions, mutilations and perversions. We saw above that he completely distorted the "truths" on which the Social-Democrats base themselves, presenting them in a way in which Marxists have never presented them, or could have presented them, anywhere. And if he had set forth the true conception which the Social-Democrats have of Russian realities, he could not but have seen that one can "conform" to these views "only in one manner," namely, by helping to develop the class consciousness of the proletariat, to organise and weld it for the political struggle against the present regime. He has, by the way, one other trick up his sleeve. With an air of injured innocence he pharisaically lifts up his eyes to the hills and unctuously declares:

"I am very glad to hear it, but I cannot understand what you are protesting against [that is exactly what he says in *Russkoye Bogatstvo*, No. 2]. Read my comment on passive Marxists more attentively and you will see that I say: from the ethical standpoint, no objection can be made."

And this, of course, is nothing but a re-hash of his former wretched subterfuges.

Tell us, please, how would the conduct of a person be characterised who declared that he was criticising social-revolutionary Narodism (when no other had yet appeared—I take such a period), and who proceeded to say approximately the following:

“The Narodniks, as far as I understand, are divided into three categories: the consistent Narodniks, who completely accept the ideas of the muzhik and, in exact accordance with his desires, generalise the lash and wife-beating and generally pursue the government’s abominable policy of the knout and club, which, you know, has been called a *narodny*<sup>1</sup> policy; then the Narodnik cowards, who are not interested in the opinions of the muzhik, and who only strive to transplant to Russia an alien revolutionary movement by means of associations and suchlike—against which, by the way, no objection can be made from the ethical standpoint, unless it be the slipperiness of the path, which may easily convert a cowardly Narodnik into a consistent or courageous one; and, finally, the courageous Narodniks, who carry out to the full the *narodny* ideals of the thrifty muzhik, and accordingly settle on the land in order to live like real kulaks.”

All decent people, of course, would characterise this as vile and vulgar scoffing. And if, further, the person who said such things could not receive a rebuttal from the Narodniks in the same press; if, moreover, the ideas of these Narodniks had hitherto been set forth only illegally, so that many people had no exact conception of them and might easily believe everything they were told about the Narodniks—then everybody would agree that such a person is . . .

But perhaps Mr. Mikhailovsky himself has not yet quite forgotten the word that fits here.

\* \* \*

But enough! Many similar insinuations by Mr. Mikhailovsky still remain. But I do not know of any labour more fatiguing, more thankless, more dispiriting than to have to wallow in this filth, to assemble insinuations dispersed here and there, to compare them and to search for at least one serious objection.

Enough!

April 1894

<sup>1</sup> I. e., peoples.—*Trans.*



## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The reader will find in the text of the article footnotes referring to a further analysis of certain questions, when as a matter of fact no such analysis is given.

The reason is that the present article is only the first part of a reply to articles on Marxism which appeared in *Russkoye Bogatstvo*. Extreme shortage of time has prevented the prompt appearance of this article, but we consider it impossible to delay it any further; we are two months late as it is. That is why we have decided for the present to publish the analysis of Mr. N. Mikhailovsky's "critique," without waiting until the printing of the whole article is completed.

In addition to the present analysis, the reader will find in Parts II and III, which are now in course of preparation, an analysis of the social and economic views of other leading figures on *Russkoye Bogatstvo*, Messrs. Yuzhakov and S. Krivenko, together with an essay on economic realities in Russia and the "ideas and tactics of the Social-Democrats" that follow therefrom.

## NOTE TO THE PRESENT EDITION

The present edition is an exact reproduction of the first. Having had no share in compiling the text, we did not consider ourselves entitled to alter it in any way and simply confined ourselves to the work of publication. Our motive for undertaking this work was the conviction that the present pamphlet will contribute to a certain invigoration of our Social-Democratic propaganda.

Believing that one absolute corollary of Social-Democratic convictions should be a readiness to help such propaganda, we call upon all who share the views of the author of the present pamphlet to assist by every means in their power (especially, of course, by republication) to secure the widest possible circulation both of the present work and of all organs of Marxist propaganda generally. The present moment is particularly favourable for this. The activity of *Russkoye Bogatstvo* is assuming an increasingly provocative character towards us. In its anxiety to paralyse the spread of Social-Democratic ideas in society, the magazine has gone so far as directly to accuse us of being indifferent to the interests of the proletariat and of insisting that the masses must become impoverished. We make bold to think that by such methods the magazine will only injure itself and pave the way for our victory. However, it should not be forgotten that the calumniators possess every material means for the most widespread propaganda of their calumnies. They possess a magazine with a circulation of several thousand copies; they have reading rooms and libraries at their disposal. We must therefore exert every effort to prove to our enemies that even the advantages of a privileged position are not always enough to ensure the success of insinuation. We express the profound conviction that such efforts will be made.

July 1894

### PART III

Let us, in conclusion, acquaint ourselves with Mr. Krivenko, another "friend of the people" who also launches into a direct war on the Social-Democrats.

But we shall not analyze his articles ("In Reference to Cultural Freelances," in No. 12, 1893, and "Travel Letters," in No. 1, 1894) in the same way as we did those of Messrs. Mikhailovsky and Yuzhakov. There an analysis was essential so as to get a clear idea, in the case of the former, of the nature of their objections to materialism and to Marxism in general, and, in the case of the latter, of their political economic theory. In order to get a complete idea of the "friends of the people," we must now acquaint ourselves with their tactics, their practical proposals and their political programme. This programme they do not set forth anywhere outright or with the same consistency and fullness as their theoretical views. I am therefore obliged to take this programme from various articles in their magazine—which is distinguished by a fair degree of unanimity among its contributors—so as not to encounter objections. I shall give preference to the articles by Mr. Krivenko mentioned above only because they furnish more material and because their author is just as typical of the magazine as a practical man, a politician, as Mr. Mikhailovsky is as a sociologist and Mr. Yuzhakov as an economist.

However, before passing to their programme, it is absolutely essential to dwell on one more theoretical point. We have seen above how Mr. Yuzhakov confines himself to meaningless phrases about land leasing by the people maintaining the national economy and the like, thereby masking the fact that he does not understand the economic life of our tillers of the soil. He did not deal with the handicraft industries at all, but confined himself to data on the growth of large-scale factory industry. Now Mr. Krivenko goes in for exactly the same sort of phrasemongering with regard to the

handicraft industries. He draws a direct distinction between "our popular industry," i.e., handicraft industry, and capitalist industry (No. 12, pp. 180-81). "Popular production [sic!]," says he, "in the majority of cases arises naturally," whereas capitalist industry "is very often created artificially." In another passage he draws a distinction between "small, popular industry" and "large-scale, capitalist industry." If you were to ask what is the peculiarity of the former, you would only learn that it is "small"<sup>1</sup> and that the implements of labour are connected with the producer (I borrow this latter definition from Mr. Mikhailovsky's article above mentioned). But this in no way defines its economic organisation—and what is more, it is absolutely untrue. For example, Mr. Krivenko says that "small popular industry to this day produces a larger gross output and employs a larger number of hands than large-scale capitalist industry." The author is evidently referring to the statistics on the number of handicraftsmen, who total as many as four million, or, according to another estimate, seven million. But who is not aware of the fact that the predominant form of enterprise among our handicraft trades is the domestic system of large-scale production; that the mass of the handicraftsmen do not occupy an independent position in production, but rather a completely dependent, subordinate position; that they work up not their own material but the material of the merchant, who only pays the handicraftsman wages? The figures bearing out the predominance of this form have been adduced even in legal literature. I shall cite, for example, the excellent work by the well-known statistician S. Kharizomenov, published in *Yuridichesky Vestnik* (1883, Nos. 11 and 12). Summarising the data given in writings on the handicraft industries in our central provinces, where they are most highly developed, S. Kharizomenov arrived at the conclusion that the domestic system of large-scale production, i.e., an unquestionably capitalist form of industry, undoubtedly predominates. "Defining the economic role of small independent industry," he says, "we arrive at the following

<sup>1</sup> You would also learn that "from it," as Mr. Krivenko says, "may develop real [sic!] popular industry." That is the usual trick of the "friends of the people"—to utter idle and meaningless phrases instead of giving a precise and direct description of reality.

conclusions: in the Moscow province 86.5 per cent of the annual turnover of handicraft industry is accounted for by the domestic system of large-scale production, and only 13.5 per cent by small independent industry. In the Alexandrovsk and Pokrovsk districts of the Vladimir province, 96 per cent of the annual turnover of handicraft industry falls to the share of the domestic system of large-scale production and manufacture, and only 4 per cent to the share of small independent industry."

As far as we know, nobody has tried to refute these facts; and they cannot be refuted. How can anybody evade these facts, say nothing about them, call such industry "popular" industry in contradistinction to capitalist industry, and talk about the possibility of its developing into real industry?

There can be only one explanation of this direct ignoring of facts, namely, the general tendency of the "friends of the people," as of all Russian liberals, to gloss over the antagonism of classes and the exploitation of the toilers in Russia by representing all this simply as so many "defects." Perhaps an additional reason lies in so profound a knowledge of the subject as is revealed, for instance, by Mr. Krivenko when he calls the "Pavlovo cutlery industry"—"an industry of a semi-artisan character." The lengths of distortion to which the "friends of the people" will go are simply phenomenal! How can you speak of the artisan character of this industry, when the Pavlovo cutlers produce for the market and not to order? Perhaps Mr. Krivenko classes as an artisan occupation the system under which the merchant orders articles from the handicraftsman to send to the Nizhni-Novgorod fair? That would be too funny, but it must be so. As a matter of fact the making of cutlery (compared with the making of other articles in Pavlovo) has least of all preserved the small handicraft form, with its (apparently) independent producers. "The production of table and industrial cutlery,"<sup>1</sup> says N. F. Annensky, "is already to a great extent approaching the factory or, more correctly, the manufactory form." Of 396 handicraftsmen engaged in the making of table cutlery in the Nizhegorod province, only 62 (16 per cent) work for the market, 273 (69 per

<sup>1</sup> The largest of the Pavlovo industries, accounting for 900,000 rubles out of a total output of 2,750,000 rubles.

cent) work for the master,<sup>1</sup> and 61 (15 per cent) are wage workers. Hence, only one-sixth of the handicraftsmen are not directly enslaved to an employer. As to the other branch of the cutlery industry—the production of folding knives (penknives)—this author says that it “occupies a position midway between the table knife and the lock: the majority of the craftsmen in this branch are already working for the master, but at the same time there are still a fairly large number of independent handicraftsmen who do business for the market.”

In the Nizhegorod province there are in all 2,552 handicraftsmen producing this sort of cutlery, of whom 48 per cent (1,236) work for the market, 42 per cent (1,058) work for the master, and 10 per cent (258) are wage workers. Thus here too the independent (?) handicraftsmen are in the minority. And even the independent ones, of course, work for the market only nominally; actually they are no less enslaved to the *capital* of the merchants. If we take the figures for all the trades in the Gorbatovo district, Nizhegorod province, where 21,983 workers are engaged in trades, or 84.5 per cent of the total number of workers,<sup>2</sup> we discover the following facts (exact statistics on the economy of the trades are available for only 10,808 workers, engaged in the following trades: metal, leather, harness, felt and hemp yarn): 35.6 per cent of the handicraftsmen work for the market, 46.7 per cent work for the master, and 17.7 per cent are wage workers. Thus here too we see the predominance of the domestic system of large-scale production, the predominance of relations under which labour is enslaved to capital.

Another reason why the “friends of the people” so freely evade facts of this kind is that their concept of capitalism has not advanced beyond commonplace, vulgar ideas—a capitalist=a wealthy and educated employer who runs a large machine enterprise—and they

<sup>1</sup> I.e., for the merchant, who supplies the handicraftsman with materials and pays him ordinary wages for his labour.

<sup>2</sup> The peculiar Russian economists, who measure Russian capitalism by the number of factory workers (*sic!*), unceremoniously class these workers, and the multitudes like them, among the people who are engaged in agriculture and who suffer not from the yoke of capital, but from pressure artificially exerted on the “popular system” (????!).

refuse to hear anything about the scientific meaning of this concept. In the preceding chapter we saw that Mr. Yuzhakov directly dates the beginning of capitalism from machine industry, passing over simple co-operation and manufacture. This is a widespread error, one consequence of which is that the capitalist organisation of our handicraft industries is overlooked.

It goes without saying that the domestic system of large-scale production is a capitalist form of industry: here we have all its earmarks—commodity production already at a high level of development, the concentration of the means of production in the hands of a few individuals, and the expropriation of the mass of the workers, who do not possess their own means of production and therefore apply their labour to those of others, working not for themselves but for the capitalist. Obviously, judged by its organisation, handicraft industry is pure capitalism; it differs from large-scale machine industry in its technical backwardness (chiefly due to the preposterously low level of wages) and in the fact that the worker retains a minute agricultural husbandry. This latter circumstance particularly confuses our "friends of the people," who, like the veritable metaphysicians they are, are accustomed to think in naked and direct contradictions: "Yea, yea—nay, nay, and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one."

If the workers have no land—there is capitalism; if the workers have land—there is no capitalism. And they confine themselves to this soothing philosophy, completely losing sight of the social organisation of production and forgetting the generally-known fact that ownership of land does not in the least obviate the dire poverty of these landowners, who are most shamelessly robbed by other, similar landowners—"peasants."

They do not know, it seems, that capitalism—while still at a comparatively low level of development—has nowhere been able completely to divorce the worker from the land. In relation to Western Europe, Marx established the law that only large-scale machine industry completes the expropriation of the worker. It is therefore obvious that the current argument that there is no capitalism in our country for the reason that "the people own land" is quite meaningless, because the capitalism of simple co-operation and man-

ufacture has never anywhere been associated with the complete divorcement of the worker from the land; yet, of course, it was capitalism none the less.

As to large-scale machine industry in Russia—and this is the form the biggest and most important branches of our industry are rapidly adopting—in spite of all our peculiarity of development, it possesses the same property as it does everywhere in the capitalist West, namely, it absolutely will not tolerate the preservation of the tie between the worker and the land. Incidentally, Dementiev proved this fact by precise statistical material, from which (quite independently of Marx) he drew the conclusion that machine production is inseparably associated with the complete divorcement of the worker from the land. This investigation served to demonstrate once more that Russia is a capitalist country, that the tie between the toiler and the land in Russia is so feeble and threadbare, and the might of property (of the money-owner, the merchant, the rich peasant, the manufacturer, etc.) so firmly established, that one more stride by technique will be enough to transform the “peasant” (?? who has long been living by the sale of his labour power) into a simple worker.<sup>1</sup> But the lack of understanding of the economic organisation of our handicraft industries on the part of our “friends of the people” is by no means confined to this. Their idea even of the trades where work is not done “for the master” is just as superficial as their idea of the tiller (which we have already seen above). This, by the way, is quite natural in the case of people who undertake to gossip about questions of political economy when all they know, it seems, is that there is such a thing in the world as means of production, which “may” be connected with the toiler—and that is very good; but which “may” also be separated from him—and that is very bad. This will not get you very far.

Speaking of trades that are becoming capitalist and of trades that are not becoming capitalist (where “small production can easily exist”), Mr. Krivenko incidentally states that in certain branches

<sup>1</sup> The domestic system of large-scale production is not only a capitalist system, but the worst kind of capitalist system, under which the most intense exploitation of the toiler is combined with the least opportunity for the worker to wage a struggle for his emancipation.



"the basic expenditures on production" are very inconsiderable and that therefore small production is possible. He cites as an example the brick-making industry, where the expenditure, he says, may be one-fifteenth of the annual output of the plants.

As this is almost the only reference the author makes to fact (that, I repeat, is the most characteristic feature of subjective sociology; it shuns a direct and precise description and analysis of realities and prefers to soar in the sphere of the "ideals"<sup>1</sup> . . . of the petty bourgeois), let us take it to show how false are the ideas of actual realities held by the "friends of the people."

We find a description of the brick industry (the making of brick from white clay) in the economic statistics of the Moscow Zemstvo (*Collated Statistics*, Vol. VII, Book I, Part 2, etc.). The industry is chiefly concentrated in three volosts of the Bogorodsk uyezd, where there are 233 establishments, employing 1,402 workers (567, or 41 per cent, family workers,<sup>1</sup> and 835, or 59 per cent. wage workers), with an annual aggregate output valued at 357,000 rubles. The industry arose long ago, but it has particularly developed during the past fifteen years owing to the building of a railway, which has greatly simplified the marketing problem. Before the railway was built the family form of production predominated, but it is now giving way to the exploitation of wage labour. This industry, too, is not exempt from the dependence of the small producer on the large producer as far as the disposal of the product is concerned: owing to "lack of funds" the former sell brick (often "raw"—unbaked) to the latter on the spot at frightfully low prices.

However, apart from this dependence, we are able to acquaint ourselves with the organisation of the industry thanks to a per household census of the handicraft workers appended to the essay, where the number of workers and the value of the annual output of each establishment is given.

In order to ascertain whether the law that commodity production is capitalist production—i.e., that the former inevitably becomes converted into the latter at a certain stage of development—applies to this industry, we must compare the establishments according to

<sup>1</sup> By "family" workers are meant working members of the owners' families, in distinction to wage workers.

size: the problem is precisely one of the relation between small and large establishments judged by their role in industry and by the exploitation of wage labour. Taking the number of workers as a basis, we divide the handicraft establishments into three groups: 1) establishments employing 1-5 workers (both family workers and wage workers); 2) establishments employing 6-10 workers, and 3) establishments employing over 10 workers.

Examining the size of the establishments, the kind of workers employed and the output in each group, we arrive at the following data:

Group of handicraft establishments according to number of workers employed	Average number of workers per establishment	Per cent		Annual output per worker (rubles)	Per cent of total			Absolute figures		
		Establishments employing wage workers	Wage workers		Establishments	Workers	Annual output	Number of establishments <sup>1</sup>	Number of workers	Annual output (rubles)
I. Employing 1-5 workers	2.8	25	19	251	72	34	34	167/43	467,92	119,500
II. Employing 6-10 workers	7.3	90	58	249	18	23	22	43/39	317,186	79,000
III. Employing over 10 workers	26.4	100	91	260	10	43	44	23/23	609,557	158,500
All groups	6.0	45	59	251	100	100	100	233/105	1,402,835	357,000

Examine these figures and you will perceive the bourgeois or, what is the same thing, the capitalist organisation of the industry: the larger the establishment, the higher the productivity of labour<sup>2</sup> (the middle group is an exception), the more intense the exploi-

<sup>1</sup> The denominators indicate the number of establishments employing wage workers and the number of wage workers employed—same in the next table.

<sup>2</sup> The annual output per worker in Group I is 251 rubles; in Group II—249 rubles; in Group III—260 rubles.

tation of wage labour<sup>1</sup> and the greater the concentration of production.<sup>2</sup>

The third group, in which production is almost entirely based on wage labour, comprises 10 per cent of the total number of establishments and accounts for 44 per cent of the aggregate value of production.

This concentration of the means of production in the hands of a minority is associated with the expropriation of the majority (the wage workers) and explains both the dependence of the small producers on the merchants (the big manufacturers are in fact merchants) and the oppression of labour in this trade. Hence we see that the *cause* of the expropriation of the toiler and of the exploitation of the toiler lies in the relations of production themselves.

The Russian Socialist-Narodniks, as we know, held the opposite view and considered the cause of the exploitation of labour in the handicraft industries to lie not in the relations of production (which were proclaimed to be based on a principle which precluded exploitation), but outside of them—in agrarian policy, financial policy and so on. One asks, what was, and is, the basis of the persistence of this opinion, which has now almost acquired the tenacity of a prejudice? Could it be the prevalence of a *different* idea of the relations of production in the handicraft industries? Not at all. It persists only because of the absence of any attempt *to give an accurate and definite description of the facts, of the real forms of economic organisation*; it persists only because the relations of production are not singled out and submitted to an independent analysis. In a word, it persists solely because of a failure to understand the only scientific method of social science, namely, the materialist method. We can now understand the train of thought of our old Socialists. In relation to the handicraft industries, they attributed the cause of exploitation to facts which lie *outside* the sphere of relations of production; in

<sup>1</sup> The proportion of establishments employing wage labour is 25 per cent in Group I, 90 per cent in Group II and 100 per cent in Group III; the proportion of wage workers is 19 per cent, 58 per cent and 91 per cent, respectively.

<sup>2</sup> Group I, comprising 72 per cent of the total establishments, accounts for 34 per cent of the total output; Group II: 18 per cent of the establishments, 22 per cent of the output; Group III: 10 per cent of the establishments, 44 per cent of the output.

relation to large-scale, factory capitalism, they could not help but see that *there* the cause of exploitation lies precisely in the sphere of relations of production. The result was an irreconcilable contradiction, an incongruity; it seemed inexplicable how this large-scale capitalism could spring up when there was nothing capitalistic in the relations of production of the handicraft industries (which relations were not even investigated!). The conclusion is a natural one: the connection between handicraft and capitalist industry not being understood, the former is contrasted to the latter, as "popular" industry to "artificial" industry. There arises the idea that capitalism is contradictory to our "popular system"—an idea which is very widespread and which quite recently was submitted to the Russian public in a revised and improved edition by Mr. Nikolai—on. This idea persists purely by inertia—despite its phenomenal illogicality: factory capitalism is conceived on the basis of what it actually is in reality, whereas handicraft industry is conceived on the basis of what it "might be"; the former on the basis of an analysis of relations of production, the latter without even an attempt to examine the relations of production separately, the matter being directly transferred to the sphere of politics. We have only to turn to an analysis of these relations of production and we find that the "popular system" consists of these very same capitalist relations of production, although in an undeveloped, embryonic state; that—if we reject the naïve prejudice that all handicraftsmen are equal to each other, and accurately set forth the differences between them—the difference between the "capitalists" of the mill or factory and the "handicraftsman" at times proves to be less than the difference between one "handicraftsman" and another; *and that capitalism constitutes not a contradiction to the "popular system" but the direct, next and immediate continuation and development of it.*

Perhaps the example quoted may be considered unsuitable, and it may be said that the percentage of wage workers in the given case is too high?<sup>1</sup> But, as a matter of fact, the important thing here is *not* the absolute figures but the *relations* they disclose, relations

<sup>1</sup> This is scarcely true of the handicraft industries of the Moscow province, but perhaps with regard to the less developed handicraft industries of the rest of Russia it may be justifiable.

which are essentially bourgeois, and which do not cease to be so whether their bourgeois character is expressed strongly or expressed weakly.

But if it be desired, let me take another example—one deliberately chosen because its bourgeois character is weakly expressed. I take (from Mr. Isayev's book on the trades of the Moscow province) the pottery trade, "a pure domestic industry," as the professor calls it. This trade, of course, may be taken as representative of the small peasant trades: its technique is of the simplest kind, its equipment quite small and it produces articles of universal and essential use. And we find that, thanks to a per household census of handicraftsmen giving the same particulars as in the previous case, we are in a position to study the economic organisation of this trade too. one that is unquestionably typical of the vast majority of Russian small, "popular" trades. We divide the handicraftsmen into groups—I: those employing 1-3 workers (family workers and wage workers); II: those employing 4-5 workers. and III: those employing over 5 workers—and apply the same methods of calculation:

Group of handicraft establishments according to number of workers employed	Average number of workers per establishment		Per cent		Annual output per worker (rubles)	Per cent of total			Absolute figures		
	Establishments employing wage workers	Wage workers	Establishments	Workers		Annual output	Number of establishments	Number of workers	Annual output (rubles)		
I. Employing 1-3 workers	2.4	39	19	461	60	38	36	72/28	174/33	81,500	
II. Employing 4-5 workers	4.3	48	20	498	27	32	32	33/16	144/29	71,800	
III. Employing over 5 workers	8.4	100	65	533	13	30	32	16/16	134/87	71,500	
All groups	3.7	49	33	497	100	100	100	121/60	452/149	224,800	

Evidently, in this trade too—and many similar examples could be quoted at will—the *relations* are bourgeois: we find the same disintegration arising out of commodity production, and it is a disintegration that is specifically capitalistic and that leads to the exploitation of wage labour, which already plays a prime part in the higher group, where with one-eighth of the total number of establishments and 30 per cent of the total number of workers, nearly one-third of the total output is produced with a productivity of labour considerably above the average. These relations of production alone are enough to explain the appearance and power of the merchants. We see that the minority, owning larger and more profitable establishments, and receiving a “pure” income from the labour of others (in the higher group of potters there is an average of 5.5 wage workers per establishment), accumulate “savings,” while the majority become impoverished, and even the small masters (not to mention the wage workers) are unable to make ends meet. It is obvious and inevitable that the latter should be enslaved to the former—inevitable precisely because of the capitalist character of the given relations of production. These relations consist in the fact that the product of the social labour, organised by commodity production, passes into the hands of private persons and in their hands serves as an instrument for oppressing and enslaving the toilers, a means of personal enrichment at the expense of the exploitation of the masses. And do not think that this exploitation, this oppression, is more feebly expressed because this character of the relations is still feebly developed, or that the accumulation of *capital* that proceeds side by side with the impoverishment of the producers is insignificant. Quite the contrary. This only leads to grosser, feudal forms of exploitation; it leads to the fact that capital, still unable to subjugate the worker directly, by the mere purchase of his labour power at its value, enmeshes the labourer in a veritable net of usurious extortion, binds him to itself by kulak methods, and as a result robs him not only of surplus value but of a large part of his wages too, and, what is more, intimidates him, deprives him of the possibility of changing his “master,” humiliates him by compelling him to regard as a boon the fact that he “gives” (*sic!*) him work.—Obviously, not a single worker would consent to exchange his status for that of a Russian

"independent" handicraftsman in "real," "popular" industry. It is also obvious that all the favourite measures of the Russian radicals either will not in the least affect the exploitation of the toiler and his enslavement to capital and remain isolated experiments (artels), or will worsen the condition of the toilers (inalienability of the land allotments), or, yet again, will only purify, develop and consolidate the given capitalist relations (improvement of technique, loans, etc.).

The "friends of the people," by the way, will never be able to grasp the fact that *capitalism* exists in peasant industry, despite its general wretchedness, despite its comparatively small establishments and extremely low productivity of labour, and despite its primitive technique and small number of wage workers. They are unable to grasp the fact that *capital* signifies certain relations between people, relations which remain the same whether the categories under comparison are at a high or a low level of development. Bourgeois economists have never been able to understand this; they have always objected to such a definition of capital. I recall how one of them, writing in the *Russkaya Mysl* of Zieber's book (on the Marxian theory), quoted this definition (capital is a relation) and put an exclamation mark after it in disgust.

That is a most characteristic feature of bourgeois philosophers, namely, to regard the categories of the bourgeois regime as something eternal and natural. That is why they adopt such definitions for capital as "accumulated labour used for further production"—that is, they define it as an eternal category of human society, thereby glossing over that specific, historically-defined economic formation in which this "accumulated labour," organised by commodity production, falls into the hands of people who do not labour and serves to exploit the labour of others. And so, instead of an analysis and study of a definite system of relations of production, what we get from them is a series of banalities applicable to any system, mixed with a sentimental pap of petty-bourgeois morality.

And now you see why the "friends of the people" call this industry "popular" industry and why they contrast it with capitalist industry. It is only because these gentlemen are petty-bourgeois ideologists and are incapable even of imagining that these small

producers live and operate under a system of commodity production (that is why I call them petty-bourgeois) and that their relations to the market necessarily and inevitably split them into a bourgeoisie and a proletariat. If you tried to study the real organisation of our "popular" industries instead of phrasemongering about what they "might" lead to, we would see whether you could *find any at all developed branch of handicraft industry in Russia which is not organised capitalistically.*

An if you do not agree that the necessary and sufficient earmarks of this concept are the monopoly of the means of production by a minority, the freeing of the majority from the means of production, and the exploitation of wage labour (or, speaking generally, the appropriation by private persons of the product of social labour organised by commodity production—and that is the essence of capitalism), then be good enough to give your "own" definition of capitalism and your "own" history of capitalism.

As a matter of fact, the organisation of our "popular" handicraft industries furnishes an excellent illustration of the general history of the development of capitalism. It clearly demonstrates the latter's origin, its inception, for example, in the form of simple co-operation (the higher group in the pottery industry); it further shows how the "savings" that—thanks to commodity production—accumulate in the hands of separate individuals become *capital*, which first monopolises marketing ("merchants and traders"), owing to the fact that only the owners of these "savings" have the necessary funds for wholesale marketing, enabling them to wait until the goods are sold in distant markets; how, further, this merchant capital enslaves the mass of producers and organises capitalist manufacture, the capitalist domestic system of large-scale production; and how, finally, the expansion of the market and increasing competition lead to higher technique, and how this merchant capital becomes industrial capital and organises large-scale machine production. And when this capital, having grown strong and having enslaved millions of toilers and whole regions, unceremoniously begins to exercise pressure on the government and to turn it into its lackey—our wise "friends of the people"



raise a howl about "capitalism being implanted," about it being "artificially created"!

They have taken time by the forelock, we must say!

And so, when Mr. Krivenko talks about a popular, real, proper, etc., industry, he is simply trying to gloss over the fact that our handicraft industries are nothing but capitalism at various stages of its development. We have already sufficiently acquainted ourselves with these methods in the case of Mr. Yuzhakov, who, instead of studying the peasant reform, talked about the fundamental aim of the famous Manifesto, and the like; who, instead of studying the question of land renting, dubbed it popular renting; who, instead of studying how the home market for capitalism evolves, philosophised about the latter's inevitable collapse owing to the absence of markets, and so on.

In order to show to what extent the "friends of the people" distort facts, I will quote another example:<sup>1</sup> our subjective philosophers so rarely condescend to give us precise references to facts that it would be unfair to ignore one they do give, one of their most precise references, namely, the reference Mr. Krivenko makes (No. I, 1894) to the budgets of the Voronezh peasants. Here we are able to convince ourselves, on the basis of facts they have themselves selected, whose idea of reality is more correct—that of the Russian radicals and "friends of the people," or that of the Russian Social-Democrats.

Mr. Shcherbina, statistician of the Voronezh Zemstvo, appends to his description of peasant economy in the Ostrogozhye uyezd the budgets of 24 typical peasant farms, and analyses them in the text.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Krivenko reproduces this analysis, not realising, or, rather,

<sup>1</sup> Although this example concerns the disintegration of the peasantry, about which much has already been said, I consider it necessary to analyse *their own facts* in order to demonstrate clearly what an insolent lie it is to assert that the Social-Democrats are interested not in realities but in "prophesying the future," and what charlatans the "friends of the people" are when in their controversies with us they ignore our real views and confine themselves to nonsensical phrases.

<sup>2</sup> *Collated Statistics of the Voronezh Province*, Vol. II, Book II. *Peasant Economy in the Ostrogozhye Uyezd*, Voronezh, 1887. The budgets are given in the appendices, pp. 42-49, and the analysis in Chapter XVIII: "Composition and Budgets of Peasant Households."

refusing to realise, that its methods are entirely unsuitable from the standpoint of getting an idea of the economy of our peasant agriculturalists. The fact is that these 24 budgets depict entirely different farms—prosperous, middle and poor—which Mr. Krivenko himself points out (p. 159); but, like Mr. Shcherbina, he simply operates with *average* figures, lumping together various types of farms, and thus completely disguises the fact of their disintegration. And the disintegration of our small producers is such a general and important fact (to which the Social-Democrats have long been drawing the attention of the Russian Socialists. See the works of Plekhanov) that it is brought out quite distinctly even by the scanty data which Mr. Krivenko has selected. Instead, when dealing with the *husbandry* of the peasants, of dividing them into categories according to size and type of husbandry, he, like Mr. Shcherbina, divides them into legal categories—former state peasants and former landlords' peasants—confines his attention to the greater prosperity of the former compared with the latter, and loses sight of the fact that the differences between the peasants within these categories are far greater than the differences between the categories.<sup>1</sup> To prove this, I divide these 24 budgets into three groups. I pick out a) 6 prosperous peasants, then b) 11 substantial peasants (Nos. 7-10 and 16-22 in Shcherbina's table) and c) 7 poor peasants (Nos. 11-15, 23 and 24 in Shcherbina's table of budgets). For example, Mr. Krivenko says that the expenses per farm of the former state peasants are 541.3 rubles, and of the former landlords' peasants 417.7 rubles. But he overlooks the fact that these expenses are far from being equal among the various peasants: among the former state peasants, for instance, there is a peasant with an expenditure of 84.7 rubles and a peasant with an expenditure *ten times as large*—887.4 rubles (even if we leave out of account the German colonist with an expenditure of

<sup>1</sup> It is unquestionable that the husbandry of a peasant who lives exclusively by his agricultural enterprise and employs a labourer differs in type from the husbandry of a peasant who works as an agricultural labourer and derives three-fifths of his earnings from this pursuit. And among these 24 husbandmen there are both types. Judge for yourselves what kind of "science" will result if we lump together agricultural labourers and husbandmen who employ labourers and operate with the general averages!

1,456.2 rubles). What is the value of an average derived by lumping together such quantities? If we take the division into categories that I give, we find that the average expenditure per household of a prosperous peasant is 855.86 rubles, of a middle peasant 471.61 rubles and of a poor peasant 223.78 rubles.<sup>1</sup>

The difference, roughly, is in the ratio 4 : 2 : 1.

Let us proceed. Basing himself on Shcherbina, Mr. Krivenko gives figures for the expenditure on personal consumption among the various legal grades of peasants: for example, the annual expenditure per person on vegetable food among the former state peasants is 13.4 rubles, and among the former landlords' peasants 12.2 rubles. But if we take them according to economic category, the figures are: a) 17.7; b) 14.5 and c) 13.1. The expenditure on meat and dairy food per person among the former landlords' peasants is 5.2 rubles and among the former state peasants 7.7 rubles. Taken by economic categories the figures are 11.7, 5.8 and 3.6 respectively. It is obvious that calculating according to legal category only serves to conceal a huge divergence and nothing more. It is obviously valueless for that reason. The income of the former state peasants is greater than the income of the former landlords' peasants by 53.7 per cent—says Mr. Krivenko: a general average (for 24 budgets) of 539 rubles; but for the two categories, over 600 rubles and about 400 rubles respectively. But if graded according to state of prosperity, the figures are a) 1,053.2 rubles, b) 473.8 rubles and c) 202.4 rubles, or a fluctuation of 10 : 2, and not 3 : 2.

"The capital value of a peasant farm among the former state peasants is 1,060 rubles, and among the former landlords' peasants 635 rubles"—says Mr. Krivenko. But if we take the economic categories,<sup>2</sup> the figures are a) 1,737.91 rubles, b) 786.42 rubles and c) 363.38 rubles—again a fluctuation of 10 : 2, and not 3 : 2. By dividing the "peasantry" into legal categories the author deprived

<sup>1</sup> The fluctuation in the average size of family is much less: a) 7.83 persons, b) 8.36 persons, and c) 5.28 persons per family.

<sup>2</sup> The divergence is even greater in respect to agricultural implements: the average value of implements is 54.83 rubles per household. But among the well-to-do peasants it is twice the average—111.80 rubles, and among the poor peasants one-third the average—16.04 rubles. Among the middle peasants it is 48.44 rubles.

himself of the opportunity of forming a correct idea of the economy of this "peasantry."

If we examine the farms of the various types of peasants graded according to their state of prosperity, we find that the prosperous family has an average income of 1,053.2 rubles and an average expenditure of 855.86 rubles, or a net income of 197.34 rubles. The middle family has an income of 473.8 rubles and an expenditure of 471.61 rubles, or a net income of 2.19 rubles per household (and that without reckoning debts and arrears)—obviously, it can barely make ends meet: out of 11 households, 5 have a deficit. The farms of the lowest, or poor group are run at a direct loss: income 202.4 rubles, expenditure 223.78 rubles, or a deficit of 21.38 rubles.<sup>1</sup> It is evident that if we were to lump these households together and strike a general average (net income—44.11 rubles) we would entirely distort the real picture. We would then overlook the fact (as Mr. Krivenko overlooked it) that all the six prosperous peasants who secure a net income employ labourers (8 in all)—a fact that elucidates the character of their agricultural husbandry (they are in process of becoming farmers), which yields them a net income and renders it almost entirely unnecessary for them to engage in subsidiary "trades." All these husbandmen taken together cover only 6.5 per cent of their expenditures by trades (412 rubles out of a total of 6,319.5 rubles); moreover, these trades—as Mr. Shcherbina in one place remarks—are of such a type as "carting," or even "sheep purchasing," that is, trades which, far from being indicative of dependence, presuppose the exploitation of others (particularly in the second case, where the accumulated "savings" become converted into merchant *capital*). These husbandmen own 4 industrial establishments, which yield an income of 320 rubles (5 per cent of the total).<sup>2</sup>

The husbandry of the middle peasants is of a different type: they, as we have seen, can barely make ends meet. Agriculture does not

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that the budgets of the agricultural labourers—two out of the seven poor households—are balanced without deficit: income 99 rubles and expenditure 93.45 rubles per family. One of the labourers is fed, clothed and shod by his master.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix I (p. 578 in this volume.—*Ed.*).

cover their needs, and 19 per cent of their income is derived from so-called trades. What sort of trades these are we learn from Mr. Shcherbina's article. They are given for seven husbandmen: only two have independent trades (tailoring and charcoal-burning): the remaining five sell their labour power ("reaped meadows," "works at a distillery," "does day-labouring at harvest time," "goes shepherding," "worked on the neighbouring estate"). These are already half peasants, half workers. Outside occupations tear them away from their husbandry and thus undermine it completely.

As to the poor peasants, they conduct their agriculture at a direct loss; the importance of "trades" to their budgets is still greater (accounting for 24 per cent of the income), and these trades amount almost entirely (except in the case of one husbandman) to the sale of their labour power. In the case of two of them their "trades" (farm labouring) predominate, providing two-thirds of their income.

It is quite clear that what we have here is a process of complete disintegration of the small producers, the upper groups of which are passing into the bourgeoisie, the lower into the proletariat. Naturally, if we take general averages we will see nothing of this and will get no idea of the economics of the countryside.

It is only because he operates with these fictitious averages that the author was able to resort to such a method. In order to determine the relation of these typical husbandries to the general type of peasant husbandry in the uyezd, Mr. Shcherbina groups the peasants according to the amount of allotted land they cultivate, and it transpires that the level of welfare (general average) of the 24 households selected is higher by about one-third than the average households in the uyezd. This calculation cannot be regarded as satisfactory, both because there is a vast divergence among these 24 households and because grouping according to allotted land only conceals the disintegration of the peasantry: the author's thesis that "allotted land is the root cause of the welfare" of the peasant is absolutely incorrect. Everybody knows that the "equal" distribution of land within the village commune in no wise prevents its horseless members from abandoning their land, giving it up, going to work on the side and becoming proletarians; nor does it prevent those with several horses from sub-renting large amounts of land and con-

ducting big and profitable enterprises. If, for example, we take our 24 budgets, we find that one rich peasant, with 6 desyatins of allotted land, secures an income of 758.5 rubles, a middle peasant, with 7.1 desyatins of allotted land, secures an income of 391.5 rubles, and a poor peasant, with 6.9 desyatins of allotted land, secures an income of 109.5 rubles. In general, we have seen that the ratio of the incomes of the various groups is 4 : 2 : 1; the ratio of allotted land will be 22.1 : 9.2 : 8.5, which equals 2.6 : 1.08 : 1. This is quite natural, for we find, for example, that the rich peasants, with 22.1 desyatins of allotted land per household, rent an additional 8.8 desyatins, whereas the middle peasants, having smaller allotments (9.2 desyatins), rent less—7.7 desyatins, and the poor peasants, with even smaller allotments (8.5 desyatins), rent only 2.8 desyatins.<sup>1</sup> And so, when Mr. Krivenko says: "Unfortunately, the figures given by Mr. Shcherbina cannot serve as an accurate criterion of the general state of affairs even in the uyezd, let alone the province"—all that we can say is that they cannot serve as a criterion only when you resort to the false method of calculating general averages (a method which Mr. Krivenko should not have resorted to), but that, generally speaking, Mr. Shcherbina's figures are so inclusive and valuable that they do provide the opportunity of arriving at correct conclusions—and that if Mr. Krivenko did not do so, Mr. Shcherbina is not to blame.

The latter, for example, gives on page 197 a grouping of the peasants, not according to allotted land, but according to draught animals owned, that is, a grouping on economic, not legal lines—and this grouping furnishes complete grounds for asserting that the relations between the various categories of the selected 24 typical households are exactly similar to the relations between the various economic groups throughout the uyezd.

This grouping is as follows (see table on next page)<sup>2</sup>:

<sup>1</sup> Of course, I do not mean to say that the figures for the 24 households *alone* are enough to refute the thesis that allotted land is of prime importance. But above we cited figures for several uyezds which do refute it completely.

<sup>2</sup> The comparison of the 24 typical households with the categories of households for the whole uyezd has been made by the same methods Mr. Shcherbina used in comparing the average of the 24 households with the groups based on amount of allotted land.

# OSTROGOZHYE UYEZD, VORONEZH PROVINCE

Groups of householders according to number of draught animals owned	Householders		Per household				Average size of family (persons)	Per cent age of households																													
	Number	Per cent	Head of large cattle	Allotted land (desyatins)	Rented land (desyatins)	With labourers		With trade or industrial establishments	Without a house	With no working member	Cultivating no land	Without implements																									
I. With no draught animals . . . .	8,728	26.0	0.7	6.2	0.2	4.6	0.6	4.0	9.5	16.6	41.6	98.5																									
II. With 1 draught animal . . . .	10,510	31.3	3.0	9.4	1.3	5.7	1.4	5.4	1.4	4.9	2.9	2.5																									
III. With 2 or 3 draught animals . .	11,191	33.3	6.8	13.8	3.6	7.7	8.3	12.3	0.4	1.3	0.4	—																									
IV. With 4 or more draught animals . .	3,152	9.4	14.3	21.3	12.3	11.2	25.3	34.2	0.1	0.4	0.3	—																									
All groups	33,581	100.0	4.4	11.2	2.5	6.7	5.7	10.0	3.0	6.3	11.9	23.4																									
Of the 24 typical households <sup>1</sup>	<table><tr><td>Labourers . . . .</td><td>0.5</td><td>7.2</td><td>0.0</td><td>4.5<sup>2</sup></td></tr><tr><td>Poor peasants . . .</td><td>2.8</td><td>8.7</td><td>3.9</td><td>5.6</td></tr><tr><td>Middle peasants . .</td><td>8.1</td><td>9.2</td><td>7.7</td><td>8.3</td></tr><tr><td>Rich peasants . . .</td><td>13.5</td><td>22.1</td><td>8.8</td><td>7.8</td></tr><tr><td>All groups . . . .</td><td>7.2</td><td>12.2</td><td>6.6</td><td>7.3</td></tr></table>												Labourers . . . .	0.5	7.2	0.0	4.5 <sup>2</sup>	Poor peasants . . .	2.8	8.7	3.9	5.6	Middle peasants . .	8.1	9.2	7.7	8.3	Rich peasants . . .	13.5	22.1	8.8	7.8	All groups . . . .	7.2	12.2	6.6	7.3
Labourers . . . .	0.5	7.2	0.0	4.5 <sup>2</sup>																																	
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All groups . . . .	7.2	12.2	6.6	7.3																																	

(For notes to table, see next page)

There cannot be the slightest doubt that by and large the 24 typical households are superior to the general run of peasant household in the uyezd. But if instead of these fictitious averages we take economic categories, a comparison becomes possible.

We find that the labourers among the typical households are somewhat below the householders who have no draught animals, but approach them very closely. The poor householders approach very closely to the owners of one draught animal (though the number of cattle is less by 0.2—the poor peasants have 2.8 and the

<sup>1</sup> Two labourers (Nos. 14 and 15 of Shcherbina's budgets) have here been separated from the group of poor peasants, so that there are only five poor peasants.

<sup>2</sup> It must be noted in connection with this table that here too we find that the amount of rented land increases in proportion to growing prosperity, *in spite of* the increase of allotted land. Thus, the facts for one more uyezd confirm the falsity of the idea that allotted land is of radical significance. On the contrary, we find that the proportion of allotted land among all the landowners of a given group diminishes as the prosperity of the group increases. Totalling allotted land and rented land, and calculating the percentage of allotted land to the total, we obtain the following figures by groups: I) 96.8 per cent; II) 85.0 per cent; III) 79.3 per cent; IV) 63.3 per cent. And this is quite natural. We know that land in Russia has become a commodity ever since the emancipation reform. Whoever has money can always purchase land; and allotted land too must be purchased. It is obvious that the prosperous peasants will concentrate land in their own hands, and that this concentration will be most marked in the case of rented land because of the mediæval restrictions on the transfer of allotted land. The "friends of the people," who favour these restrictions, do not realise that this senseless reactionary measure only worsens the condition of the poor peasants: the impoverished peasants, possessing no agricultural implements, are in any case obliged to rent out land, and any prohibition on such renting (or sale) leads either to land being rented secretly, and, consequently, on worse terms for those who rent it, or to the poor peasants surrendering their land for nothing to the "village commune," i.e., again to the kulak.

I cannot refrain from quoting a profoundly true comment made by Hourwich on this famous "inalienability":

"In order to understand this question we must first see who is the purchaser of the peasants' land. We have seen that only the smaller part of the lots of freehold land were purchased by merchants. Generally speaking, small lots sold by the nobles are purchased only by peasants. Consequently, this question affects the relations only of the peasants and does not affect the interests of the nobility or of the capitalist class. It is very possible that in such cases it might suit the Russian government to throw a sop to the Narodniks. This strange combination (*mésalliance*) of oriental paternalism with a kind of distorted state-socialist prohibitionism can scarcely do otherwise than arouse the opposition of the very people whom it is intended to



one-horse peasants 3.0—on the other hand the total amount of land, both allotted and rented, is somewhat more—12.6 desyatins as against 10.7 desyatins). The middle householders are only slightly above the householders with 2 or 3 draught animals (they have a little more cattle and a little less land), while the wealthy householders approximate to those who have 4 or more draught animals, being a little *below* them. We are therefore entitled to draw the conclusion that in the uyezd as a whole not less than one-tenth of the householders conduct a regular, profitable husbandry and have no need to work on the side. (Their income—it is important to note—is expressed in money, and therefore points to the fact

benefit. As the process of disintegration of the peasantry is obviously proceeding from within and not from without, the inalienability of peasant land will be simply tantamount to the expropriation of the poor peasants without compensation in favour of the wealthy members of the village community.

"We note that the proportion of migrants among the freehold peasants, who had the right to dispose of their land, was much higher than among the former state peasants, who hold their land in common: for example, in the Raneburg uyezd (Ryazan province) the proportion of migrants among the former was 17 per cent, and among the latter 9 per cent; in the Dankov uyezd, it was 12 per cent among the former, and 5 per cent among the latter. What is the cause of this difference? A single concrete example will elucidate this point:

"In 1881 a small community consisting of five householders, former serfs of Gregorov, migrated from the village of Bigildino, Dankov uyezd. They sold their land, 30 desyatins, to a rich peasant for 1,500 rubles. The migrants had nothing to live on at home and the majority of them were year labourers.' (*Collated Statistics*, Part II, pp. 115, 247.) According to Mr. Grigoriev (*Peasant Migration in the Ryazan Province*), 300 rubles—such is the price of an average peasant lot of six desyatins—is sufficient to enable a peasant family to start agricultural husbandry in the south of Siberia. Thus the absolutely impoverished peasant, by selling his lot of communal land, would be able to become an agriculturalist in a new country. Reverence for the sacred customs of our forefathers could scarcely have withstood such a temptation were it not for the counteracting interference of our most kind-hearted bureaucracy.

"Of course, I will be accused of pessimism, just as I was accused of it recently for my views on the migration of peasants (*Severny Vestnik*, 1892, No. 5, article by Bogdanovsky). The usual argument is roughly as follows: even if we assume that matters have been depicted exactly as they are in reality, the pernicious consequences (of migration) are due to the abnormal conditions under which the peasants live, and if their conditions were normal, the objections (against migration) 'would lose their force.' Unfortunately, these really 'abnormal' conditions develop spontaneously, while the creation of 'normal' conditions is not within the power of the peasants' well-wishers'" (*op. cit.*, p. 137),

that their agriculture is of a commodity character.) To a large extent they conduct their husbandry with the help of wage workers: not less than one-fourth of all the households maintain permanent labourers, and how many seasonal day labourers they take on in addition is unknown. Further, more than half the householders in the uyezd are poor (nearly six-tenths: horseless and one-horse. 26 per cent + 31.3 per cent = 57.3 per cent), who conduct their husbandry at an outright loss and who are consequently becoming impoverished and are subject to constant and invariable expropriation. They are obliged to sell their labour power; about one-fourth of the peasants already live much more by wage labouring than by agriculture. The remaining peasants are middle peasants, who manage to carry on agriculture somehow or other, operating at a constant loss and eking out a living by working on the side, and who, consequently, have not the slightest economic stability.

I have deliberately dwelt on these figures in such detail in order to show how Mr. Krivenko distorts realities. Without stopping to think, he takes general averages and operates with them. Naturally, the result is not so much a fiction as a downright falsehood. We have seen, for example, that the net income (+ 197.34 rubles) of one wealthy peasant (of the typical budgets) covers the deficit of nine poor households ( $-21.38 \times 9 = -192.42$ ), so that the rich peasants of the uyezd, constituting 10 per cent, not only cover the deficits of the poor peasants, who constitute 57 per cent, but even yield a certain surplus. And Mr. Krivenko, deriving from the budgets of the 24 households an average surplus of 44.14 rubles—or, deducting loans and arrears, 15.97 rubles—simply speaks of the “decline” of the middle and lower than middle householder. As a matter of fact one can talk of a decline, if at all, only in reference to the middle peasants,<sup>1</sup> whereas in the case of the mass of the poor peasants we observe direct *expropriation*, accompanied, moreover, by the concentration of the means of production in the hands of a minority who own comparatively large and stable husbandries.

<sup>1</sup> And even this would scarcely be true because decline implies a temporary and casual loss of stability, whereas the middle peasants, as we have seen, are constantly in a state of instability, hovering on the verge of ruin.

Because he ignored this latter circumstance, the author failed to observe another very interesting feature of these budgets, namely, that they likewise prove that *the disintegration of the peasantry is creating a home market*. On the one hand, as we pass from the higher group to the lower, we observe the growing importance of income from trades (6.5 per cent, 18.8 per cent and 23.6 per cent of the total budget of the rich, middle and poor peasants respectively), that is, chiefly from the sale of labour power. On the other hand, as we pass from the lower group to the higher, we observe the growing commodity (even more: *bourgeois*, as we have seen) character of agriculture and an increase in the proportion of produce disposed of: the income from tillage of all the householders by categories is a)  $\frac{3,861.7}{1,774.4}$ , b)  $\frac{3,163.8}{898.9}$ , c)  $\frac{689.9}{175.24}$ . The denominator indicates the money part of the income,<sup>1</sup> which constitutes, passing from the higher category to the lower, 45.9 per cent, 28.3 per cent and 25.4 per cent, respectively.

We again see quite clearly that the means of production, from which the expropriated peasants are being divorced, are becoming converted into capital.

It is quite obvious that Mr. Krivenko, using—or, rather, distorting—material in this way, could not arrive at correct conclusions. Having described, on the basis of what he was told by a Novgorod peasant with whom he travelled in the train, the monetary character of the peasant economy of those regions, he was forced to draw the correct conclusion that it is precisely this circumstance, commodity production, that “trains” “special abilities” and gives rise to one

<sup>1</sup> A fairly complex calculation was required to arrive at the money income from tillage (Shcherbina does not give it). It was necessary to exclude from the total income derived from produce, the income derived from straw and stubble, which, according to the author, are used as cattle feed. The author himself excludes them in Chapter XVIII, but only for the total figures for the uyezd, and not for the given 24 households. Taking his total figures, I determined the proportion of income from grain (compared with the total income from produce, i.e., both from grain and from straw and stubble) and on this basis excluded straw and stubble in the present case. This proportion is, for rye 78.98 per cent, for wheat 72.67 per cent, for oats and barley 73.32 per cent and for millet and buckwheat 77.78 per cent. Then the amount of grain sold was determined by excluding the amount consumed by the household itself.

preoccupation, namely, "to reap (hay) as cheaply as possible and to sell as dearly as possible" (p. 156).<sup>1</sup> This circumstance serves as a "school" which "awakens [quite true!] and refines commercial gifts." "Talented people are discovered who give rise to the Kolu-payevs, the Derunovs and the other types of bloodsuckers,<sup>2</sup> while the simple-hearted and simple-minded fall behind, deteriorate, become impoverished and pass into the ranks of the labourers" (p. 156).

The figures for a province in which entirely different conditions prevail—an agricultural province (Voronezh)—lead to exactly the same conclusions. The matter, it would appear, is quite clear: we get a distinct picture of a system of commodity production as the main background of the economic life of the country in general and of the "village commune" "peasantry" in particular; we also get a picture showing the *fact* that this commodity production, *and it alone*, is splitting the "people" and the "peasantry" into a proletariat (they become impoverished and pass into the ranks of the labourers) and a bourgeoisie (bloodsuckers), *i.e.*, is becoming transformed into capitalist production. But the "friends of the people" never dare look *realities* in the face and call a spade a spade (that would be too "harsh")! And Mr. Krivenko argues as follows:

"Some consider this state of affairs quite natural [he should have added: a quite natural consequence of the capitalist character of the relations of production. Then that would have been an accurate description of the views of the "some," and it would then have been impossible to evade these views with the help of empty phrases and he would have had to analyse them in substance. When the author was not deliberately setting out to combat these "some" he himself was obliged to admit that money economy is the "school" that produces "talented" bloodsuckers and "simple-hearted" labourers] and regard it as the invincible mission of capitalism. [Well, of course! To believe that the fight must be waged precisely against this

<sup>1</sup> "The worker must be hired as cheaply as possible and advantage derived from him"—Mr. Krivenko quite rightly remarks in the same passage.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Yuzhakov, how's this! Here is your colleague saying that "talented people" become "bloodsuckers," whereas you assured us that people become so only because they have "uncritical minds." That won't do, gentlemen, slamming each other like this in one and the same magazine!

"school" and against the "bloodsuckers" and their administrative and intellectual lackeys who dominate it is to consider capitalism invincible! On the other hand, to leave the capitalist "school" and the bloodsuckers intact and to want to avoid its capitalist products by means of liberal half-measures is to be a true "friend of the people"! We regard the matter somewhat differently. Capitalism undoubtedly does play an important role here, as we pointed out above [namely, the reference to the school of bloodsuckers and labourers quoted above], but it cannot be said that its role is so all-embracing and decisive that there are no other factors in the changes taking place in the national economy, and that the future holds out no other solution" (p. 160).

There you are! Instead of giving an accurate and direct description of the present system, instead of giving a definite answer to the question why "the peasantry" is being split into bloodsuckers and labourers, Mr. Krivenko tries to get away with meaningless phrases. "It cannot be said that the role of capitalism is decisive." Why, that is the whole question: can it be said, or can it not?

If you wanted to maintain your opinion, you should have indicated what other factors "decide" matters, what other "solution" there can be besides the one indicated by the Social-Democrats, namely, a class struggle of the proletariat against the bloodsuckers.<sup>1</sup> But no indications are given. Unless, perhaps, the author regards the following as an indication? Amusing as that would be, you can expect anything from the "friends of the people."

"The first to fall into decline, as we have seen, are the weak households with little land"—namely, allotments of less than 5 desyatins. "But the typical households of the state peasants, with allotments of 15.7 desyatins, are distinguished by their stability...

<sup>1</sup> If the idea of the class struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie appears for the present to be accessible only to the urban factory workers, and not to the rural "simple-hearted and simple-minded" agricultural labourers, that is, if it seems accessible only to the very people who have lost these charming qualities, which are so closely associated with the "century-old pillars" and the "communal spirit"—it only goes to prove the correctness of the theory of the Social-Democrats about the progressive and revolutionary work of Russian capitalism.

True, to secure such an income (a net income of 80 rubles) they rent an additional 5 desyatins, but that only shows how much they need."

What does this "amendment," which associates the notorious "land hunger" with capitalism, amount to? Only to this, that those who have little lose the little they have, while those who have much (15.7 desyatins each) acquire still more.<sup>1</sup> Why, this is a sheer paraphrase of the statement that some become impoverished while others become rich!! It is time to abandon this meaningless talk about land hunger, which explains nothing (because the peasants are not given allotted land free but have to buy it), but only describes a process, and moreover describes it inaccurately, because one should not speak of the land alone, but of the means of production in general, and not that the peasants have "little" of them, but that the peasants are being *freed* from them, that they are being *expropriated* by growing capitalism. "We have no intention of saying," Mr. Krivenko remarks, concluding his philosophy, "that agriculture must and can, under all circumstances, remain 'natural' and separated from manufacturing industry [another phrase! Was it not you who were just obliged to admit that a school of money economy already exists, which presumes exchange and, consequently, the separation of agriculture from manufacturing industry? Why again this sloppy talk of what can be and what should be?]; all we say is that to create a separate industry artificially is irrational [it would be interesting to know: is the industry of the Kimri and Pavlovo handicraftsmen "separate," and who "artificially created" it, and how and when?], and that the divorcement of the worker from the land and the means of production is being influenced not by capitalism alone, but also by other factors that preceded and furthered capitalism."

Here most likely he again had in mind the profound idea that if the worker is divorced from the land, which passes into the hands of the bloodsucker, this happens because the former has "little" land and the latter "much" land.

<sup>1</sup> Not to mention the absurdity of the idea that peasants with an equal amount of allotted land are equal among themselves and are not divided 100 into "bloodsuckers" and "labourers."

And philosophers of this kind accuse the Social-Democrats of being "narrow" when they regard capitalism as the decisive factor! . . . I have dwelt once more in such detail on the disintegration of the peasants and handicraftsmen just because it was necessary to explain clearly how the Social-Democrats picture the matter and how they explain it. It was necessary to show that the very facts which mean to the subjective sociologist that the peasants have "grown poor," while the "money-chasers" and "bloodsuckers" "derive profits for their own advantage," mean, from the standpoint of the materialist, the bourgeois disintegration of the commodity producers, a disintegration which is necessarily brought about by commodity production itself. It was necessary to show what facts serve as the basis for the thesis (adduced above in Part I) that the struggle between the poor and the rich is going on everywhere in Russia, not only in the mills and factories, but even in the most remote villages, and that everywhere this struggle is a struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat, which arise out of commodity production. The disintegration of our peasants and handicraftsmen, the fact that they are ceasing to be peasants, which may be depicted accurately thanks to such admirable material as the *Zemstvo* statistics, furnish *factual* proof that it is precisely the Social-Democratic conception of Russian realities that is true, the conception that the peasant and handicraftsman are *small producers* in the "categorical" meaning of the term, that is, that they are *petty bourgeois*. This thesis may be regarded as the central point of the theory of WORKING-CLASS SOCIALISM, in contrast to the old peasant Socialism, which understood neither the conditions of commodity production in which the small producer lives, nor his capitalist disintegration as a result of these conditions. And, therefore, whoever seriously wanted to criticise Social-Democracy should have concentrated his argument on this, and have shown that from the standpoint of political economy Russia does not represent a system of commodity production, that this is not the cause of the disintegration of the peasantry, and that the expropriation of the mass of the population and the exploitation of the toiler can be attributed to something else than the bourgeois, capitalist organisation of our social (including peasant) production.

Well, just try it, gentlemen!

Then there is one other reason why I preferred to take precisely data on peasant and handicraft production to illustrate the Social-Democratic theory. It would be a departure from the materialist method, were I, when criticising the views of the "friends of the people," to confine myself to contrasting their ideas with the Marxist ideas. One must in addition explain the "Narodnik" ideas, demonstrate their MATERIAL foundation in our present economic relations of society. Illustrations and examples of the economy of our peasants and handicraftsmen show the nature of this "peasant" whose ideologists the "friends of the people" would fain be. They demonstrate the bourgeois character of the economy of our rural life and thus confirm the correctness of classing the "friends of the people" as petty-bourgeois ideologists. And that is not all; they also show that there is the closest connection between the ideas and programmes of our radicals and the interests of the petty bourgeoisie. It is this connection, which will become even clearer after a detailed examination of their programme, that explains why these radical ideas are so widespread in our "society"; it also admirably explains both the political servility of the "friends of the people" and their readiness for compromise.

There was, lastly, one other reason for dwelling in such detail on the economy precisely of those sides of our social life where capitalism is least developed and from which the Narodniks usually drew the material for their theories. A study and description of this economy was the simplest way to reply in substance to one of the most widespread objections to Social-Democracy current among our public. Basing themselves on the usual idea that capitalism is contradictory to the "popular system," and perceiving that the Social-Democrats regard large-scale capitalism as a progressive phenomenon, and that it is precisely on large-scale capitalism that they want to rely in combating the present robber regime—our radicals, without more ado, accuse the Social-Democrats of ignoring the interests of the mass of the peasant population, of desiring to "boil down every muzhik in the melting pot of the factory," etc.

All these arguments are based on the strange and astonishingly illogical trick of judging capitalism by what it is in reality, and the countryside by what it "might be." Naturally, there could be no bet-



ter reply to this than by showing them the *real* countryside and its *real* economy.

Anybody who considers this economy dispassionately and scientifically will be bound to admit that rural Russia consists of a system of small, disunited markets (or small branches of a central market), which regulate the social and economic life of small separate districts. And in each of these districts we find the same phenomena that are inherent in the economic organisation of society in general, whose regulator the market is: we find the disintegration of the once equal, patriarchal, direct producers into rich and poor; we find the rise of *capital*, especially of merchant capital, which weaves its net around the toiler and sucks the life-blood out of him. When you compare the description of the economy of the peasantry given by our radicals with the precise data on rural economic life derived from first sources, you are astonished by the absence of any place in the system of views we are criticising for that mass of small traders who swarm in each of these markets, all these higglers and cheap-jacks, or however else they are called by the peasants in different localities, all this mass of petty exploiters who dominate the markets and ruthlessly oppress the toiler. They are usually simply brushed aside with the remark—"These are no longer peasants, but traders." Yes, you are quite right: these are "no longer peasants." But try to separate all these "traders" into a separate group, that is, speaking in the precise language of political economy, those who conduct a commercial enterprise and who appropriate, even if in part, the labour of others; try to express in precise figures the economic strength of this group and the part it plays in the general economic life of the district; and then try to separate into an opposite group all those who also are "no longer peasants" because they bring their labour power to the market, because they work not for themselves but for others—try to fulfil all these elementary demands of a dispassionate and serious inquiry and you will get such a vivid picture of bourgeois disintegration that nothing but the memory will remain of the myth of a "popular system." This mass of small rural exploiters represents a terrible force, especially terrible because they oppress the toiler separately, individually, because they fetter the toiler to themselves and deprive him of all hope of salva-

tion; terrible because this exploitation, in view of the savage state of rural life caused by the low productivity of labour and the absence of communications inherent in the system we are describing, consists not only of the robbery of labour but also of the Asiatic humiliation of the individual which we constantly encounter in rural areas. Now, if you compare this *real* countryside with our capitalism you will understand why the Social-Democrats consider the work of our capitalism progressive when it draws together these small, disunited markets into one nation-wide market, when, in place of the legion of small well-meaning bloodsuckers, it creates a handful of big "pillars of the fatherland," when it socialises labour and raises its productivity, when it rends the bonds of subjection of the toiler to the local bloodsuckers and makes him subject to large-scale *capital*. The latter subjection is progressive compared with the former—despite all the horrors of the oppression of labour, despite extermination, brutalisation, the crippling of female and child organisms, etc.—because it AWAKENS THE MIND OF THE WORKER, converts dumb and incoherent discontent into conscious protest, converts disunited, small and senseless revolt into an organised class struggle for the emancipation of all the toiling folk, a struggle which derives its strength from the very conditions of existence of this large-scale capitalism, and therefore may unreservedly count upon CERTAIN SUCCESS.

In reply to the accusation of ignoring the mass of the peasantry. Social-Democrats would be quite justified in quoting the words of Karl Marx:

*"Criticism has torn from the chains the imaginary flowers that adorned them not so that mankind should continue to wear these shackles in a form deprived of all imaginativeness and joy, but so that it should cast off the chains and stretch forth its hand to the living flower."*

The Russian Social-Democrats are tearing from our countryside the imaginary flowers that adorn it, they are combating idealisations and fantasies and are performing the destructive work for which they are so mortally detested by the "friends of the people," not in order that the mass of the peasantry should remain in the present state of oppression, extinction and enslavement, but in order that the proletariat may understand what are the chains that everywhere fetter the toiler, that it may understand how these chains are forged, and be

able to rise against them, cast them off and stretch forth its hand to the real flower.

When they bring this idea to the representatives of the toiling class who by their status are alone able to acquire class-consciousness and to begin a class struggle, they are accused of wanting to boil down the muzhik in a melting pot.

And who accuses them of this?—

People who themselves base their hopes of the emancipation of the toiler on the "government" and on "society," that is, on the organs of that very bourgeoisie which has everywhere fettered the toiler!

And these slugs have the puffed-up assurance to say that the Social-Democrats have no ideals!

\* \* \*

Let us now pass to the political programme of the "friends of the people," to whose theoretical views we have, we think, devoted too much time already. By what means do they propose to "extinguish the conflagration"? What do they suggest as the solution, and why do they think the solution proposed by the Social-Democrats wrong?

"The reorganisation of the Peasants' Bank," says Mr. Yuzhakov in an article entitled "The Ministry of Agriculture" (*Russkoye Bogatstvo*, No. 10), "the establishment of a colonisation department, the regulation of state land leasing in the interest of the national economy . . . the study and regulation of the problem of land-letting—such is the programme for restoring national economy and for protecting it from the economic violence [*sic!*] of the rising plutocracy."

And in an article entitled "Problems of Economic Development" this programme for "restoring the national economy" is supplemented by the following "measures of prime necessity":

"The removal of all the hindrances that now encumber the village commune; its release from tutelage, the adoption of common tillage (the socialisation of agriculture) and the development of the communal working up of raw materials obtained from the soil."

And Messrs. Krivenko and Karyshev add:

"Cheap credit, the artel<sup>1</sup> form of farming, a guaranteed market, the opportunity to dispense with entrepreneurs' profit (this is dealt with separately below), the invention of cheaper engines and other technical improvements," and, finally, "museums, warehouses, commission agencies."

<sup>1</sup> Co-operative.—*Trans.*

Examine this programme and you will find that these gentlemen wholly and completely adopt the position of modern society (*i.e.*, the position of the capitalist system, although they do not realise it) and want to confine themselves to darning and patching it up, not comprehending that all their progressive measures—cheap credit, improved technique, banks, and so on—can only serve to strengthen and develop the bourgeoisie.

Nik—on is quite right, of course, when he says—and this is one of his most valuable theses, against which the “friends of the people” could not help protesting—that no reforms based on the present system are of any use, and that credit, colonisation, fiscal reform, the handing over of all the land to the peasants, will not change anything in substance, but, on the contrary, will only serve to strengthen and develop capitalist production, which at present is being retarded by excessive “tutelage,” the survivals of serf dues, the fact that the peasantry is tied to the land, etc. Economists, he says, who, like Prince Vasilchikov (an undoubted “friend of the people” in his ideas), want the extensive development of credit, want the same thing as the “liberal,” *i.e.*, bourgeois, economists, and “strive for the development and consolidation of capitalist relations.” They do not understand the antagonism within our relations of production (within the “peasantry” as within the other estates), and instead of striving to bring this antagonism out into the open road, instead of frankly taking sides with those who are enslaved as a result of this antagonism and trying to help them to rise to the struggle, they dream of terminating the struggle by measures that would satisfy everybody, that would reconcile and unite. The result of all these measures is naturally a foregone conclusion: we have only to recall the examples of disintegration given above to convince ourselves that all these credits,<sup>1</sup> improvements, banks and similar “progressive” measures can only be taken advantage of by

<sup>1</sup> This idea—of utilising credit to foster the “national economy,” *i.e.*, the economy of small producers, while maintaining capitalist relations (and the “friends of the people,” as we have already seen, can no longer deny their existence)—this absurd idea, which reveals a complete failure to understand the elementary truths of theoretical political economy, clearly exposes the banality of the theories advanced by these gentlemen who try to sit between two stools.

those who, having well-managed and well-established farms, have "savings," *i.e.*, the representatives of the insignificant minority, the petty bourgeoisie. And however much you reorganise the Peasants' Bank and similar institutions, you will not in the least affect the fundamental and basic fact that the mass of the population has been expropriated and continues to be expropriated, not possessing even the means of subsistence, let alone means for starting proper farming.

The same must be said of "artels," and "communal tillage." Mr. Yuzhakov calls the latter "the socialisation of agriculture." This is simply funny, of course, because socialisation necessitates the organisation of production on a wider scale than the limits of a single village, and because it necessitates the expropriation of the "bloodsuckers" who have monopolised the means of production and who now rule Russian social economy. And this necessitates struggle, struggle and struggle, and not empty, philistine moralising.

And for that reason such measures are transformed by them into mild, liberal half-measures, that languish on the generosity of the philanthropic bourgeois, and do more harm by diverting the exploited from the struggle than the good that might accrue from possible improvements in the position of separate individuals, which cannot but be paltry and precarious on the general basis of capitalist relations. The outrageous extent to which these gentlemen gloss over the antagonisms in Russian life—done, of course, with the best intentions in the world, in order to put an end to the present struggle, that is, the sort of intentions with which the road to hell is paved—is shown by the following argument advanced by Mr. Krivenko: "The intelligentsia manage the manufacturers' enterprises, and they could manage popular industry."

The whole of their philosophy reduces itself to whining on the subject that there is conflict and exploitation, but that these "might" not be if . . . if there were no exploiters. Whatever did the author mean by this absurd phrase? Can it be denied that the Russian universities and other educational establishments turn out year after year a brand of "intelligentsia" (??) whose only concern is to find someone to feed them? Can it be denied that the means for maintaining this "intelligentsia" are owned at the present time in Russia only

by the bourgeois minority? Will the bourgeois intelligentsia in Russia disappear because the "friends of the people" say that they "might" serve somebody else, and not the bourgeoisie? Yes, they "might," *if* they were not a bourgeois intelligentsia. They "might" not be a bourgeois intelligentsia if there were no bourgeoisie and no capitalism in Russia! And there are people who spend their whole lives speculating on "ifs" and "buts." Incidentally, these gentlemen not only refuse to attach decisive importance to capitalism, but in general refuse to see anything wrong in it. If certain "defects" were removed, they would, perhaps, fare not so badly under it. How do you like the following statement by Mr. Krivenko:

"Capitalist production and the capitalistic transformation of the trades are by no means gates through which manufacturing industry can only depart from the people. It can depart, of course, but it can also enter the life of the people and come into closer contact with agriculture and the extractive industries. This can be done in various ways, and these gates, as well as others, can serve this purpose" (p. 161).

Mr. Krivenko has a number of very good qualities—as compared with Mr. Mikhailovsky; for example, frankness and straightforwardness. Where Mr. Mikhailovsky would have filled reams with smooth and glib phrases, wriggling around the subject without actually touching it, businesslike and practical Mr. Krivenko hits straight from the shoulder and without any qualms of conscience spreads before the reader all the absurdities of his views. "Capitalism may enter the life of the people"—if you please! That is, capitalism is possible without the toilers being divorced from the means of production! This is positively delightful! At any rate, we now have a clear idea of what the "friends of the people" want. They want commodity production without capitalism—capitalism without expropriation and without exploitation, only with philistinism peacefully vegetating under the shelter of humane landlords and liberal administrators. And, with the serious mien of a departmental official who intends to confer bounties on Russia, they undertake to contrive a system under which the wolves will not go hungry while the sheep will remain safe and sound. To get some idea of the character of these contrivances we must turn to the article by the same author ("Our Cultural Freelances") in No. 12:

"The artel and state form of industry," argues Mr. Krivenko—apparently under the impression that he has already been "called" to "solve practical economic problems"—"is by no means all that can be offered in the present instance. For example, the following contrivance is possible."...

And then he goes on to relate how an engineer visited the offices of *Russkoye Bogatstvo* with a scheme for the technical exploitation of the Don Region by a joint stock company with shares in small denominations (not more than 100 rubles per share). The author was recommended to modify his scheme roughly as follows:

"That the shares do not belong to private persons, but to village communes; that the part of the population of the village communes who are employed in the enterprises of the company receive ordinary wages, and the village communes guarantee that their connection with the land will be maintained."

What administrative genius! With what touching simplicity and ease capitalism is introduced into the life of the people and all its pernicious attributes removed! All that is required is that the rural rich buy shares<sup>1</sup> through the village commune and receive dividends from the enterprise, in which a "part of the population" will be employed and the latter's connection with the land guaranteed—a "connection" which will not secure a livelihood from the land (otherwise who would go to work for "ordinary wages"?), but will be sufficient to tie a man to his locality, enslave him to the local capitalist—precisely capitalist—enterprise and deprive him of the possibility of changing masters. I am quite justified in saying master, capitalist, because he who pays the toiler *wages* cannot be called anything else.

<sup>1</sup> I say the rich will buy the shares, despite the author's stipulation that the shares are to be owned by the village communes, because, after all, he speaks of the purchase of shares for money, and only the rich have money. Hence, whether the business is conducted through the agency of the village commune or not, only the rich will be able to pay, in the same way as the purchase or renting of land by the commune in no way prevents the rich from monopolising this land. Besides, the dividends must go to those who paid—otherwise the shares will not be shares. And I understand the author's proposal to mean that a certain part of the profits will be earmarked for "guaranteeing the workers' connection with the land." If the author does not mean this (although it inevitably follows from what he says), but that the rich should pay the money for the shares and not receive dividends, then all his scheme amounts to is that the rich should share out with the poor. This reminds one of the anecdote about the flykiller which requires that you first catch the fly and put it in the dish—and the fly will instantly die.

Perhaps the reader is already vexed with me for dealing at such length with nonsense like this, which would seem not to deserve the slightest attention. But I beg leave to say that although this is nonsense, it is a type of nonsense that it is useful and necessary to study because it reflects the actual social and economic relations in Russia and, consequently, is one of those public ideas which are very widespread among us and with which Social-Democrats will have to contend for a long time to come. The point is that the transition from the serf, feudal mode of production to the capitalist mode of production in Russia gave rise, and to some extent continues to give rise, to a situation for the toilers in which the peasant, being unable to obtain a livelihood from the land and to *pay dues for it to the landlord* (and *he has to pay them to this very day*), is compelled to seek "earnings on the side," which at first, in the good old times, took the form either of some independent trade (for example, carting), or of some trade which was not independent but which, owing to the extremely undeveloped state of the trades, was comparatively fairly well paid. This guaranteed the relative prosperity of the peasantry, as compared with present conditions, the prosperity of the serf, who peacefully vegetated under the care of one hundred thousand noble police officers and of the rising assemblers of the land of Russia—the bourgeoisie.

And the "friends of the people" idealise this system, simply close their eyes to its dark sides, dream about it—"dream," because it has long ceased to exist, has long been destroyed by capitalism, which gave rise to the mass expropriation of the peasant tiller of the soil and transformed the former "earnings" into the unbridled exploitation of "hands," which are being offered in abundance.

Our knights of philistinism want to preserve the peasant's "connection" with the land, but they do not want the serfdom that alone was able to guarantee this connection, and that was broken only by commodity production and capitalism, which made this connection impossible. They want earnings on the side which would not divorce the peasant from the land, and which—while work is done for the market—would not give rise to competition, would not create *capital* and would not enslave the masses of the population to it. True to the subjective method in sociology, they want to "take" what is



best from here and from there; but, of course, this childish desire can in fact only lead to reactionary dreams which ignore realities, to an inability to understand and utilise the really progressive and revolutionary sides of the new system, and to sympathy for measures which perpetuate the good old system of semi-serf, semi-free labour—a system which contains all the horrors of exploitation and oppression, and holds forth no possibility of escape.

To prove the correctness of this explanation, which classes the "friends of the people" among the reactionaries, we shall quote two examples.

The Moscow Zemstvo statistics give a description of the farm of a certain Madame K. (in the Podolsk uyezd), which (the farm, not the description) aroused the admiration both of the Moscow statisticians and of Mr. V. V., if my memory does not deceive me (he wrote about it. I recall, in a magazine article).

Madame K.'s much lauded farm was regarded by Mr. V. Orlov as a "thing which convincingly confirms in practice" his favourite thesis that "where peasant agriculture is solvent, there the private landowners' farms are also conducted better." From Mr. Orlov's account of this lady's estate, it appears that she runs her farm with the labour of local peasants, who till her land in return for flour, etc., which she loans them in the winter. Moreover, the lady treats these peasants with extraordinary kindness and helps them, so that these peasants are now the most solvent in the volost and have enough grain "to last them almost until the new harvest (formerly, it did not last even until St. Nicholas' day in winter)."

The question arises, does "such an arrangement exclude the antagonism of interests of the peasant and the landowner," as Messrs. N. Kablukov (Vol. V, p. 175) and V. Orlov (Vol. II, pp. 55-59 and elsewhere) think? Obviously not, because Madame K. lives on the labour of her peasants. Hence, exploitation is not abolished at all. Madame K. can be forgiven for failing to see the exploitation behind the kindness shown the exploited, but not so an economist and statistician who, in his admiration for the case we are discussing, takes up exactly the same position as those *Menschenfreunde*<sup>1</sup> in Western

<sup>1</sup> Friends of humanity.—Ed.

Europe who admire kindness shown by capitalist to worker and go into raptures over cases where employers show solicitude for the welfare of their workers, open provision shops for them, supply them with dwellings, etc. To draw the conclusion from such "facts" (and therefore from such "possibilities") that no antagonism of interests exists is to fail to see the wood for the trees. That is the first point.

The second point is that we see from Mr. Orlov's account that Madame K.'s peasants, "thanks to excellent harvests (the landlady gave them good seed), have acquired cattle" and have "solvent" farms. Let us assume that these "solvent farmers" have become not "almost," but completely solvent, that they have enough grain to last them not only "almost" until the new harvest, and that not only the "majority" but all of them have quite enough grain. Let us assume that these peasants now have enough land, and that they have "meadows and pastures"—which they have not got at present (fine solvency!), having to rent them from Madame K. in return for their labour. Does Mr. Orlov really believe that then—i.e., if peasant farming were really solvent—these peasants would agree to "perform all the work on Madame K.'s estate thoroughly, punctually and expeditiously," as they do now? Or perhaps gratitude to the kind mistress who sweats the life out of solvent peasants with such maternal care will be a no less potent incentive than the present hopeless condition of the peasants, who, after all, cannot dispense with meadows and pastures?

Evidently, that is virtually what the "friends of the people" do think: like true ideologists of the petty bourgeoisie, they do not want to abolish exploitation, but to mitigate it, they do not want conflict, but conciliation. Their broad ideals, from the standpoint of which they so zealously belabour the narrow-minded Social-Democrats, do not go beyond a "solvent" peasantry which performs its "duties" to the landlords and capitalists if only the landlords and capitalists treat it fairly.

Take the other example. Mr. Yuzhakov, in his fairly well-known article, "Norms of Popular Landownership in Russia" (*Russkaya Mysl*, 1885, No. 9), expounded his views on what should be the dimensions of "popular" landownership, i.e., in the terminology of our liberals, such as would exclude capitalism and exploitation.

Now, after the excellent explanation given by Mr. Krivenko, we know that he too regarded things from the standpoint of the "introduction of capitalism into the life of the people." As the minimum for "popular" landownership, he took such allotments as would cover "requirements in grain and payments,"<sup>1</sup> while the rest, he says, could be obtained by "earnings." . . . In other words, he deliberately reconciled himself to a state of affairs in which the peasant, by maintaining connection with the land, is subjected to double exploitation—partly by the landlord, on the "allotment," and partly by the capitalist, when working for his "earnings." This condition of the small producer, who is subjected to a double exploitation, and whose conditions of life, moreover, are such as to breed a spirit of humility and downtroddenness which kills all hope that the oppressed class will even fight, let alone be victorious—this semi-mediaeval condition is the *nec plus ultra* of the outlook and ideals of the "friends of the people." And when capitalism, which developed with tremendous rapidity throughout the whole of the post-Reform history of Russia, began to uproot this pillar of old Russia—the patriarchal, semi-serf peasantry—to drag the peasants out of these mediaeval and semi-feudal conditions and to put them into most modern, purely capitalist conditions, compelling them to abandon their ancient habitations and to wander over the face of Russia in search of employment, breaking the chains of enslavement to the local "work-provider" and disclosing the basis of exploitation in general, of class exploitation as distinct from the depredations of any particular viper—when capitalism began to draw the backward peasant population, which had been reduced to the downtrodden and depressed condition of cattle, *en masse* into the vortex of social and political life, with all its growing complexities, then our knights began to lament and bemoan the fall and collapse of the old pillars. And

<sup>1</sup> In order to show the relation between these outlays and the remaining part of the peasants' budget, I will quote the 24 budgets of the Ostrogozhye uyezd. The average expenditure per family is 495.39 rubles (in kind and in money). Of this, 109.10 rubles goes to maintain cattle, 135.80 rubles is spent on vegetable food and taxes, and the remaining 250.49 rubles on other expenses—non-vegetable food, clothes, implements, rent, etc. Mr. Yuzhakov puts the maintenance of cattle to the account of the hay crop and auxiliary pastures.

they continue to lament and bemoan the good old times even now, although one would think that only the blind can fail to see the revolutionary side of these new conditions of life, can fail to see how capitalism is creating a new social force, which is in no way connected with the old regime of exploitation and which has been placed in a position to fight it.

The "friends of the people," however, show no trace of a desire for a radical change in present conditions. They are entirely satisfied with liberal measures on the existing basis, and in the field of invention of such measures Mr. Krivenko displays the genuine administrative ability of a native-bred pompadour.

"Generally speaking"—he says, urging the necessity for "a detailed study and radical transformation" of "our popular industry"—"this question calls for special investigation, and for the division of industries into groups that can be applied to the life of the people [*sic!!*] and those which would encounter serious obstacles in their application."

Mr. Krivenko himself gives an example of such a division when he divides the various trades into those which are not becoming capitalistic, those which have already become capitalistic, and those which can "contend with large-scale industry for existence."

"In the first case," this administrator decides, "small-scale production can exist freely"—but can it be free of the market, whose fluctuations disintegrate the small producers into bourgeoisie and proletariat? Can it be free of the expansion of the local markets and their amalgamation into a big market? Can it be free of the progress of technique? Or perhaps this progress of technique—under commodity production—need not be capitalistic? In the last case, the author demands the "organisation of production on a large scale too":

"Clearly," he says, "what is required here is the organisation of production on a large scale too, basic and working capital, machines, etc., or something else that will counter-balance these conditions: cheap credit, the elimination of superfluous middlemen, the *artel* form of production and the possibility of dispensing with entrepreneurs' profits, assured markets, the invention of cheaper engines and other technical improvements, or, finally, a certain reduction in wages, provided it is compensated by other benefits."

This sort of reasoning is highly characteristic of the "friends of the people," with their broad ideals in word and their stereotyped liberalism in action. As you see, our philosopher starts out from noth-

ing more nor less than the possibility of dispensing with entrepreneurs' profits and the organisation of large-scale production. Excellent: this is EXACTLY what the Social-Democrats want. But how do the "friends of the people" want to achieve this? In order to organise large-scale production without entrepreneurs, it is necessary first of all to abolish the commodity system of social economy and to replace it by the communal, Communist system, under which production would not be regulated by the market, as it is at present, but by the producers themselves, by the society of workers itself, and under which the means of production would not be owned by private individuals, but by the whole of society. Obviously, such a transition from the private *form of appropriation* to the communal form requires that *the form of production should be first* changed, that the scattered, small, isolated processes of production of small producers should be merged into a *single, social, productive process*; it requires, in a word, the very material conditions which capitalism creates. But the "friends of the people" have not the slightest intention of relying on capitalism. How then do they propose to act? They do not say. They do not even mention the abolition of commodity production: evidently, their broad ideals are incapable of reaching beyond the limits of this system of social production. Moreover, in order to abolish entrepreneurs' profits it would be necessary to expropriate the entrepreneurs, who obtain their "profits" precisely because they have monopolised the means of production. And in order to expropriate these pillars of our fatherland, a popular revolutionary movement against the bourgeois regime is required, a movement that only the working-class proletariat, which is in no way connected with this regime, is capable of organising. But the "friends of the people" have no struggle in mind at all, and do not even suspect that other types of public men apart from the administrative organs of the entrepreneurs themselves are possible and necessary. Clearly, they have not the slightest intention of taking any serious measures against "entrepreneurs' profits." Mr. Krivenko just blurted this out. And he immediately corrected himself: why, such a thing as "the possibility of dispensing with entrepreneurs' profits" can be "counter-balanced"—"by something else," namely, credits, the organisation of a market, improvements

in technique. Thus everything is arranged splendidly: instead of the abolition of the sacred right to "profits," which would be so vexatious to the entrepreneur gentlemen, such meek, liberal measures are proposed as would only serve to place better weapons for the struggle in the hands of the capitalist, and would only strengthen, consolidate and develop our petty, "popular" bourgeoisie. And in order not to leave the slightest doubt that it is the interests of this petty bourgeoisie alone that the "friends of the people" champion, Mr. Krivenko adds the following remarkable explanation. It appears that the abolition of entrepreneurs' profits may be "counter-balanced" . . . "by a reduction in wages"!!! At first sight this would seem to be just nonsense. But, no. It is the consistent reasoning of a petty bourgeois. The author observed a fact like the struggle between big capital and small capital, and, like the true "friend of the people" he is, he of course took the side of small . . . *capital*. Moreover, he had heard that one of the most powerful weapons the small capitalist has is to reduce wages—a fact which was quite correctly observed and which has been confirmed in a large number of industries in Russia as well—in addition to lengthening the working day. And so, desiring at all cost to save the small . . . *capitalists*, he proposes "a certain reduction in wages, provided it is compensated by other benefits"! Messieurs the entrepreneurs, about whose "profits" some queer things seemed to have been said at first, may rest assured. In fact, I think they would be quite willing to appoint this brilliant administrator, who proposes to reduce wages as a measure *against* the entrepreneurs, to the post of Minister of Finance.

Another example could be quoted to show how the pure-blooded bourgeois peeps out of the humane and liberal administrators of *Russkoye Bogatstvo* as soon as practical questions arise. The "Chronicle of Home Affairs" in *Russkoye Bogatstvo*, No. 12, deals with the subject of monopoly.

"Monopoly and syndicate," says the author, "such are the ideals of developed industry." And he goes on to express surprise that these institutions are appearing in Russia, too, although there is "no keen competition among the capitalists" here.

"Neither the sugar industry nor the oil industry has developed to any great extent yet. The use of sugar and kerosene oil here are still in the embryonic

stage, to judge by the insignificant quantity of these goods consumed per head of the population here as compared with other countries. It would seem that the field for the development of these branches of industry is still very large and could still absorb a large amount of capital."

It is characteristic that just here, where a practical question was concerned, the author forgot the favourite idea of *Russkoye Bogatstvo* about the contraction of the home market. He is compelled to admit that this market has the prospect of tremendous development, and not contraction. He arrives at this conclusion from a comparison with the West, where consumption is greater. Why? Because the level of culture is higher. But what is the material basis of this culture if not the development of capitalist technique, the growth of commodity production and exchange, which bring people into more frequent intercourse with each other and break down the mediæval isolation of separate localities? Was not the level of culture in France, for example, before the great revolution, when the semi-mediæval peasantry had not yet been split up into a rural bourgeoisie and proletariat, no higher than ours? And if the author had examined Russian life more closely he could not have failed to notice, for example, that in those localities where capitalism is developed the demands of the peasant population are much higher than in the purely agricultural districts. This has been noted by all investigators of our handicraft industries in all cases where these industries have developed so far as to lay an industrial impress upon the whole life of the population.<sup>1</sup>

The "friends of the people" pay no attention to such "trifles" as this because they explain the thing "simply" by the level of culture or by the growing complexity of life generally, and do not even trouble to inquire into the material foundations of this culture and of this complexity. If they would only examine the economics of our rural districts they would have to admit that it is precisely the disintegration of the peasantry into a bourgeoisie and a proletariat that creates the home market.

<sup>1</sup> I would quote as an example the Pavlovo handicraftsmen in comparison with the peasants of the surrounding villages. See the works of Grigoriev and Annensky. I again deliberately give the example of a rural district in which a special "popular system" is supposed to exist.

They must think that the growth of the market does not imply the growth of the bourgeoisie. "In view of the low level of development of production generally," continues the above-mentioned chronicler of home affairs, "and the lack of enterprise and initiative, monopoly will still further retard the development of the *forces of the country*." Speaking of the tobacco monopoly, the author calculates that it "takes 154,000,000 rubles out of the *popular* circulation." The author just loses sight of the fact that the basis of our economic system is commodity production, the leader of which, here as everywhere else, is the bourgeoisie. And instead of saying that monopoly hampers the bourgeoisie, he speaks about the "country," instead of speaking about bourgeois commodity circulation, he speaks about "popular" circulation.<sup>1</sup> A bourgeois is incapable of detecting the difference between these two concepts, great as it is. To show how obvious this difference really is, I will refer to a magazine which is an authority in the eyes of the "friends of the people," namely, *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*. In No. 2 of that magazine, 1872, in an article entitled "The Plutocracy and its Foundations," we read the following:

"According to Marlow, the most important characteristic of the plutocracy is its love for a liberal form of government, or at all events for the principle of freedom of acquisition. If we take this characteristic and recall what the position was some eight or ten years ago, we shall find that as far as liberalism is concerned we have made enormous strides. . . . No matter what newspaper or magazine you take up, they all seem more or less to represent democratic principles, they all fight for the interests of the people. But side by side with these democratic views, and even under the cloak of these views [*mark this*], every now and again, intentionally or unintentionally, plutocratic strivings are expressed."

The author quotes as an example the address presented by the St. Petersburg and Moscow merchants to the Minister of Finance, expressing the gratitude of this most venerable body of the Russian bourgeoisie to him for having "based the financial position of Russia on the widest possible expansion of private enterprise, which is alone fruitful." And the author of the article concludes: "Plutocratic elements and strivings undoubtedly exist in our society, and in plenty."

<sup>1</sup> The author must be particularly blamed for this use of terms because *Russkoye Bogatstvo* loves to use the word "popular" (*narodny*—*Trans.*) in contradistinction to bourgeois.



As you see, even your predecessors in the distant past, when the impressions of the great emancipatory reform (which, as Mr. Yuzhakov has discovered, should have opened up peaceful and correct paths of development for "popular" production, but which in fact only opened up paths for the development of a plutocracy) were still vivid and fresh, had to admit the plutocratic, *i.e.*, bourgeois, character of private enterprise in Russia.

Why have you forgotten this? Why, when you talk about "popular" circulation and the development of the "forces of the country" thanks to the development of "enterprise and initiative," do you not mention the antagonistic character of this development, the exploiting character of this enterprise and initiative? Opposition can, and should, of course, be expressed to monopolies and similar institutions, for they undoubtedly worsen the conditions of the toilers, but it must not be forgotten that besides all these mediæval fetters the toiler is shackled by still stronger, modern, bourgeois fetters. Undoubtedly, the abolition of monopoly would be beneficial to the whole "people," because since bourgeois production has become the basis of the economic life of the country these survivals of the mediæval system only add still more bitter, mediæval, miseries to the capitalist miseries. Undoubtedly, they must absolutely be abolished—and the quicker and more radically the better—in order, by freeing bourgeois society of the semi-feudal fetters it has inherited, to untie the hands of the working class and facilitate its struggle against the bourgeoisie.

That is the way one should talk, calling a spade a spade, namely, that the abolition of monopoly and of all the other mediæval restrictions (and in Russia their name is legion) is absolutely essential for the working class in order to facilitate its struggle against the bourgeois system. That is all. Only a bourgeois can overlook the profound and irreconcilable antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat among the "people" because of the solidarity of the interests of the whole "people" as against the mediæval, feudal institutions.

Incidentally, it would be absurd to think that the "friends of the people" could be put to shame when, in regard to what the rural districts need, they can say things like the following:

"When, a few years ago," Mr. Krivenko informs us, "certain newspapers discussed what professions and what type of intellectual people the rural districts needed, the list proved to be a very long and varied one and embraced nearly every walk of life: doctors and women doctors were followed by doctors' assistants, then came lawyers, followed by teachers, librarians and booksellers, agronomists, forestry experts and agricultural experts generally, technicians of the most varied branches (a very extensive sphere, one almost untouched as yet), organisers and managers of credit institutions, warehouses, etc."

Let us stop to consider, say, those "intellectuals" (??) whose activities are directly related to the sphere of economics, these: forestry experts, agronomists, technicians, etc. How these people are indeed needed in the rural districts! But BY WHOM in the rural districts? By the landowners of course, and by the thrifty muzhiks, who have "savings" and can afford to pay for the services of these artisans whom Mr. Krivenko is pleased to call "intellectuals." *These* inhabitants of the rural districts have indeed long been thirsting for technicians, for credit and warehouses; all our economic literature testifies to this. But there are other inhabitants of the rural districts who are much more numerous, and of whom it would not harm the "friends of the people" to think a little more often, *viz.*, the ruined, ragged and fleeced peasants who not only have no "savings" to pay for the services of "intellectuals" but have not even enough bread to save them from dying of starvation. And is it *these* inhabitants of the rural districts you want to assist by setting up *warehouses*!! What will they put in them, our one-horse and horseless peasants? Their clothes? They already pawned them in 1891 to the rural and city kulaks who at that time, in accordance with your humane and liberal precept, set up real "warehouses" in their houses, inns and shops. All they have left is their "hands" to work with; but even the Russian *chinovniks*<sup>1</sup> have so far failed to invent "warehouses" for this sort of commodity.

It would be hard to imagine more striking proof of the utter banality of these "democrats" than the way they sentimentally adore technical progress among the "peasantry," while closing their eyes to the mass expropriation of this very "peasantry." For example, in *Russkoye Bogatstvo*, No. 2 ("Sketches," § XII), Mr. Karyshev,

<sup>1</sup> Government officials, bureaucrats.—*Trans.*

with the fervour of a liberal cretin, tells of cases of "perfections and improvements" in peasant farming—of the "spread of improved sorts of seed on peasant farms," such as American oats, Vaza rye, Clydesdale oats, etc. "In some places the peasants set apart a special plot of land for seed, on which, after careful tilling, they plant by hand selected samples of grain." "Many and very varied innovations" are to be observed "in the sphere of improved implements and machines,"<sup>1</sup> cultivators, light ploughs, threshing machines, winnowing machines, seed sorters. He states that there is "a greater variety of fertiliser"—phosphates, fish manure, pigeon manure, etc. "Correspondents urge the necessity for setting up local Zemstvo stores for the sale of phosphates in the villages"—and Mr. Karyshev, quoting from Mr. V. V.'s book, *Progressive Tendencies in Peasant Farming* (Mr. Krivenko also refers to this book), is so affected by all this progress as to become quite pathetic:

"These reports, which we have been able to give only in brief, make a cheerful and at the same time a sad impression. . . . Cheerful, because these people, impoverished, debt-laden, very many of them without horses, do not drop their hands and give way to despair, do not change their occupation, but remain true to the soil, realising that in the soil, if it is properly treated, lies their future, their strength, their wealth. [Of course, it goes without saying that it is just the impoverished and horseless muzhik who buys phosphates, seed sorters, threshing machines and Clydesdale oat seed! *O sancta simplicitas!* And this is not written by a high school girl, but by a professor, a doctor of political economy!! No, you can't attribute it all to holy simplicity.] They are feverishly searching for the way to treat it properly, new ways, methods of cultivation, seed, implements, fertilisers, everything that will lend fertility to the soil that feeds them and that will sooner or later compensate them a hundredfold for it. . . .<sup>2</sup> These reports create a sad impression because [perhaps you think that here at least this "friend of the people" mentions the mass expropriation of the peasantry that accompanies

<sup>1</sup> We would remind the reader how these improved implements are distributed in the Novo-Uzensk uyezd: 37 per cent (poor) peasants, i. e., 10,000 out of 28,000 households, have 7 implements out of 5,724, that is, one-eighth of one per cent! Four-fifths of the implements are monopolised by the rich, who represent only one-fourth of the total number of households.

<sup>2</sup> You are profoundly right, worthy Mr. Professor, when you say that improved methods of farming will compensate a hundredfold the "people" who do not "give way to despair" and "remain true to the soil." But have you not observed, O mighty doctor of political economy, that in order to acquire all these phosphates and so on, the "muzhik" must stand out from the mass of the starving poor by the fact that he has ready money—and money, after all, is the product of social labour which has passed into private hands; that the appropriation of the "reward" for improved farming will be

and calls forth the concentration of the land in the hands of the thrifty muzhika, its conversion into *capital*, the basis of *improved* farming—the expropriation that throws on the market “free” and “cheap” “hands,” which create the success of native “enterprise” with the aid of all these threshing machines, seed sorters and winnowing machines?—Nothing of the kind!, because . . . it is we ourselves who must be roused. Where is the aid we should be giving to the muzhik who is striving to raise the level of his farming? We have at our disposal science, literature, museums, warehouses, commission agencies. [That is exactly how he puts them, gentlemen, side by side: “science” and “commission agencies.” . . . You must study the “friends of the people” not when they are fighting the Social-Democrats, because on such occasions they don a uniform sewn from tatters of the “ideals of their fathers,” but in their everyday clothes, when they are discussing in detail the affairs of everyday life. Then you can observe these petty-bourgeois ideologists in their true colours and odours.] Has the muzhik anything like it? Of course, he has the rudiments of them, but somehow they are developing very slowly. The muzhik wants an example—where are our experimental fields, our model farms? The muzhik is seeking the printed word—where is our popular literature on agronomics? . . . The muzhik is seeking fertiliser, implements, seed—where are our Zemstvo stores for the sale of these things, wholesale buying, purchasing and distributing conveniences? . . . Where are you, private and Zemstvo public men? Go and work, the time for it has long arrived, and

Hearty thanks will be your meed  
From the Russian people!”

N. Karyshev (*Russkoye Bogatstvo*, No. 2, p. 19).

Here you have them, these friends of the petty “popular” bourgeois, revelling in their philistine progress!

One would think that, even apart from an analysis of our rural economy, it is enough to observe this striking fact in our modern economic history—*viz.*, the generally-admitted progress in peasant economy which is proceeding simultaneously with the expropriation of the “peasantry” on a tremendous scale—to convince oneself of the absurdity of picturing the “peasantry” as an inherently united and homogeneous whole, and of the bourgeois character of all this progress! But the “friends of the people” remain deaf to all this. Having lost the good features of the old Russian social-revolutionary Narodism, they cling tightly to one of its gravest errors, *viz.*, its failure to understand the class antagonism within the peasantry.

the appropriation of *other people's* labour; and that only the most contemptible hangers-on of the bourgeoisie can think that the source of this abundant reward is the personal effort of the master, who, “without dropping his hands,” “fertilises the soil that feeds him”?

"The Narodnik of the 'seventies," Hourwich aptly remarks, "had not the faintest idea of the class antagonism within the peasantry itself, and saw only the antagonism between the 'exploiter'—the kulak or shark—and his victim, the peasant, who is imbued with the Communist spirit." Gleb Uspensky was alone in his scepticism and responded to the general illusion with an ironical smile. With his excellent knowledge of the peasant and his great literary talent, which penetrated to the heart of things, he could not help seeing that individualism had become the basis of economic relations, not only between the usurer and the debtor, but among the peasants in general." See his article, "Reducing to One Level," in *Russkaya Mysl*, 1882, No. 1 (p. 106 of the article).

But if it was permissible and even natural to succumb to this illusion in the 'sixties and 'seventies, when accurate information about rural economy was relatively scarce, and when the disintegration of the peasants had not yet become so marked, today one must deliberately close one's eyes not to see this disintegration. It is extremely characteristic that it is precisely at the present time, when the ruin of the peasantry seems to have reached its apex, that one hears so much on all sides about the progressive tendencies in peasant economy. Mr. V. V. (also a most indubitable "friend of the people") has written a whole book on this subject. And he cannot be accused of factual inaccuracy. On the contrary, the technical, agricultural progress of the peasantry is a fact that cannot be doubted; but neither can the fact of the mass expropriation of the peasantry be doubted. And so, the "friends of the people" concentrate all their attention on the fact that the "muzhik" is feverishly seeking new methods of cultivation that will help him to fertilise the soil that feeds him—losing sight of the reverse side of the medal, *viz.*, the feverish separation of the very same "muzhik" from the land. They bury their heads in the sand like ostriches so as to avoid looking facts in the face, so as not to see that what they are witnessing is precisely the process of transformation of the land from which the peasant is being divorced into capital, the process of creation of an internal market.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Within the village community antagonistic social classes arose," says Hourwich in another place (p. 104). I quote Hourwich only to supplement the facts enumerated above.

<sup>2</sup> The quest for "new methods of cultivation" is becoming "feverish" just because the thrifty muzhik has to conduct farming on a larger scale, which he could not do by the old methods, and just because competition is compelling him to seek for new methods, inasmuch as agriculture is more and more acquiring a commodity, bourgeois character.

Try to refute the fact that these two polar opposite processes are taking place among our village commune peasants; try to *explain* them in any other way than by the bourgeois character of our society. Well, let them try! Hallelujas and humane and well-meaning effusions are the alpha and omega of their "science" and of their whole political "activity."

And they even elevate this meek, liberal patching up of the present system to a regular philosophy. "Small effective deeds," says Mr. Krivenko, with an air of profundity, "are much better than superb inactivity." New and clever! Moreover, he goes on to say, "small deeds are by no means synonymous with small aims." And as an example of such an "extension of activity," when small deeds become "proper and good," he quotes the activity of a certain lady in organising schools, and then the activities of lawyers among the peasants in eliminating pettifoggers, the proposal of lawyers to accompany the circuit courts into the provinces in order to defend accused persons, and, finally, the proposal of which we have already heard, namely, to open handicraft stores: in this case the extension of activity (to the dimensions of a great aim) is to consist in opening stores "by the combined efforts of the Zemstvos in the busiest centres."

All this is very lofty, humane and liberal, of course—"liberal," because it will free the bourgeois system of production from all its mediæval hindrances and thus make it easier for the worker to fight this system itself, which, of course, will be strengthened and not injured by such measures; and about all this we have been reading for a long time in all the Russian liberal publications. It would not have been worth while arguing against this had we not been compelled to do so by the gentlemen of *Russkoye Bogatstvo*, who began to advance these "modest beginnings of liberalism" as arguments AGAINST the Social-Democrats and as a lesson to them, at the same time reproaching them for having renounced the "ideals of the fathers." That being the case, we cannot help remarking that it is amusing to say the least to oppose the Social-Democrats with proposals and suggestions for such moderate and punctilious *liberal* (in other words, bourgeois-serving) activity. As for the fathers and their ideals, it should be said that however erroneous and utopian the old

theories of the Russian Narodniks may have been, they, at all events, were ABSOLUTELY opposed to such "modest beginnings of liberalism." I have borrowed the latter expression from Mr. N. K. Mikhailovsky's review "On the Russian Edition of K. Marx's Book" (*Otechestvenniye Zapiski*, 1872, No. 4)—a review that is written in a fresh, lively and spirited style (compared with his present writings), and that strongly protests against the proposal not to offend our young liberals.

But that was long ago, so long that the "friends of the people" have managed to forget it all completely, and have, by their tactics, strikingly demonstrated that when a materialist criticism of political institutions is lacking, and when the class character of the modern state is not understood, it is only one step from political radicalism to political opportunism.

Here are a few examples of this opportunism.

"The transformation of the Ministry of State Property into the Ministry of Agriculture," declares Mr. Yuzhakov, "may profoundly influence the course of our economic development, but it may also prove to be nothing but a reshuffling of officials." (*Russkoye Bogatstvo*, No. 10.)

Everything depends, that is to say, upon who will be "called"—the friends of the people or the representatives of the interests of the landlords and capitalists. The interests themselves need not be touched.

"The protection of the economically weak from the economically strong is the first natural task of state interference," this same Mr. Yuzhakov continues in the same article; and he is seconded in the same terms by the chronicler of home affairs in *Russkoye Bogatstvo*, No. 2. And so as not to leave any doubt that he interprets this philanthropic nonsense<sup>1</sup> in the same way as do his worthy fellow-liberal and radical petty-bourgeois ideologists in Western Europe, he adds to the above:

"Gladstone's Land Bill, Bismark's insurance for workers, factory inspection, the idea of our Peasants' Bank, the organisation of migration, measures against the kulak—all these are attempts to apply this very principle of state interference for the purpose of protecting the economically weak."

<sup>1</sup> It is nonsense because the strength of the "economically strong" lies, among other things, in the fact that he possesses political power. Without political power he could not maintain his economic rule.

The merit of this is its frankness. The author openly declares that, just like Messrs. Gladstone and Bismarck, he wants to stick to the present relations of society, and that, just like them, he wants to patch and darn present-day society (a bourgeois society—which he, like the West European followers of Gladstone and Bismarck, does not understand), and not to combat it. The fact that they regard the state—an organ which has arisen from the soil of this present-day society and which protects the interests of the ruling classes in this society—as an instrument of reform, is in complete harmony with this fundamental theoretical tenet of theirs. They positively believe the state to be omnipotent and above classes, and expect that it will not only “assist” the toilers, but create a real and proper order of things (as Mr. Krivenko informed us). Incidentally, of course, nothing else was to be expected of them, purest of pure philistine ideologists that they are. For it is one of the most essential and characteristic features of the petty bourgeoisie—one which, incidentally, makes it a reactionary class—that the small producer, disunited and isolated by the very conditions of his work, and tied down to a definite place and to a definite exploiter, cannot understand the class character of the exploitation and oppression from which he suffers, and sometimes suffers no less than the proletarian; he cannot understand that in bourgeois society the state too is bound to be a class state.<sup>1</sup>

But why is it, most worthy “friends of the people,” that up till now—and with particular energy since this very emancipatory reform—our government has “supported, protected and created” only the bourgeoisie and capitalism? Why is it that such bad behaviour on the part of this absolute government, which is supposed

<sup>1</sup> That is why the “friends of the people” are most arrant reactionaries when they say that it is the natural task of the state to protect the economically weak (that is what it *should* be according to their banal, old wives’ morality), when the whole history and the whole internal politics of Russia testify that it is the task of our state to protect only the feudal landlords and the big bourgeoisie, and to punish with the utmost brutality every attempt on the part of the “economically weak” to stand up for their own interests. And that, of course, is its *natural* task, because absolutism and bureaucracy are thoroughly saturated with the feudal-bourgeois spirit, and because in the economic sphere the bourgeoisie has undivided power and keeps the worker “in his place.”



to stand above classes, has coincided with a historical period which, in the internal life of the country, is characterised by the development of commodity production, commerce and industry? What makes you think that these last-mentioned changes in internal life came second and the policy of the government first, when as a matter of fact these changes took place so deep down in society that the government did not even notice them and put innumerable obstacles in their way, and when as a matter of fact this very same "absolute" government, under other conditions of internal life, "supported," "protected" and "created" another class?

Oh, the "friends of the people" never ask themselves such questions! All that is materialism, dialectics, "Hegelianism," "mysticism and metaphysics." They simply think that if they plead with this government properly and gently enough, it can put everything right. And as far as gentleness is concerned, one must do *Russkoye Bogatstvo* justice: it stands out even among the Russian liberal press for its inability to display the slightest independence. Judge for yourselves:

"The abolition of the salt tax, the abolition of the poll tax and the reduction of the land purchase payments" are described by Mr. Yuzhakov as "a considerable relief to the national economy." Of course! But was not the abolition of the salt tax accompanied by the imposition of a host of new indirect taxes and by an increase in the old taxes? Was not the abolition of the poll tax accompanied by an increase in the duties payable by the former state peasants on the plea of transforming them into redemption payments? And even now, after the notorious reduction in the redemption payments (by which the government did not even return to the peasants the profit it had made out of the redemption operations), does not the discrepancy between the amount of the payments and the income from the land, i.e., a direct survival of feudal quit-rent, remain? Oh, that's nothing. What is important is "the first step," the "principle." As for the rest . . . the rest we can appeal for later on!

But these are only the blossoms. Now for the fruit:

"The 'eighties eased the burden on the people [this refers to the above mentioned measures] and thus saved them from utter ruin."

This is another classical example of shameless, servile phrasemongering, which can only be compared with Mr. Mikhailovsky's statement, quoted above, that we have still to create a proletariat. One cannot help recalling in this connection Shchedrin's apt description of the evolution of the Russian liberal. This liberal starts out by pleading with the authorities to grant reforms "as far as possible," then he goes on to beg, "well, at least something," and ends by taking up a permanent and unshakable position "adapted to vileness." Now how can one not say that the "friends of the people" have taken up such a permanent and unshakable position when, fresh from the impressions of a famine which affected millions of people, and towards which the attitude of the government was first one of huckster-like stinginess and then of huckster-like cowardice, they declare in the press that the government has saved the people from utter ruin!! Several years more will pass, during which the peasantry will be expropriated even more rapidly, the government will add to the establishment of the Ministry of Agriculture the abolition of one or two direct taxes and the imposition of several new indirect taxes, the famine will then embrace forty million people—and these gentlemen will write in just the same way: you see, forty million are starving, not fifty million; that is because the government has eased the burden on the people and has saved them from utter ruin; it is because the government has paid heed to the "friends of the people" and has established a Ministry of Agriculture!

Another example:

In *Russkoye Bogatstvo*, No. 2, the chronicler of home affairs argues that Russia is "fortunately" (*sic!*) a backward country, "which has preserved elements that enable her to base her economic system on the principle of solidarity,"<sup>1</sup> and that she is therefore able to act "in the sphere of international affairs as a vehicle of economic solidarity" and that the chances for this are enhanced by Russia's undeniable "political might"!!

This is said of the gendarme of Europe, the constant and most

<sup>1</sup> Solidarity between whom? Between the landlord and the peasant, the thrifty muzhik and the tramp, the manufacturer and the worker? To understand what this classical "principle of solidarity" means, we must remember that solidarity between the employer and the workman is achieved by "reducing wages."

reliable bulwark of all reaction, which has reduced the Russian people to the shameful state of being oppressed at home and of serving as an instrument for oppressing the peoples of Western Europe—it is this gendarme that is described as a vehicle of economic solidarity!

That is going too far! Messieurs the "friends of the people" have outdone the liberals. They not only plead with the government, they not only eulogise it, but they actually pray to it; they pray, bowing low to the ground, and with such zeal that it is positively uncanny to hear the thumping of their loyal foreheads.

Do you remember the German definition of a philistine?

Was ist der Philister?  
Ein hohler Darm,  
Voll Furcht und Hoffnung,  
Dass Gott erbarm.<sup>1</sup>

This definition does not quite apply to us. God . . . God with us is quite in the background. But as to the authorities . . . well, that's a different matter. And if in this definition we substitute the word "authorities" for the word "God" we shall get an exact description of the intellectual stock-in-trade, the moral level and the civic courage of the Russian, humane and liberal "friends of the people."

To this absolutely absurd view of the government, the "friends of the people" add a corresponding attitude toward the so-called "intelligentsia." Mr. Krivenko writes:

"Literature . . ." should "appraise phenomena according to their social meaning and encourage every active effort to do good. It has called attention, and continues to call attention, to the shortage of teachers, doctors, technicians, to the fact that the people are sick, are becoming impoverished [owing to the shortage of technicians!], that they are illiterate, etc.; and when people come forward who have grown weary of sitting around green baize tables, of taking part in private theatricals and eating sturgeon patties at banquets of marshals of nobility, and who go out to work with rare self-sacrifice [think of it: they have sacrificed green baize tables, theatricals and patties!], in spite of all obstacles, it should welcome them."

Two pages later, with the business-like air of an old campaigner grown wise by experience, he reproves those who

<sup>1</sup> What is a philistine? A hollow gut, full of fear and hope, that God have mercy! (*Heine.*)—*Trans.*

"wavered when confronted with the question whether or not to accept service as rural prefects, town mayors, or chairmen or members of Zemstvo administrations under the new regulations. In a society with a developed consciousness of civic requirements and duties [really, gentlemen, this is as good as the speeches of famous Russian pompadours like the Baranovs and Kosiches!], such wavering and such an attitude to the matter would be inconceivable, because it would assimilate every reform that had any vital side to it at all in its own way, that is, it would take advantage of and help to develop those sides of the reform that were expedient; as to the undesirable sides, it would convert them into a dead letter; and if there were no vitality in the reform at all, it would remain an entirely alien body."

The devil only knows what this means! Miserable twopenny-ha'penny opportunism, and yet he talks with such self-adulation! It is the task of literature to collect all the drawing-room gossip about the wicked Marxists, to bow to the government for having saved the people from utter ruin, to welcome people who have grown weary of sitting around green baize tables, to teach the "public" not to shy even at such posts as rural prefectures. . . . What am I reading—*Nedelya* or *Novoye Vremya*? No, it is *Russkoye Bogatstvo*, the organ of the advanced Russian democrats. . . .

And it is people like this who talk about the "ideals of the fathers," who claim that they, and they alone, guard the traditions of the time when France spread the ideas of Socialism through Europe—and when the assimilation of these ideas gave rise in Russia to the theories and teachings of Herzen and Chernyshevsky. This is really scandalous; and it would be utterly outrageous and offensive—if *Russkoye Bogatstvo* were not so amusing, if such statements in the pages of such a magazine aroused anything but Homeric laughter. Yes, you are besmirching these ideals! Indeed, what were the ideals of the first Russian Socialists, the Socialists of the epoch which Kautsky so aptly described in the words: "when every Socialist was a poet and every poet a Socialist."

*Faith in a special social system, in the village commune structure of Russian life; hence—faith in the possibility of a peasant Socialist revolution—that is what inspired them and roused scores and hundreds of people to wage a heroic struggle against the government. And you cannot reproach the Social-Democrats with being unable to appreciate the enormous historical services rendered by these, the finest people of their day, and with being unable to respect*

their memory profoundly. But I ask you, where is that faith now? It no longer exists. So much so that when last year Mr. V. V. tried to argue that the village commune trains the people to common effort and is a home of altruistic sentiments, etc., even Mr. Mikhailovsky's conscience was pricked and he began shamefacedly to lecture Mr. V. V. and to point out that "no *investigation* has shown the connection between our village commune and altruism." And indeed no investigation has shown this. But yet there was a time when people did believe, and believed faithfully, without any investigation.

How? Why? On what grounds? Because: "Every Socialist was a poet and every poet a Socialist."

Moreover, adds Mr. Mikhailovsky, all conscientious investigators agree that the rural population is being split up, giving rise to a mass of proletarians. on the one hand, and to a handful of "kulaks" who keep the rest of the population under their heel, on the other. And again he is right: the rural population is indeed being split up. More than that, the rural population split up completely a long time ago. And the old Russian peasant Socialism split up simultaneously, making way for workers' Socialism, on the one hand, and for a degenerate and vulgar philistine radicalism, on the other. This change cannot be described otherwise than as degeneration. Out of the doctrine of a special social system of peasant life, out of the peculiarly native paths of development of our country, there has emerged a diluted sort of eclecticism, which can no longer deny that commodity production has become the basis of economic development and has grown into capitalism, but which refuses to perceive the bourgeois character of all relations of production, refuses to perceive the inevitability of the class struggle under this social system. Out of a political programme that was calculated to *rouse the peasantry* for the Socialist revolution *against the foundations of modern society*<sup>1</sup> there has emerged a programme calculated to patch up, to "improve" the condition of the peasantry while *preserving the foundations of present society*.

<sup>1</sup> This, in fact, was the substance of all our old revolutionary programmes—from the Bakunists and the rebels to the Narodniks and finally the Narodovtsi, with whom, too, the conviction that the peasants would send an overwhelming majority of Socialists to the future National Assembly played no small part.

What has already been said is quite enough to enable us to judge the kind of "criticism" that can be expected from the gentlemen of *Russkoye Bogatstvo* when they undertake to "smash" the Social-Democrats. They do not make the slightest attempt to explain in a straightforward and conscientious manner the Social-Democrats' conception of Russian realities (the censorship could not have prevented them from doing this if they had laid most stress on the economic side and expressed themselves in the general and partly allegorical terms in which the whole of their "polemic" was conducted) and to bring forward arguments against the conception itself, arguments showing that the practical conclusions drawn from it are wrong. They prefer instead to get away with vapid phrases about abstract schemes and belief in them, about the conviction that every country has to pass through the phase . . . and similar nonsense, with which we have become sufficiently acquainted in the case of Mr. Mikhailovsky. Often we get direct distortions. For instance, Mr. Krivenko declares that Marx

"admitted that, if we desired it [?! So according to Marx the evolution of the economic relations of society is determined by human will and consciousness?? What is this—boundless ignorance or unparalleled effrontery?!], and acted accordingly, we could avoid the vicissitudes of capitalism and proceed by another and more expedient path [*sic!!!*]."

Our knight was able to talk such nonsense because he deliberately misquoted. Citing the passage from the well-known "K. Marx's Letter" (*Yuridicheski Vestnik*, 1888, No. 10), in which Marx expresses his great respect for Chernyshevsky, who thought that Russia might be able to avoid "experiencing the torments of the capitalist regime," Mr. Krivenko closes the quotation marks, *i.e.*, ends the reproduction of what Marx actually said (the last words of which were: "he [Chernyshevsky] pronounces in favour of the latter solution"), and adds: "And I, says Marx, *share* [Krivenko's italics] these views" (p. 186, No. 12).

What Marx actually said was the following:

"And my honourable critic would have had at least as much reason for inferring from my consideration for this 'great Russian critic and man of learning' that I shared his views on the question, as for concluding from my polemic against the 'literary man' and Pan-Slavist<sup>1</sup> that I rejected them." (*Yuridicheski Vestnik*, 1888, No. 10, p. 271.)

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, A. Herzen.—Ed.

And so Marx said that Mr. Mikhailovsky had no right to regard him as an opponent of the idea that Russia would develop along special lines, because he also respected those who advocated this idea; but Mr. Krivenko interpreted this to mean that Marx "admitted" this special line of development. This is a direct distortion. Marx's statement quoted above shows quite clearly that he avoided the question as such: "Mr. Mikhailovsky might have taken as his grounds either one of the two contradictory remarks, i.e., he had no grounds for basing his conclusions as to my views on Russian affairs generally on either of them." And in order to avoid any misinterpretation, Marx, in this very same "letter," gave a direct reply to the question how his theory could be applied to Russia. This reply very clearly shows that Marx avoided a reply to the question as such and refrained from examining the Russian facts, which alone could decide the question:

"If Russia," he replied, "is to become a capitalist nation after the example of the Western European countries, and during the last years she has been taking a lot of trouble in this direction—she will not succeed without having first transformed a good part of her peasants into proletarians. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

This seems perfectly clear: the question was precisely whether Russia was striving to become a capitalist nation, whether the ruin of her peasants was the process of creating a capitalist system, a capitalist proletariat; and Marx replied that "if" she was striving to become a capitalist nation she would have to transform a good part of her peasants into proletarians. In other words, Marx's theory is to investigate and explain the evolution of the economic system of certain countries, and its "application" to Russia could only mean INVESTIGATING Russian relations of production and their evolution by EMPLOYING the means worked out by the MATERIALIST method and by THEORETICAL political economy.<sup>2</sup>

The working out of a new theory of methodology and political economy marked such gigantic progress in social science, such a tremendous forward stride of the Socialist movement, that the prin-

<sup>1</sup> See *Marx-Engels Selected Correspondence*, Martin Lawrence Ltd., London, Letter No. 167.—*Trans.*

<sup>2</sup> I repeat that this conclusion could not but be clear to anybody who had read *The Communist Manifesto*, *Poverty of Philosophy* and *Capital*, and that only for the benefit of Mr. Mikhailovsky was a special explanation required.

cial theoretical question that confronted the Russian Socialists almost immediately after the appearance of *Capital* was "the destiny of capitalism in Russia"; around this question the most heated controversies raged, and in accordance with it the most important programme points were decided. And it is a remarkable fact that when (about ten years ago) there appeared a separate group of Socialists who answered the question whether the evolution of Russia was a capitalist evolution in the affirmative and based this decision on the data of Russian economic realities, it encountered no direct and definite criticism on the actual point at issue, no criticism which accepted the same general methodological and theoretical principles and gave a different explanation of this data.

The "friends of the people," who have undertaken a crusade against the Marxists, likewise advance their arguments without investigating the facts. As we have seen in the first article, they try to get away with phrases. Moreover, Mr. Mikhailovsky never misses an opportunity to display his wit in teasing the Marxists about their lack of unanimity, about their lack of agreement among themselves. And "our celebrated" Mr. N. K. Mikhailovsky laughs heartily over his own jokes about "genuine" and "non-genuine" Marxists. It is perfectly true that complete unanimity among the Marxists does not exist. But, firstly, Mr. Mikhailovsky puts it incorrectly; and, secondly, it reveals not the weakness, but the strength and vitality of Russian Social-Democracy. The fact of the matter is that it has been characteristic of late that Socialists have been arriving at Social-Democratic views by various paths and that, therefore, while unreservedly agreeing with the fundamental and principal thesis—that Russia is a bourgeois society which has grown out of the feudal system, that its political form is the class state, and that the only way to put an end to the exploitation of the toilers is through the class struggle of the proletariat—they differ on many partial questions both in their methods of argument and in the detailed interpretation of this or that phenomenon of Russian life. I can therefore delight Mr. Mikhailovsky beforehand by stating that, within the limits of the fundamental thesis just mentioned, which all Social-Democrats accept, differences of opinion exist even on the questions that have been touched upon in these brief remarks, e.g., the peasant reform,



the economics of peasant farming and the handicraft industries, the renting of land, etc. The unanimity of people who content themselves with the unanimous acceptance of "lofty truths"—such as that the peasant reform *might* open for Russia a peaceful path of proper development; that the state *might* call, not upon the representatives of the interests of capitalism, but upon the "friends of the people"; that the village commune *might* socialise agriculture together with the manufacturing industries, which the handicraftsman *might* develop into large-scale production; that *popular* renting of land *might* support *popular* production—this touching and moving unanimity has been replaced by disagreements among people who are seeking for an explanation of the *real*, the *present* economic organisation of Russia as a system of definite relations of production, an explanation of its *real* economic evolution, of its political and other super-structures.

And if such work—by leading, from various angles, to the acceptance of a common thesis, which undoubtedly leads to joint political action as well, and for that reason confers on all who accept it the right and duty to call themselves SOCIAL-DEMOCRATS—still leaves a wide field for differences of opinion on a host of partial problems, which are solved in various ways, this, of course, merely goes to show the strength and vitality of Russian Social-Democracy.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, the conditions under which this work has to be done are so bad that anything worse can scarcely be imagined: there is not, and there cannot be, an organ to unite the various branches of the work; and, in view of the prevailing police conditions, private intercourse is extremely difficult. It is only natural that Social-

<sup>1</sup> For the simple reason that these problems have *not been solved yet*. After all, you cannot regard as a solution of the land renting problem the assertion that "popular renting of land supports popular production," or the following description of the system under which the peasant cultivated the landlord's land with his own implements: "The peasant proved to be stronger than the landlord," who "sacrificed his independence for the benefit of the independent peasant"; "the peasant has wrested large-scale production from the grasp of the landlord"; "the people are the victors in the struggle to determine the form of agriculture." This empty liberal phrasemongering is to be found in *The Destiny of Capitalism*, written by "our celebrated" Mr. V. V.

Democrats cannot reach agreement among themselves in regard to details, that they contradict each other. . . .

That is indeed funny, is it not?

References to "neo-Marxists" in Mr. Krivenko's "polemic" against the Social-Democrats may cause surprise. Some readers might think that something in the nature of a split has taken place among the Social-Democrats, and that "neo-Marxists" have separated from the old Social-Democrats. Nothing of the kind. Nowhere and never has anybody publicly criticised the theory and programme of Russian Social-Democracy in the name of Marxism, or advocated any other kind of Marxism. The fact of the matter is that Messrs. Krivenko and Mikhailovsky have been listening to drawing-room gossip about the Marxists, have been observing various liberals who try to cover their liberal inanity by a cloak of Marxism, and, with their characteristic wit and tact, have set out with this stock-in-trade to "criticise" the Marxists. It is not surprising, therefore, that this "criticism" should consist of a regular chain of curiosities and filthy innuendoes.

"Consistency," argues Mr. Krivenko, "demands an affirmative answer to this [the question: "Should we not work for the development of capitalist industry?"]", and there should be no shrinking from buying up peasants' land or from opening shops and dram shops": we should "rejoice at the success of the numerous innkeepers in the Duma and assist a still larger number of dealers in peasants' grain."

That is really funny. Try to explain to such a "friend of the people" that everywhere in Russia the exploitation of the toilers is capitalistic by its very nature, that the thrifty muzhiks and dealers should be classed under the category of representatives of capitalism because of such and such political and economic tokens, which prove the bourgeois character of the disintegration of the peasantry—why, he would raise a howl, call it outrageous heresy, shout about the blind acceptance of West European formulas and abstract schemes (while at the same time most carefully evading the actual content of the "heretical" argument). But when it is necessary to depict the "horrors" which the wicked Marxists are introducing, then lofty science and pure ideals may be left aside, and it is permissible to admit that dealers in peasants' grain and peasants' land really are

representatives of capitalism, and not merely "hankerers" after other people's goods.

Try to prove to such a "friend of the people" that not only has the Russian bourgeoisie already become master of the labour of the people everywhere—by the fact that the means of production are concentrated in its hands alone—but that it also brings pressure to bear upon the government, giving rise to, compelling and determining the bourgeois character of its policy—why, he would fly into a rage, begin to shout that our government is omnipotent, that only by fatal misunderstanding and unlucky chance does it "call upon" representatives of the interests of capitalism and not upon the "friends of the people," that it is artificially implanting capitalism. . . . But under cover of this noise they are themselves compelled to recognise as representative of capitalism the innkeepers in the Duma, which is one of the elements of this very government that is supposed to stand above classes. But, gentlemen, are the interests of capitalism in Russia represented only in the "Duma" and only by "innkeepers"? . . .

As to filthy innuendoes, we have heard quite enough of them from Mr. Mikhailovsky, and we hear them again from Mr. Krivenko, who, for example, in his desire to annihilate the hated Social-Democrats, relates that "some of them go into the factories (that is, when they can get soft jobs as technicians or office workers), on the plea that their sole purpose is to accelerate the capitalist process." There is no need, of course, to reply to such positively indecent statements. The only thing to be done is to put a full stop here.

Go on in the same spirit, gentlemen, go on boldly! The imperial government, the very government which, as you have just told us, has already taken measures (although not without defects) to save the people from utter ruin, will take measures, this time without any defects at all, to save your banality and ignorance from exposure. "Cultured society" will continue as hitherto, in the intervals between sturgeon patties and green baize tables, to talk about our "little brother" and to devise humane projects for "improving" his condition; its representatives will be pleased to learn from you that by taking up positions as rural prefects or as other supervisors of the purses of the peasants they will display a developed conscious-

ness of civic requirements and duties. Go on! You are assured not only of peace of mind but also of approval and praise . . . from the lips of Messieurs the Burenins.

\* \* \*

In conclusion, it would perhaps not be superfluous to reply to a question which in all probability has already occurred to more than one reader, viz., was it worth while arguing so long with such people? Was it worth while replying in substance to this stream of liberal and censor-protected abuse which they are pleased to call controversy?

I think it was worth while, not for their sake, of course, and not for the sake of the "cultured" public, but for the sake of the useful lesson which Russian Socialists can and should learn from this attack. This attack provides most striking and convincing proof that the time in the social development of Russia when democracy and Socialism were merged into one inseparable and indissoluble whole (as was the case, for example, in Chernyshevsky's day) has departed never to return. Today there are no grounds whatever for the idea, which Russian Socialists here and there still cling to and which has a most harmful effect upon their theories and practical work, namely, that there is in Russia no profound qualitative difference between the ideas of the democrats and those of the Socialists.

Quite the contrary: a regular gulf separates these ideas, and it is high time the Russian Socialists understood this, it is high time they understood that a COMPLETE and FINAL RUPTURE with the ideas of the democrats is INEVITABLE and IMPERATIVE.

Indeed, let us examine what the Russian democrat was in the times which gave rise to this idea, and what he has become. The "friends of the people" provide enough material for such a comparison.

Extremely interesting in this connection is Mr. Krivenko's attack on Mr. Struve, who, in a German publication, wrote an article against Mr. Nik—on's utopianism ("On Capitalist Development in Russia," "*Zur Beurteilung der kapitalistischen Entwicklung Russlands*," in *Sozialpolitisches Zentralblatt*, III, No. 1, October 2, 1893). Mr. Krivenko attacks Mr. Struve for classing, as he alleges, the

ideas of those who "stand for the village commune and allotments" as "national Socialism" (which he regards as of a "purely utopian nature"). This terrible accusation of being a Socialist drives our worthy author to fury:

"Were there no others" (apart from Herzen, Chernyshevsky and the *Narodniks*), he exclaims, "who stood for the village commune and allotments? What about those who drew up the Peasant Laws, which made the commune and the economic independence of the peasantry the basis of reform; what about the investigators of our history and of contemporary social conditions who support these principles, and almost the whole of our serious and respectable press, which also supports these principles—are they all victims of the illusion known as 'national Socialism'?"

Calm yourself, most worthy "friend of the people"! You were so scared by the awful accusation of being a Socialist that you did not even take the trouble to read Mr. Struve's "little article" carefully. And, indeed, what a crying injustice it would be to accuse those who stand for "the village commune and allotments" of being Socialists! Pray, what is there socialistic in it? Socialism is a protest and a struggle against the exploitation of the toilers, a struggle for the complete abolition of this exploitation, while to "stand for allotments" means being in favour of the peasants' buying out all the land they have at their disposal. But even if they do not stand for the peasants' buying out the land, but for their retaining possession of the land they possessed before the Reform, without compensation, even so there is nothing socialistic in that, for it is precisely this peasant ownership of land (which had arisen in the course of the feudal period) that has everywhere in the West, as in Russia,<sup>1</sup> been the basis of bourgeois society. What is there socialistic about "standing for the village commune," *i.e.*, protesting against police interference in the customary methods of distributing the land, when everyone knows that exploitation of the toilers can exist very well and is generated within this commune? This is stretching the word "Socialism" to mean anything; why, Mr. Pobedonostsev too will have to be called a Socialist next!

Mr. Struve is not guilty of such an awful injustice at all. He talks of the "utopian nature of the national Socialism" of the *Narodniks*, and we are able to judge whom he classes as *Narodniks* by the fact

<sup>1</sup> Which is proved by the disintegration of the peasantry.

that he refers to Plekhanov's *Our Differences* as a polemic against the Narodniks. There is not the slightest doubt that Plekhanov's polemic was directed against Socialists, against people who have nothing in common with the "serious and respectable" Russian press. Hence, Mr. Krivenko had no right to ascribe to himself what is ascribed to the Narodniks. If he was so anxious to know Mr. Struve's opinion about the trend he himself represents, I am surprised that he did not pay attention to and *did not translate for* "*Russkoye Bogatstvo*" the following passage from Mr. Struve's article:

"As capitalist development advances, the philosophy just described [the Narodnik philosophy] must become groundless. It will either degenerate (*wird herabsinken*) into a rather colourless reformist trend, capable of compromise and seeking for compromise,<sup>1</sup> promising beginnings of which have long been observable, or it will admit that the actual development is inevitable and will draw the theoretical and practical conclusions that logically follow from this—in other words, will cease to be utopian."

If Mr. Krivenko has no inkling where the beginnings of the trend that is only capable of compromise are to be found, then I would advise him to glance at *Russkoye Bogatstvo*, at the theoretical views of that magazine, which represent a pitiful attempt to piece together fragments of the Narodnik doctrine with the recognition of the capitalist development of Russia, and at its political programme, which aims at improving and restoring the economy of the small producers on the basis of the present capitalist system.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ziemlich blasse kompromissfähige und kompromissüchtige Reformrichtung*—I think this can be translated into Russian as *kulturnicheski opportunism* (uplift opportunism—*Trans.*)

<sup>2</sup> Generally speaking, Mr. Krivenko cuts a sorry figure in his attempt to wage war on Mr. Struve. He betrays a childish inability to bring forward any serious objection on the point at issue, and an equally childish irritation. For example, Mr. Struve says that Mr. Nik—on is a "utopian," and gives very clear reasons for calling him so: (1) because he ignores the "actual development of Russia," and (2) because he appeals to "society" and to the "state," failing to understand the class character of our state. What reply does Mr. Krivenko make to this? Does he deny that our development is really capitalist? Does he say that it is something else? Does he say that our state is not a class state? No. He prefers to ignore these questions altogether and to gird with comical passion at "stereotyped" phrases which he himself has invented. Another example. In addition to charging Mr. Nik—on with failing to understand the class struggle, Mr. Struve reproaches him with having committed grave errors of theory in the sphere of "purely economic facts." He points out, among other things, that, in speaking of the smallness of the non-agricultural population, Mr. Nik—on "fails to observe that the

Generally speaking, this degeneration of Narodism into philistine opportunism is one of the most characteristic and noteworthy phenomena of our social life in recent times.

In fact, if we examine the programme of *Russkoye Bogatstvo*—the regulation of migration and the renting of land, cheap credit, museums, warehouses, improvement of technique, artels, communal tillage and all the rest—we will find that it is indeed very widely supported in the "serious and respectable press," i.e., in the liberal press, except for the organs of feudalism and the reptile press. The idea that these measures are essential, useful, urgent, "innocuous" has taken deep root among the intelligentsia and is extremely widespread. One meets with it in the provincial sheets and newspapers, in all Zemstvo researches, symposiums, descriptions, etc., etc. If *this* is to be regarded as Narodism, then undoubtedly its success is enormous and indisputable.

Only it is not Narodism at all (in the old, customary meaning of that term), and its success and the great extent to which it has spread have been achieved by the vulgarisation of Narodism, by the transformation of social-revolutionary Narodism, which is sharply opposed to our liberalism, into uplift opportunism, which is merging with this liberalism, expressing only the interests of the petty bourgeoisie.

To convince ourselves of this we need only turn to the pictures of disintegration among the peasants and handicraftsmen given above—and these pictures by no means depict isolated or new facts, they are simply an attempt to express in terms of political economy the "school" of "bloodsuckers" and "labourers," whose existence in our rural districts is not denied even by our opponents. It goes without saying that "Narodnik" measures can only serve to strengthen the petty bourgeoisie, or else (artels and communal tillage) must be

capitalist development of Russia will tend to obliterate this difference between 80 per cent [rural population of Russia] and 44 per cent [rural population of America]; that, one might say, is its historical mission." Mr. Krivenko (1) garbles this passage by saying that "our" (?) mission is to divorce the peasant from the land, whereas the point is simply that capitalism tends to diminish the rural population, and (2) without saying a single word on the point at issue (whether a capitalist system that would not tend to diminish the rural population is possible), talks a lot of nonsense about "erudite persons," etc. See Appendix II (p. 586 in this volume—*Ed.*)

miserable palliatives, pitiful experiments which the liberal bourgeoisie so tenderly cultivates everywhere in Europe for the simple reason that they do not in the least affect the "school" itself. For this reason, too, even gentlemen like Yermolov and Witte cannot object to progress of this kind. Quite the contrary. By all means, gentlemen! They will even grant you money for your "experiments," if only they divert the "intelligentsia" from revolutionary work (emphasising the antagonisms, explaining them to the proletariat, attempting to direct these antagonisms into the highroad of direct political struggle) to such attempts at patching up antagonisms, conciliating and uniting. By all means!

We will deal for a moment with the process which led to this degeneration of Narodism. When it first arose, in its original form, this theory was a fairly well-knit one. Starting out with the concept of a special form of national life, it believed in the communistic instincts of the "village commune" peasant and for that reason regarded the peasantry as the direct champion of Socialism. But it lacked theoretical analysis and confirmation in the facts of Russian life, on the one hand, and experience in applying a political programme based on these assumed qualities of the peasant, on the other.

The development of the theory proceeded along these two lines, theoretical and practical. Theoretical work was directed mainly towards studying that form of *landownership* in which it was desired to see the rudiments of Communism; and this work yielded a wealth of material of the most varied kind. But this material, which mainly concerned the forms of *landownership*, completely obscured from the eyes of the investigators the *economics* of the countryside. This was all the more natural, firstly, because the investigators lacked a firm theory of method in social science, a theory that would explain the necessity for singling out and making a special study of the relations of production; and, secondly, because the factual material collected furnished direct evidence of the immediate needs of the peasantry, their immediate misfortunes, which had a depressing effect upon peasant economy. All the attention of the investigators was concentrated on studying these misfortunes—lack of land, heavy impositions, lack of rights, and the wretched and downtrodden



condition of the peasants. All this was described and studied and explained with such a wealth of material, in such minute detail, that, had our government not been a class government, had its policy not been determined by the interests of the ruling classes, but by an impartial consideration of the "needs of the people," it would, of course, have been convinced a thousand times over of the necessity of removing these misfortunes. The naïve investigators, believing in the possibility of "convincing" society and the government, were completely submerged in the details of the facts they had collected and lost sight of one thing, the political-economic structure of the countryside; they lost sight of the main background of the economy that was really being depressed by these direct and immediate misfortunes. Naturally, the result was that defence of the interests of the economy which was being depressed by the lack of land, etc., turned out to be the defence of the interests of the class in whose hands this economy was concentrated, the only class that could hold on and develop in the given social and economic relations prevailing *within* the village commune under the given economic system prevailing in the country.

Theoretical work directed towards the study of the institution which was to serve as the basis and support of the abolition of exploitation led to the drawing up of a programme which expresses the interests of the petty bourgeoisie, *i.e.*, the very class upon which the exploiting system rests!

At the same time, practical revolutionary work also developed in an altogether unexpected direction. Belief in the communistic instincts of the muzhik naturally demanded that the Socialists abandon politics and "go among the people." A large number of energetic and talented persons undertook to carry out this programme, but practice convinced them of the naïveté of the idea that the instincts of the muzhik were communistic. Incidentally, it was decided that it was not the muzhik who was to blame, but the government—and the whole of the work was then concentrated on fighting the government, a fight that was now waged by the intellectuals alone, sometimes joined by *workers*. At first this fight was waged in the name of Socialism and was based on the theory that the people were ready for Socialism and that it would be possible, merely by seizing power,

to bring about not only a political revolution but a social revolution as well. Lately, however, this theory is apparently losing all credit, and the struggle the *Narodnaya Volya* waged against the government is being turned into a struggle of the radicals for political liberty.

Hence, from the other side too, the work led to results diametrically opposite to the point from which it started; from this side, too, there emerged a programme which expressed only the interests of the radical bourgeois democracy. Strictly speaking, this process is not yet complete, but it seems to be already clearly defined. This development of Narodism was quite natural and inevitable, because the doctrine was based on the purely mythical idea of a special (communal) form of peasant economy; the myth dissolved when it came into contact with reality, and peasant Socialism was transformed into radical-democratic representation of the petty-bourgeois peasantry.

I will give examples showing the evolution of the democrat:

"We must see to it," argues Mr. Krivenko, "that instead of a universal man we do not get an all-Russian jellyfish filled only with a vague ferment of good sentiments but incapable either of real self-sacrifice or of doing anything durable in life."

The moralising is excellent, but let us see what it applies to. "In regard to the latter," continues Mr. Krivenko, "I am acquainted with the following vexatious fact": in the south of Russia there lived some young people

"who were inspired by the very best intentions and by a love for the little brother; they showed the greatest attention and respect for the muzhik; they gave him precedence over almost everybody; they ate out of one dish with him; they treated him to jam and biscuits; they paid him higher prices than others did; they gave him money—as loans, or as tips, or without any pretext at all; they told him about European ways and European associations, etc. In the same locality there lived a young German named Schmidt, the manager of an estate, or rather a simple gardener, a man without any humanitarian ideas, a real, narrow, formal, German soul [*sic*??!], etc.

Three or four years passed, and these people separated and went their different ways. Another twenty years passed, and the author, visiting the locality again, learned that "Mr. Schmidt" (as a reward for his useful activities gardener Schmidt had been promoted to Mr. Schmidt) had taught the peasants how to cultivate vineyards, from which they obtain "a certain income," 75 to 100 rubles a year, and

for which they had preserved "kind memories" of him, whereas of the "gentlemen who merely cherished kind sentiments for the muzhik but did nothing substantial [!] for him, not even the memory was left."

A calculation shows that the events described occurred about 1869-70, that is, roughly at the time when the Russian Socialist-Narodniks tried to introduce into Russia the most advanced and most important feature of "European ways"—the International.

Clearly, the impression created by Mr. Krivenko's account is a little too harsh, and so he hastens to make the reservation:

"I do not want to suggest, of course, that Schmidt is better than these gentlemen. I merely point out why, for all his defects, he left a more lasting impression in the locality and on the population. [“I do not say that he is better, I say that he left a more lasting impression”—what nonsense is this?!] Nor do I say that he did anything important; on the contrary, I cite what he did as an example of a most trifling, incidental deed, which cost him nothing, but which was undoubtedly vital for all that.”

His reservation, as you see, is a very ambiguous one, but that is not the point; the point is that the author, in contrasting the fruitlessness of one form of activity with the success of the other, apparently does not suspect that there is a fundamental difference between the trends of these two forms of activity. This is the salt that lends piquancy to the story, which so characteristically brings out the features of the contemporary democrat.

The young men who talked to the muzhik about "European ways and European associations" obviously wanted to rouse in the muzhik a desire to alter the form of social life (the conclusion I draw may be wrong in this instance, but everyone will agree, I think, that it is a legitimate one, for it follows inevitably from Mr. Krivenko's story quoted above), they wanted to rouse him for the social revolution against present-day society, which gives rise to such shameful exploitation and oppression of the toilers—alongside with universal rejoicing over all sorts of liberal progress. "Mr Schmidt," however, true husbandman that he was, merely wanted to help other husbandmen to improve their husbandry—and nothing more. How can any comparison be made between these two trends of activity, which have diametrically opposite aims? Why, it is like comparing the failure of a person who tried to destroy a given system with the success of a

person who tried to bolster it up! In order to draw a comparison that would have any sense at all, he should have inquired why the efforts of the young men who went among the people to rouse the peasants for revolution were so unsuccessful—whether it was not due to the fact that they erroneously believed that it was the “peasants” who represented the toiling and exploited population, whereas in fact the peasantry is not a separate class (an illusion which can only be explained by the reflected influence of the epoch of the fall of serfdom, when the peasantry was indeed a *class*, but a class of serf society), for bourgeois and proletarian classes are forming within it—in a word, he should have examined the old Socialist theories and the Social-Democratic criticism of these theories. But instead, Mr. Krivenko exerts himself to the utmost to prove that “Mr. Schmidt’s” deed was “undoubtedly vital.” But my dear “friend of the people,” why hammer at an open door? Whoever doubts it? To cultivate a vineyard and get an income of 75 or 100 rubles per annum from it—what could be more vital?<sup>1</sup>

And the author goes on to explain that if one farmer lays out a vineyard, that is isolated activity; but if several farmers do so, that is common and widespread activity, which converts a small affair into a real and proper one; *for example*, A. N. Engelhardt, who not only used phosphates on his own farm, but induced others to do the same.

Now isn’t this democrat magnificent!

We will quote another example, taken from the arguments about the peasant reform. What was the attitude towards it of a democrat of the above-mentioned epoch, when democracy and Socialism were undivided, namely, Chernyshevsky? Unable to express his opinion openly, he *remained silent*, but in a circumlocutory way he described the contemplated reform as follows:

*“Let us assume that I was interested in taking measures to protect the provisions out of which your dinner is made. It goes without saying that if I were prompted to do so by my kind disposition towards you, then my zeal*

<sup>1</sup> You should have tried to suggest this “vital” deed to the young men who talked to the muzhik about European associations! You would have got a welcome and a reply that you did not bargain for! You would have been as mortally terrified of their ideas as you are now terrified of materialism and dialectics!

would be based on the assumption that the provisions belonged to you and that the dinner prepared from these provisions would be wholesome and beneficial for you. Imagine my feelings, then, when I learn that the provisions do not belong to you at all, and that for every dinner prepared from them you are charged a price WHICH NOT ONLY EXCEEDS THE COST OF THE DINNER [this was written before the Reform. And Messieurs the Yuzhakova assert now that the fundamental principle of the Reform was to give security to the peasants!!] BUT WHICH GENERALLY YOU ARE UNABLE TO PAY WITHOUT EXTREME HARDSHIP. What thoughts will enter my head when I make such strange discoveries? . . . How stupid I was to worry about a matter for whose usefulness the conditions were not provided! Who but a fool would take measures to preserve property in certain hands without first satisfying himself that the property will pass into those hands, and on favourable terms? . . . Far better if these provisions were wasted, for they can ONLY CAUSE HARM to my dear friend! Far better ABANDON THE WHOLE BUSINESS THAT WILL ONLY CAUSE YOUR RUIN!"

I have emphasised the passages which most strikingly reveal how profoundly and splendidly Chernyshevsky understood the realities of his time, how well he understood what the payments the peasants had to make meant, and how well he understood the antagonisms between the social classes in Russia. It is also important to note his ability to expound such purely revolutionary ideas in the censored press. He wrote the same thing in his illegal works, but without this circumlocution. In *A Prologue to a Prologue*, Volgin (into whose mouth Chernyshevsky puts his own ideas) says:

*"Let the cause of emancipation of the peasants be placed in the hands of the landlords' party. It won't make much difference."*<sup>1</sup>

And in reply to the remark of his interlocutor that, on the contrary, the difference would be tremendous, because the landlords' party was opposed to allotting land to the peasants, he says very emphatically:

*"No, not tremendous, but insignificant. It would be tremendous if the peasants obtained land without having to buy it out. There is a difference between taking a thing from a man and leaving it with him, but there is no difference if you take payment for it from him. The difference between the plan of the landlords' party and the plan of the progressives is that the former is simpler and briefer. For that reason it is even better. Less red tape and, in all probability, fewer burdens on the peasants. THOSE PEASANTS WHO HAVE MONEY WILL BUY LAND. AS TO THOSE WHO HAVE NO MONEY—WHAT'S THE USE OF COMPELLING THEM TO BUY LAND? IT WILL ONLY RUIN THEM. BUYING OUT IN INSTALMENTS IS BUYING ALL THE SAME."*

<sup>1</sup>I quote from Plekhanov's article "N. G. Chernyshevsky," in *Sotsial-Demokrat*.

It required the genius of a Chernyshevsky to understand so clearly at that time, when the Peasant Reform was being introduced (when its significance had not yet been properly elucidated even in Western Europe), that its character was fundamentally bourgeois, that even at that time Russian "society" and the Russian "state" were ruled and governed by social classes which were irreconcilably hostile to the toilers and which undoubtedly predetermined the ruin and expropriation of the peasantry. Moreover, Chernyshevsky understood that the existence of a government that screens our antagonistic social relations is a terrible evil, which makes the position of the toilers ever so much worse.

*"To tell the truth,"* Volgin continues, *"it would be better if they were emancipated without land."* (That is, since the serf-owning landlords are so strong, it would be better if they acted openly, straightforwardly, and said all that they had in mind, rather than conceal their serf-owning interests behind the compromises of a hypocritical absolute government.)

*"The thing is being put in such a way that I can see no reason for getting excited even over whether the peasants are emancipated or not, let alone whether it is the liberals who emancipate them or the landlords. To my mind, there is no difference. The landlords would even be better."*

Here is a passage from "An Unaddressed Letter":

*"They say: emancipate the peasants... Where are the forces that can do this? Those forces do not exist yet. It is useless taking up a cause when the forces for it are lacking. You see what it is leading to: they will begin to emancipate. As to what will come of it— judge for yourselves what comes of taking up a cause that is beyond one's powers. The cause will be damaged—it will end vilely."*

Chernyshevsky understood that the Russian serf-owning, bureaucratic state was incapable of emancipating the peasants, that is, of overthrowing the serf-owners, that it was only capable of something "vile," of a miserable compromise between the interests of the liberals (buying out in instalments is buying all the same) and the landlords, a compromise calculated to deceive the peasants with the illusion of security and freedom, but which would in fact ruin them and place them at the mercy of the landlords. And he protested, cursed the Reform, wanted it to fail, wanted the govern-

ment to get entangled in its equilibristic attempts to satisfy the liberals and the landlords, and so hasten a collapse that would put Russia on the high road of an open class struggle.

And now, when Chernyshevsky's brilliant predictions have been realised, when the history of the past thirty years has ruthlessly swept aside all economic and political illusions, our contemporary "democrats" wax eloquent over the Reform, regard it as a sanction for "popular" industry, contrive to draw proof from it of the possibility of finding a way which would *get around* the social classes that are hostile to the toilers. I repeat, their attitude towards the Peasant Reform is the most striking proof how profoundly bourgeois our democrats have become. These gentlemen have learned nothing, but they have forgotten a great deal.

For the sake of comparison, I will take *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* for 1872. I have already quoted passages from the article, "The Plutocracy and its Foundations," which dealt with the successes in respect to liberalism (which serves to conceal plutocratic interests) attained by Russian society in the very first decade after the "great emancipatory" Reform.

"While formerly," says the author in the mentioned article, "people were often to be found who whined over reforms and wailed for the good old times, they are not to be found any longer. Everybody is pleased with the new order of things; everybody is happy and tranquil."

And the author goes on to say that literature "itself is becoming an organ of the plutocracy," advocating the interests and desires of the plutocracy "under the cloak of democracy." Examine this argument a little more closely. The author is displeased with the fact that "everybody" is satisfied with the new order of things brought about by the Reform; that "everybody" (the representatives of "society" and of the "intelligentsia," of course, not of the toilers) is happy and tranquil, notwithstanding the obviously antagonistic, bourgeois features of the new order of things: people fail to observe that liberalism merely serves to screen "freedom of acquisition," acquisition, of course, at the expense and to the disadvantage of the mass of the toilers. And he protests. It is precisely this protest, which is characteristic of the Socialist, that is valuable in his argument. Observe that this protest against a plutocracy masked by democracy

contradicts the general theory of the magazine: they deny that there are any bourgeois features, elements or interests in the Peasant Reform, they deny the class character of the Russian intelligentsia and of the Russian state, they deny that there is a soil for capitalism in Russia—nevertheless, they cannot but sense and perceive capitalism and bourgeoisdom. And to the extent that *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*, sensing the antagonisms in Russian society, fought bourgeois liberalism and democracy—to that extent it fought a cause common to all our pioneer Socialists, who, although they could not understand these antagonisms, nevertheless realised their existence and desired to fight the very organisation of society which gave rise to them; to that extent *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* was progressive (from the point of view of the proletariat, of course). The “friends of the people” have forgotten these antagonisms, they have lost all sense of the fact that “under the cloak of democracy” a pure-blooded bourgeois lies concealed in Holy Russia too; and that is why they are now reactionary (in relation to the proletariat), for they try to obscure the antagonisms, and talk, not of struggle, but of conciliatory, cultural activity.

But, gentlemen, did the Russian clear-browed liberal, the democratic representative of the plutocracy in the 'sixties, cease to be the ideologist of the bourgeoisie in the 'nineties just because his brow became clouded with civic grief?

Does “freedom of acquisition” on a large scale, freedom to acquire big credits, big capital, big technical improvements, cease to be liberal, *i.e.*, bourgeois—assuming that the present economic relations of society remain unchanged—merely because its place is taken by the freedom to acquire small credits, small capital, small technical improvements?

I repeat, it is not that they have changed their opinions under the influence of a radical change of views or a radical change in the order of things. No, they have simply forgotten.

Having lost this feature, the only feature that at one time made their predecessors progressive, notwithstanding the utter unsoundness of their theories and their naïve and utopian outlook on reality, the “friends of the people” learnt absolutely nothing throughout the whole of this period. And yet, quite apart from a political-



economic analysis of Russian conditions, the mere political history of Russia during the past thirty years should have taught them a great deal.

At the time, in the epoch of the " 'sixties," the power of the serf-owners was undermined: they suffered, not final defeat, it is true, but such a decisive defeat that they had to slink from the stage. The liberals, on the contrary, raised their heads. Streams of liberal phrasemongering began to flow about progress, science, virtue, combating injustice, national interests, national conscience, national forces, etc., etc.—the very phrases which now too our radical snivelers, at moments of particular depression, vomit forth in their salons, and our liberal phrasemongers at anniversary dinners and in the columns of their magazines and newspapers. The liberals have proved to be so strong that they have remoulded the "new order of things" in their own way, not entirely, of course, but in a fair measure. Although the "clear light of the open class struggle" did not shine in Russia at that time either, nevertheless it was brighter than it is now, so that even those ideologists of the toiling classes who had not the faintest idea of this class struggle, and who preferred to dream of a better future rather than *explain* the vile present, could not help seeing that liberalism was a cloak for the plutocracy, and that the new order of things was a bourgeois order. It was the fact that the serf-owners had been removed from the stage and no longer diverted attention to even more crying evils, and no longer prevented the new order of things from being discerned in its (relatively) pure form, that enabled this to be seen. But although the democrats of that time were able to condemn plutocratic liberalism, they were unable to understand and explain it scientifically; they were unable to understand that it was inevitable under the capitalist system of organisation of our social economy; they were unable to understand the progressive character of the new system of life as compared with the old serf system; they were unable to understand the revolutionary role of the proletariat it had created; and they limited themselves to "snorting" at these "liberties" and "humanitarianisms," imagined that bourgeoisdom was something casual, and expected that other social relations in the "popular system" would reveal themselves.

And history showed them these other social relations. The serf-owners, not completely crushed by the Reform, which was so terribly mutilated in their interests, revived (for a time) and strikingly demonstrated what these other social relations, apart from the bourgeois, were, demonstrated it in the form of such unbridled, incredibly senseless and brutal reaction that our democrats caught fright and subsided, and instead of advancing and remoulding their naïve democracy—which was able to sense bourgeoisdom but was unable to understand it—into Social-Democracy, they retreated, went back to the liberals, and are now proud of the fact that their snivelling . . . that is, their theory and programme I meant to say, is shared by “the whole of the serious and respectable press.” One would have thought that the lesson was a very convincing one: the illusions of the old Socialists concerning a special system of life of the people, the socialistic instincts of the people, and the casual character of capitalism and the bourgeoisie, had become too obvious; one would have thought that it was now time to look facts straight in the face and openly admit that no social and economic relations except bourgeois and moribund serf relations have existed or do exist in Russia, and that, therefore, there can be no road to Socialism except through the working-class movement. But these democrats learned nothing, and the naïve illusions of petty-bourgeois Socialism gave way to the practical sobriety of petty-bourgeois progress.

Now the theories of these ideologists of the petty bourgeoisie, when they come forward as representatives of the interests of the toilers, are positively reactionary. They obscure the antagonisms of contemporary Russian social and economic relations and argue as if things could be improved by general measures, measures applying to all, for “raising,” “improving,” etc., and as if it were possible to reconcile and unite. They are reactionary because they depict our state as something standing above classes, and therefore fit and capable of rendering serious and honest aid to the exploited population.

Finally, they are reactionary because they totally fail to understand the necessity for a struggle, a desperate struggle on the part of the toilers themselves for their emancipation. According to the

"friends of the people," for example, they can most likely manage the whole thing themselves. The workers need not worry. Why, an engineer even visited the offices of *Russkoye Bogatstvo*, and they nearly worked out one complete "scheme" for "introducing capitalism into the life of the people." Socialists must break ONCE AND FOR ALL with all petty-bourgeois ideas and theories—THAT IS THE PRINCIPAL USEFUL LESSON to be drawn from this campaign.

I want you to note that I speak of breaking with petty-bourgeois ideas and not of breaking with the "friends of the people" and with their ideas—because there can be no breaking with that with which there has never been any connection. The "friends of the people" are only one of the representatives of one of the trends of this sort of petty-bourgeois Socialist ideas. And if, in this case, I draw the conclusion that it is necessary to break with petty-bourgeois Socialist ideas, with the ideas of the old Russian peasant Socialism *generally*, it is because the campaign now launched against the Marxists by the representatives of the old ideas, who have been scared by the growth of Marxism, has induced them to depict the petty-bourgeois ideas in particularly thorough and bold relief. Comparing these ideas with modern Socialism and with the facts of modern Russian life, we see with astonishing clarity how empty these ideas have become, how they have lost all integral theoretical basis and sunk to the level of pitiful eclecticism, to the level of an ordinary, opportunist uplift programme. It may be said that this is not the fault of the old ideas of Socialism generally, but of these particular gentlemen, whom no one even thinks of classing with the Socialists; but it seems to me that such an argument would be quite unsound. I have everywhere tried to show that such a degeneration of the old theories was inevitable, I have everywhere tried to devote as little space as possible to criticism of these gentlemen in particular and as much space as possible to the general and fundamental theses of the old Russian Socialism. And if any Socialists should find that I have not stated these theses properly, accurately or fully, my reply to them would be the most humble request: please, gentlemen, state them yourselves, state them as fully as they should be!

Indeed, no one would be more pleased to enter into a polemic with the Socialists than the Social-Democrats.

Do you really think that we find any pleasure in replying to the "polemics" of these people, or that we would have undertaken it if there had not been a direct, persistent and emphatic challenge on their part?

Do you really think that we do not have to force ourselves to read, re-read and delve into the meaning of this repulsive mixture of official-liberal phrasemongering and philistine moralising?

Surely, we are not to blame for the fact that only such people now take it upon themselves to justify and expound these ideas. I want you to note also that I speak of the necessity of breaking with the petty-bourgeois ideas of *Socialism*. The petty-bourgeois theories we have discussed are ABSOLUTELY reactionary INASMUCH AS they are put forward as Socialist theories.

But if we understand that there is absolutely nothing socialistic about these theories, that is, that they absolutely fail to explain the exploitation of the toilers and are therefore absolutely useless as a means for their emancipation, that as a matter of fact all these theories reflect and further the interests of the petty bourgeoisie—then our attitude towards them must be different, and we must ask: *What should be the attitude of the working class towards the petty bourgeoisie and its programme?* And it will be impossible to reply to this question unless the dual character of this class is taken into consideration (in Russia this duality is particularly marked owing to the fact that the antagonism between the big bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie is less developed). This class is progressive in so far as it puts forward general democratic demands, *i.e.*, fights all survivals of the epoch of mediævalism and serfdom; it is reactionary in so far as it fights to preserve its status as a petty bourgeoisie and to retard, to turn back the general development of the country in the bourgeois direction. Reactionary demands of this kind, such as, for example, the notorious demand for the inalienability of allotments, as well as the many other projects for instituting guardianship over the peasants, are usually put forward on the plausible pretext of protecting the toilers; as a matter of fact, of course, they only make their condition worse, while at the same time hampering them in their struggle for emancipation. A strict distinction must be drawn between these two sides of the petty-

bourgeois programme and, while denying that these theories in any way bear a socialistic character, and while combating their reactionary sides, we must not forget their democratic part. I will quote an example to show that the fact that the Marxists completely repudiate petty-bourgeois theories does not prevent them from including democracy in their programme, but, on the contrary, calls for stronger insistence on democracy than ever. We have mentioned above the three main theses that formed the stock-in-trade of the representatives of petty-bourgeois Socialism, *viz.*, lack of land, high payments and the tyranny of the administration.

There is absolutely nothing socialistic in the demand for the abolition of these evils, for they do not in the least explain the causes of expropriation and exploitation, and their removal would not in the least affect the oppression of labour by capital. But the removal of these evils would purge this oppression of the mediæval remnants that serve to aggravate it, and would facilitate the direct struggle of the worker against capital, and for that reason, as a democratic demand, would be energetically supported by the workers. Generally speaking, the question of payments and taxes is one to which only the petty bourgeois can attach any particular importance; but in Russia the payments made by the peasants are, in many respects, simply survivals of feudalism. Such, for example, are the land payments, which should be immediately and unconditionally abolished; such, too, are those taxes which the peasants and the urban petty bourgeois pay, but from which the "nobility" are exempt. Social-Democrats will always support demands for the removal of these survivals of mediæval relations, which cause economic and political stagnation. The same thing must be said in regard to lack of land. I have already stopped at length to prove the bourgeois character of the complaints on this score. However, there is no doubt, for example, that the land enclosures permitted under the Peasant Reform positively robbed the peasants for the benefit of the landlords and rendered service to this tremendous reactionary force both directly (by seizing the peasants' lands) and indirectly (by the artful demarcation of the peasant allotments). And Social-Democrats will most strenuously insist on the immediate return to the peasants of the land of which they have been deprived, and on the complete

expropriation of the landed estates—that bulwark of serf institutions and traditions. This latter point, which coincides with the nationalisation of the land, contains nothing socialistic, because the farmer system, which is already arising in this country, would only be brought to more rapid and abundant fruition thereby; but it is extremely important in the democratic sense as the only measure that can finally break the power of the landed nobility. Finally, only people like Messrs. Yuzhakov and V. V., of course, can assert that the unfranchised state of the peasants is the cause of their expropriation and exploitation; but not only is the tyranny of the administration over the peasantry an unquestionable fact; it is something more than mere tyranny; it is treating the peasants as the “base rabble,” who by their very nature must be subject to the noble landlords, who are granted common civic rights only as a special favour (resettlement,<sup>1</sup> for example), and whom any pompadour can order about as if they were workhouse inmates. And the Social-Democrats unreservedly associate themselves with the demand for the complete restoration of civic rights to the peasants, the complete abolition of all the privileges of the nobility, the abolition of the bureaucratic tutelage over the peasantry, and self-government for the peasantry.

Generally speaking, the Russian Communists, the adherents of Marxism, are entitled to call themselves SOCIAL-DEMOCRATS more than anyone else, and in their activities they should never forget the enormous importance of DEMOCRACY.<sup>2</sup>

In Russia, the remnants of mediæval, semi-feudal institutions are still so very strong (as compared with Western Europe), they im-

<sup>1</sup> One cannot help recalling the purely Russian serf-owner insolence with which Mr. Yermolov, now Minister of Agriculture, objects to resettlement in his book *Bad Harvests and National Poverty*. It cannot be regarded as rational from the point of view of the state, he says, when in European Russia the landlords are suffering from a shortage of labour. And, indeed, what do the peasants exist for, if not by their labour to feed the idle landlords and their “high-placed” servitors!

<sup>2</sup> This is a very important point. Plekhanov is quite right when he says that our revolutionaries have “two enemies: old prejudices that have not yet been entirely eradicated, on the one hand, and a narrow conception of the new programme, on the other.” See Appendix III (p. 604 in this volume—*Ed.*)

pose such a heavy yoke upon the proletariat and upon the people generally, retarding the growth of political thought in all ranks and classes, that one cannot refrain from insisting how tremendously important it is for the workers to combat all feudal institutions, absolutism, the social estates and the bureaucracy. It must be explained to the worker in the greatest possible detail what a terrible, reactionary force these institutions are, how they intensify the yoke of capital over labour, how they degrade the workers, how they maintain capital in its mediæval forms, which, while conceding nothing to the modern, industrial forms as far as the exploitation of labour is concerned, add to this exploitation enormous difficulties in the struggle for emancipation. The workers must know that unless these pillars of reaction<sup>1</sup> are overthrown it will be utterly impossible for them to wage a successful struggle against the bourgeoisie, because as long as they exist the Russian rural proletariat, whose support is an essential condition for the victory of the working class, will never cease to be a downtrodden and cowed creature, capable only of acts of sullen desperation and not of sensible and persistent protest and struggle. And therefore it is the direct duty of the working class to fight side by side with the radical democracy against absolutism and the reactionary estates and institutions—and the

<sup>1</sup> A particularly imposing reactionary institution, one to which our revolutionaries have paid relatively small attention, is our national *bureaucracy*, which *de facto* rules the Russian state. Its ranks filled mainly by commoners, this bureaucracy is both in origin and in the purpose and character of its activities profoundly bourgeois, but absolutism and the enormous political privileges of the landed nobility have lent it particularly harmful qualities. It is a permanent weathercock which regards its supreme task as being to combine the interests of the landlord and the bourgeois. It is a Yudushka, who uses his feudal sympathies and connections to fool the workers and peasants and, on the pretext of "protecting the economically weak" and acting as their "guardian" against the kulak and usurer, resorts to measures which reduce the toilers to the position of a "base rabble," completely delivering them into the hands of the feudal landlord and making them more defenceless against the bourgeoisie. It is a most dangerous hypocrite, who, having learned from the experience of the West European masters of reaction, skilfully conceals its Arakcheyev designs behind the fig-leaf of talk about love of the people. [Yudushka is a character in Shchedrin's *The Golovlyov Family*, typifying the pious hypocrite; Arakcheyev was a favourite of Alexander I, a military despot, typifying brutal reaction.—*Trans.*

Social-Democrats must impress this upon the workers, while not for a moment ceasing to impress upon them that the struggle against these institutions is necessary only as a means of facilitating the struggle against the bourgeoisie, that the achievement of general democratic demands is necessary for the worker only as a means of clearing the road to victory over the chief enemy of the toilers, over an institution which is purely democratic by nature, *viz.*, *capital*, which here in Russia is particularly inclined to sacrifice its democracy and to enter into alliance with the reactionaries in order to suppress the workers and to still further retard the rise of a labour movement.

What has been said, I think, is sufficient to define the attitude of the Social-Democrats towards absolutism and political liberty, and also towards the tendency, which has been growing particularly strong of late, to "amalgamate" and "unite" all the revolutionary factions for the winning of political liberty.

This is a rather peculiar and characteristic tendency.

It is peculiar because the proposal for "unity" does not come from a definite group or groups, with definite programmes which coincide in this point and that. If it did, the question of unity could be decided in each separate case; it would be a concrete question that could be decided by the representatives of the uniting groups. Then there would not have been a special tendency advocating "amalgamation." But such a tendency does exist, and it originates simply with people who have left the old, but have not yet joined anything new. The theory on which the fighters against absolutism have hitherto based themselves is obviously crumbling and is also destroying the conditions of solidarity and organisation which are essential for the struggle. And so, these "amalgamators" and "uniters" seem to think that it is the easiest thing to create such a theory, and reduce it all to a protest against absolutism and a demand for political liberty, while evading all other questions, Socialist and non-Socialist. It goes without saying that this naïve fallacy will inevitably be refuted at the very first attempts at such union.

But this tendency to "amalgamation" is characteristic because it expresses one of the latest stages in the process of transformation



of militant, revolutionary Narodism into radical political democracy, which process I have tried to outline above. It will be possible to firmly unite all the non-Social-Democratic revolutionary groups under the banner mentioned only when a durable programme of *democratic* demands has been drawn up, which will put an end to the old prejudices concerning the peculiar position of Russia. Of course, the Social-Democrats believe that the formation of such a democratic party would be a useful forward step; and their work of opposing Narodism should help to facilitate the formation of such a party, should help to facilitate the eradication of all prejudices and myths, the grouping of all Socialists under the banner of Marxism and the formation of a democratic party by the other groups.

And the Social-Democrats could not, of course, "amalgamate" with such a party, for they consider it necessary to organise the workers into an independent workers' party; but the workers would most strenuously support any struggle the democrats put up against reactionary institutions.

The degeneration of Narodism to the level of a very ordinary theory of petty-bourgeois radicalism—which degeneration is so strikingly demonstrated by the "friends of the people"—shows how serious is the mistake committed by those who call upon the workers to fight absolutism without at the same time explaining to them the antagonistic character of our social relations, as a consequence of which even the ideologists of the bourgeoisie stand for political liberty, and without explaining to them the historical role of the Russian worker as the champion of the emancipation of all the toilers. The Social-Democrats are often accused of wanting to monopolise Marx's theory, whereas, it is argued, his economic theory is accepted by all Socialists. But the question arises, what is the use of explaining to the workers the form of value, the nature of the bourgeois system and the revolutionary role of the proletariat, if here in Russia the exploitation of the toilers is generally and everywhere attributed not to the bourgeois system of organisation of social economy, but, say, to lack of land, payments, and the tyranny of the administration?

What is the use of expounding the theory of the class struggle to the worker, if that theory cannot even explain his relations to the

factory-owner (capitalism in Russia is artificially implanted by the government), not to mention the mass of the "people," who do not belong to the newly-arisen class of factory workers?

How can one accept Marx's economic theory and its corollary, the revolutionary role of the proletariat as the organiser of Communism through the medium of capitalism, if one tries to find ways to Communism other than through capitalism and the proletariat it has created?

Obviously, to call upon the worker to fight for political liberty under such conditions would be equivalent to calling upon him to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for the progressive bourgeoisie. For it cannot be denied (it is significant that even the Narodniks and the followers of *Narodnaya Volya* did not deny it) that political liberty will primarily serve the interests of the bourgeoisie and will not improve the conditions of the workers, but . . . only the conditions for their struggle . . . *against this very bourgeoisie*. I say this as against those Socialists who, while they do not accept the theory of the Social-Democrats, carry on agitation among the workers, having become convinced empirically that only among the latter can revolutionary elements be found. The theory of these Socialists contradicts their practice, and they make the very serious mistake of distracting the workers from their direct task of ORGANISING A SOCIALIST WORKERS' PARTY.<sup>1</sup>

This mistake naturally arose at a time when the class antagonisms of bourgeois society were as yet quite undeveloped, when they were suppressed by serfdom, when the latter gave rise to a unanimous protest and struggle on the part of the whole of the intelligentsia, which created the illusion that our intelligentsia was particularly

<sup>1</sup> There are two ways of arriving at the conclusion that the worker must be roused to fight absolutism: *either* by regarding the worker as the only champion of the Socialist system, and therefore regarding political freedom as one of the means of facilitating his struggle. That is the attitude of the Social-Democrats. *Or* by appealing to him simply as the man who suffers most from the present system, who has nothing more to lose and who can most determinedly take up the cudgels against absolutism. But that will mean compelling the worker to drag at the tail of the bourgeois radicals, who refuse to see the antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie because of the solidarity of the whole "people" against absolutism,

democratic and that there was no profound diversity between the ideas of the liberals and those of the Socialists. Now, however, when economic development has advanced so far that even those who formerly denied that there was a soil for the development of capitalism in Russia admit that it is precisely the capitalist path of development that we have entered on, illusions on this score are no longer possible. The composition of the "intelligentsia" is being defined just as clearly as the composition of a society engaged in the production of material values: while the latter is ruled and governed by the capitalist, the "tone" in the former is set by the rapidly growing horde of careerists and bourgeois hirelings, an "intelligentsia" which is contented and quiet, which is a stranger to all wild fantasies and which knows very well what it wants. Far from denying this, our radicals and liberals strongly emphasise it and strain every nerve to prove how immoral it is, condemn it, strive to confound it, to shame it . . . and to destroy it. These naïve efforts to make the bourgeois intelligentsia *ashamed* of being bourgeois are as ridiculous as the efforts of our philistine economists to frighten our bourgeoisie (pleading the experience of "elder brothers") by warning them that they are making for the ruin of the people, the poverty, unemployment and starvation of the masses; this sitting in judgment on the bourgeoisie and its ideologists is reminiscent of the court which was held on the pike and which condemned it to death by drowning! Beyond these stand the liberal and radical "intelligentsia," who pour out streams of phrases about progress, science, truth, the people, etc., and who love to lament the passing of the 'sixties, when there was no discord, depression, despondency and apathy, and when all hearts were fired by democracy.

With their characteristic simplicity, these gentlemen refuse to understand that the unanimity that then prevailed was called forth by the material conditions of the time, which can never return: serfdom oppressed all equally—the serf bailiff, who had saved up a bit of money and wanted to live in contentment; the thrifty muzhik, who hated the landlord because of the dues he had to pay him, and because he interfered in his business and tore him from his work; the proletarian domestics and the impoverished muzhik, who was sold into bondage to the merchant; all suffered from serfdom;

the merchant, the manufacturer, the worker, the handicraftsman and the artisan. The only tie that linked all these people together was the fact that they were all hostile to serfdom; beyond that unanimity, the sharpest economic antagonisms began. How one must lull oneself with sweet illusions to fail to this day to perceive these antagonisms—which have become so enormously developed—and to weep for the return of the times of unanimity when the realities of the situation demand struggle, demand that everyone who does not desire to be a WILLING or UNWILLING time-server of the bourgeoisie shall take his stand on the side of the proletariat!

If you refuse to believe the pompous phrases about the “interests of the people” and try to delve deeper into the matter, you will find that you are dealing with the purest ideologists of the petty bourgeoisie, who dream of improving, supporting and restoring their (“popular” in their jargon) economy by various innocent progressive measures, and who are totally incapable of understanding that, the relations of production being what they are, the only effect of these measures can be to proletarianise the masses still more. We cannot but be grateful to the “friends of the people” for having done so much to reveal the class character of our intelligentsia and thus to fortify the Marxists’ theory that our small producers are petty-bourgeois. They must inevitably hasten the disappearance of the old illusions and myths that have so long confused the minds of the Russian Socialists. The “friends of the people” have so mauled, vulgarised and soiled these theories that the Russian Socialists who held them are confronted with a dilemma—either to revise them, or to abandon them altogether and leave them to the exclusive use of the gentlemen who with smug solemnity announce *urbi et orbi* that the rich peasants are buying improved implements, and who with serious mien assure us that we must welcome people who have grown tired of sitting around green baize tables. And they talk in the same strain about a “popular system” and the “intelligentsia”; they talk about them not only with a serious air, but in pretentious, pompous phrases about broad ideals, about an ideal treatment of the problems of life! . . .

The Socialist intelligentsia can expect to perform fruitful work only when it abandons illusions and begins to seek support in the

actual and not the desired development of Russia, in the actual and not the possible economic relations of society. Moreover, its THEORETICAL work must be directed towards *the concrete study of all forms of economic antagonism in Russia, the study of their connections and sequence of development*; it must *expose these antagonisms wherever they have been concealed by political history, by the peculiarities of legal systems and by established theoretical prejudices*. It must *present an integral picture of our conditions as a definite system of relations of production, it must show that the exploitation and expropriation of the toilers are inevitable under this system, and must show the way out of this system that economic development indicates*.

This theory, based on a detailed study of Russian history and conditions, must meet the requirements of the proletariat—and if it satisfies the requirements of science, then every awakening of the protesting thought of the proletariat will inevitably guide this thought into the channels of Social-Democracy. The more the building up of this theory advances, the more rapidly will Social-Democracy grow; for even the most artful guardians of the present system will be unable to prevent the awakening of the thought of the proletariat, because this very system necessarily and inevitably leads to the intensified expropriation of the producers, to the continuous growth of the proletariat and of its reserve army of labour, simultaneously with the progress of social wealth, the enormous growth of productive forces, and the socialisation of labour by capitalism. Although a great deal has still to be done to build up this theory, the accomplishment of this task by the Socialists is guaranteed by the spread among them of materialism, the only scientific method, a method which demands that every programme shall be a precise formulation of the actual process; it is guaranteed by the success of Social-Democracy, which has adopted these ideas—a success which has so stirred up our liberals and democrats that, as a certain Marxist puts it, their magazines have ceased to be dull.

In thus emphasising the necessity, importance and immensity of the theoretical work of the Social-Democrats, I have not the least desire to suggest that this work must take precedence over PRACTICAL

work<sup>1</sup>—still less that the latter be postponed until the former is completed. Only those who admire the “subjective method in sociology,” or the followers of utopian Socialism, could arrive at such a conclusion. Of course, if it is presumed that it is the task of Socialists to seek “other [than the actual] paths of development” for the country, then, naturally, practical work becomes possible only when philosophical geniuses discover and indicate these “other paths”; on the other hand, the discovery and indication of these paths will mark the close of theoretical work, and the beginning of the work of those who are to direct the “fatherland” along the “newly discovered” “other path.” The position is altogether different when the task of the Socialists is understood to mean that they must be the ideological leaders of the proletariat in its actual struggle against actual and real enemies, who stand in the *actual* path of present social and economic development. In these circumstances, theoretical and practical work merge into one, which the veteran German Social-Democrat, Liebknecht, aptly described as:

*Studieren, propagandieren, organisieren.*<sup>2</sup>

It is impossible to be an ideological leader without performing the above-mentioned theoretical work, just as it is impossible to be an ideological leader without directing this work to meet the requirements of the cause, and without propagating the results of this theory among the workers and helping to organise them.

Presenting the task in this way will guard Social-Democracy against the defects from which groups of Socialists so frequently suffer, *viz.*, dogmatism and sectarianism.

There can be no dogmatism where the supreme and sole criterion of a doctrine is whether or not it conforms to the actual process of social and economic development; there can be no sectarianism when the task undertaken is to assist in organising the proletariat, and

<sup>1</sup> On the contrary, the practical work of propaganda and agitation must always take precedence, because: (1) theoretical work only provides replies to the problems which practical work raises, and (2) the Social-Democrats, for reasons over which they have no control, are too often compelled to confine themselves to theoretical work not to value highly every moment when practical work becomes possible.

<sup>2</sup> Study, propaganda, organisation—*Trans.*

when, therefore, the role of the "intelligentsia" is to make special leaders from among the intelligentsia unnecessary.

Hence, notwithstanding the differences of opinion that exist among Marxists on various theoretical questions, the methods of their political activity have remained unchanged ever since the group arose.

The political activities of the Social-Democrats consist in assisting the development and organisation of the working-class movement in Russia, in transforming it from the present state of sporadic attempts at protests, "riots" and strikes which lack a guiding idea, into an organised struggle of the **WHOLE** Russian working **CLASS** directed against the bourgeois regime and striving for the expropriation of the expropriators and the abolition of the social system which is based on the oppression of the toilers. At the basis of these activities lies the general conviction of the Marxists that the Russian worker is the sole and natural representative of the whole toiling and exploited population of Russia.<sup>1</sup>

He is the natural representative because *everywhere, by its very nature*, the exploitation of the toilers in Russia is *capitalist exploitation*, if we leave out of account the moribund remnants of serf economy; the only difference is that the exploitation of the mass of producers is on a small scale, scattered and undeveloped, whereas the exploitation of the factory workers is on a large scale, socialised and concentrated. In the former case, exploitation is still enmeshed by mediæval forms, by various political, juridical and social appendages, tricks and devices, which prevent the toiler and his ideologist from perceiving the nature of the system which oppresses him, and from perceiving the way out of this system. In the latter case, on the contrary, exploitation is fully developed and emerges in its pure form, without any confusing trappings. The worker can no longer fail to see that it is *capital* that is oppressing him, and that he must wage the struggle against the bourgeois *class*. And this struggle, which is a struggle for the satisfaction of his immediate

<sup>1</sup> The man of the future in Russia is the muzhik—thought the representatives of peasant Socialism, the Narodniks in the broadest sense of the term. The man of the future in Russia is the worker—think the Social-Democrats. This is how the view of the Marxists was formulated in a certain manuscript.

economic needs, for the improvement of his material conditions, inevitably demands that the workers organise, and the struggle itself inevitably becomes a war not against individuals, but against a *class*, the class which not only in the factories, but everywhere, oppresses the toilers. That is why the factory worker is none other than the foremost representative of the whole of the exploited population. And in order that he may fulfil his function as a representative in an organised and sustained struggle, it is not at all required that he should be carried away by "perspectives"; all that is required is that *he be made to understand his position*, that he be made to understand the political and economic structure of the system that oppresses him and the necessity and inevitability of class antagonisms under this system. The position of the factory worker in the general system of capitalist relations makes him the sole fighter for the emancipation of the working class, because only the higher stage of development of capitalism, large-scale machine industry, creates the material conditions and the social forces necessary for this struggle. In all other places, where the forms of development of capitalism are low, these material conditions are absent: production is fractionalised into thousands of tiny enterprises (and they do not cease to be fractionalised *enterprises* even under the most equalitarian forms of communal landownership), the exploited for the most part still possess tiny enterprises, and for that reason attach themselves to the very bourgeois system which they should be fighting: this retards and hinders the development of the social forces that are capable of overthrowing capitalism. Fractionalised, individual, petty exploitation binds the toilers to a particular place, disunites them, prevents them from appreciating their class solidarity, prevents them from uniting and from understanding that the cause of their exploitation is not any particular individual, but the whole economic system. Large-scale capitalism, on the contrary, inevitably severs all the workers' ties with the old society, with a particular locality and with a particular exploiter; it unites them, compels them to think and puts them in conditions which enable them to commence an organised struggle. It is on the working class that the Social-Democrats concentrate all their attention and all their activities. When its advanced representatives have mastered the ideas of scientific Socialism, the



idea of the historical role of the Russian worker, when these ideas become widespread, and when there arise among the workers durable organisations which will transform the present sporadic economic war of the workers into a conscious class struggle—then the Russian WORKER, rising at the head of all the democratic elements, will overthrow absolutism and lead the RUSSIAN PROLETARIAT (side by side with the proletariat of ALL COUNTRIES) *along the straight road of open political struggle towards the VICTORIOUS COMMUNIST REVOLUTION.*

The End.

1894



**AUTHOR'S APPENDICES TO PART III**  
*What the "Friends of the People" Are  
and How They Fight the Social-Democrats*

CATEGORIES OF HOUSEHOLDS AND THEIR NUMBER		Number of members of households (both sexes) 1	Number of workers (males) 2	Labourers	
				Number of house- holds with la- bourers 3	Number of la- bourers (both sexes) 4
6 rich households	Total . . . . .	47	11	6	8
	Average per household . . .	7.33	1.3	—	—
11 middle households	Total . . . . .	92	26	2	2
	Average per household . . .	8.36	2.4	—	—
7 poor households	Total . . . . .	37	10	2	2
	Average per household . . .	5.28	1.4	—	—
Total—24 households	Total . . . . .	176	47	10	12
	Average per household . . .	7.33	1.9	—	—
2 labourers (in- cluded among poor peasants)	Total . . . . .	9	2	—	—
	Average per household . . .	4.5	1	—	—

Allotted Land (desyatins)	Leased Land		Total tillage (desyatins)	Number of buildings	Number of industrial establishments	Number of implements	Cattle (head of)	
	Households	Desyatins					Draught cattle	Total (expressed in equivalent of large cattle)
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
132.6	6	52.8	123.4	52	4	224	35	81
22.1	—	8.8	20.6	8.6	—	37.3	5.8	13.5
101.2	10	85.5	140.2	70	—	338	40	89.1
9.2	—	7.7	12.7	6.4	—	30.7	3.6	8.1
57.8	4	19.8	49.8	31	—	108	7	15.3
8.5	—	2.8	7.1	4.4	—	15.4	1	2.2
291.6	20	158.1	313.4	153	4	670	82	185.4
12.1	—	6.6	13	6.4	—	27.9	3.4	7.7
14.4	—	—	6.8	6	—	11	—	1.1
7.2	—	—	3.4	3	—	5.5	—	0.5

CATEGORIES OF HOUSEHOLDS AND THEIR NUMBER		Value in			
		Buildings	Other immovable property	Implementments	Utensils
		14	15	16	17
6 rich households	Total . . . . .	2,696	2,237	670.8	453
	Average per household	449.31	372.83	111.80	75.5
11 middle households	Total . . . . .	2,362	318	532.9	435.9
	Average per household	214.73	28.91	48.41	39.63
7 poor households	Total . . . . .	835	90	112.3	254
	Average per household	119.28	12.85	16.04	36.29
Total—24 households	Total . . . . .	5,893	2,645	1,316	1,142.9
	Average per household	245.55	110.21	54.83	47.62
2 labourers (included among poor peasants)	Total . . . . .	155	25	6.4	76.8
	Average per household	77.5	12.5	3.2	38.4

R u b l e s			Arrears in loans (rubles)	Sources of income		
Clothing	Livestock and bees	Total		From agricul ure		From livestock
				Total	Of which grain crops	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
1,294.2	3,076.5	10,427.5	80	61.2% 3,861.7 1,774.4	2,598.2 1,774.4	15.4% 972.6 396.5
215.7	512.75	1,737.91	13.3	643.6	—	162.1
2,094.2	2,907.7	8,650.7	357	60.7% 3,163.8 899.9	2,203.8 899.9	16.1% 837.5 423.2
190.38	264.33	786.42	32.4	287.7	—	76.1
647.1	605.3	2,543.7	233.6	48.7% 689.9 175.25	502.08 175.24	22.9% 324.2 216.6
92.45	86.47	363.38	33.4	98.5	—	46.3
4,035.5	6,589.5	21,621.9	670.6	59.6% 7,715.4 2,849.54	5,304.8 2,849.54	16.5% 2,134.3 1,066.3
168.14	274.56	900.91	27.9	321.5	—	88.9
129.3	9.1	401.6	50	59.5 3	—	5.7 4.8
64.65	4.55	200.8	25	29.75	—	2.85

CATEGORIES OF HOUSEHOLDS AND THEIR NUMBER		Sources of income				
		From bee-keeping and gardening	From trades	From establishments	From various sources	Total (rubles)
		25	26	27	28	29
6 rich households	Total . . . . .	4.3% 271	6.5% 412	5% 320	7.6% 482.2	100% 6,319.5 3,656.1
	Average per household . .	45.2	68.6	53.3	80.4	1,053.2 609.3
11 middle households	Total . . . . .	0.7% 36.1	18.8% 979.3	—	3.7% 195.5	100% 5,212.2 2,534
	Average per household . .	3.2	89	—	17.8	473.8 230
7 poor households	Total . . . . .	1.9 27	23.8% 336.8	—	2.7% 39	100% 1,416.9 794.64
	Average per household . .	3.3	48.1	—	5.5	202.4 113.5
Total 24 households	Total . . . . .	2.6% 334.1	13.3% 1,728.1	2.5% 320	5.5% 716.7	100% 12,948.6 6,984.74
	Average per household . .	13.9	72	13.3	29.9	539.5 291.03
2 labourers (included among poor peasants)	Total . . . . .	—	128.8	—	4	198 140.6
	Average per household . .	—	64.4	—	2	99 70.3



# Distribution of expenditure

## F o o d

Total	Vege- table	Other	Of which		Clothes and domestic needs
			Milk, meat, etc. 33	Salt, vodka, tea 34	
30	31	32	33	34	35
29.2% 1,500.6 218.7	823.8	676.8	561.3 103.2	115.5	8.2% 423.8
250.1	—	—	—	—	70.63
37.6% 1,951.9 257.7	1,337.3 33.4	614.6	534.3 144	80.3	10.6% 548.1 49.5
177.45	—	—	—	—	49.83
42.1% 660.8 253.46	487.7 160.96	173.1	134.4 53.8	38.7	14.6% 229.6 26.8
94.4	—	—	—	—	32.8
34.6% 4,113.3 729.86	2,648.8	1,464.5	1,230	234.5	10.1% 1,201.5 134.9
171.39	110.37	61.02	51.25	9.77	50.06
81.7 50.7	72.1 42.5	9.6	6.1 4.7	3.5	14.9 4.6
40.85	—	—	—	—	7.45

CATEGORIES OF HOUSEHOLDS AND THEIR NUMBER		Dis		
		Mainte- nance of livestock	Imple- ments and livestock	Mainte- nance of workers and shepherds
		30	37	38
6 rich households	Total . . . . .	24.9% 1,276.6	9.4% 484.5	13.5% 691.7
	Average per household . . .	212.76	80.75	115.29
11 middle households	Total . . . . .	21.2% 1,098.2	5% 256	0.9% 47.6
	Average per household . . .	99.84	23.27	4.33
7 poor households	Total . . . . .	15.6% 243.7	7.1% 110.6	1.6% 24.3
	Average per household . . .	34.81	15.8	3.47
Total - 24 households	Total . . . . .	22.2% 2,618.5	7.1% 851.1	6.4% 763.6
	Average per household . . .	109.1	35.46	31.82
2 labourers (included among poor peasants)	Total . . . . .	8	53.2	0.4
	Average per household . . .	4	26.6	0.2

tribution of expenditure					Surplus (+) or deficit (-)
Rent	Taxes and duties	Priests	Miscel- laneous	Total (rubles)	
39	40	41	42	43	44
6.5% 332	4.9% 253.5	1.1% 56	2.3% 116.5	100% 5,135.2 2,211.5	+1,184.3
55.33	42.25	9.33	19.42	855.86 368.6	+197.34
6.8% 351.7	4.9% 254.9	1.3% 69.9	11.7% 609.4	100% 5,187.7 1,896.7	÷24.5
31.97	23.17	6.35	55.4	471.6 172.5	+2.19
6% 94.5	6.5% 101.8	1.8% 28	4.7% 73.2	100% 1,566.5 712.66	-149.6
13.5	14.54	4	10.46	233.78 101.8	-21.38
6.5% 778.2	5.1% 610.2	1.3% 153.9	6.7% 799.1	100% 11,889.4 4,820.86	+1,059.2
32.43	25.43	6.41	33.29	495.39 200.87	+44.11
—	22.6	2.8	3.3	186.9 137.6	+11.1
—	11.3	1.4	1.65	93.45 68.8	+5.55

## Appendix II

Mr. Struve quite rightly takes as the main subject of his criticism of Nik—on the latter's thesis that "Marx's theory of the class struggle and of the state is completely foreign to the Russian political economist." I am not so bold as Mr. Krivenko to judge Mr. Struve's system of views on the basis of this small article (four columns) of his alone (I am not acquainted with his other articles). Nor can I avoid saying that I do not agree with all the statements he makes, and cannot therefore defend his article as a whole, but only certain fundamental propositions that he adduces. At any rate, the circumstance mentioned has been adjudged with profound truth: failure to understand the class struggle inherent in capitalist society is indeed Mr. Nik—on's *basic error*. The correction of this error would alone be sufficient for Social-Democratic conclusions to follow necessarily even from his theoretical statements and investigations. It is quite true that the fact that he has overlooked the class struggle testifies to a gross misunderstanding of Marxism, a misunderstanding for which Mr. Nik—on must all the more be blamed because he would like in general to make himself out to be a strict adherent of Marx's principles. Can anyone with the least knowledge of Marx deny that the doctrine of the class struggle is the focal point of his whole system of views?

Mr. Nik—on might, of course, have accepted Marx's theory with the exception of this point, on the grounds, for example, of its assumed non-conformity with the facts of Russian history and reality. But then, in the first place, he could not possibly have said that Marx's theory explains our order of things; he could not even have spoken of this theory and of capitalism, because it would have been necessary to reconstruct the theory and to work out a concept of a different capitalism, in which antagonistic relations and the struggle of classes would not be inherent. At any rate, he should have made

such a reservation in the fullest detail and explained why, having accepted *A* in Marxism, he refuses to accept *B*. Mr. Nik—on did not even try to do this.

And Mr. Struve quite rightly concluded that Mr. Nik—on's failure to understand the class struggle makes him a *utopian*, for anybody who ignores the class struggle in capitalist society *eo ipso* entirely ignores the real content of the social and political life of this society and, as regards the realisation of what he desires, inevitably condemns himself to hover in the sphere of pious dreams. The failure to understand the class struggle makes him a *reactionary*, for appeals to "society" and to the "state," that is, to the ideologists and politicians of the bourgeoisie, can only confuse the Socialists, lead them to accept the bitterest enemies of the proletariat as allies, and hamper the workers' struggle for emancipation instead of helping to strengthen, elucidate and better organise this struggle.

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Since we have mentioned Mr. Struve's article, we cannot refrain here from dealing with Mr. Nik—on's reply in *Russkoye Bogatstvo*, No. 6.<sup>1</sup>

"It appears," argues Mr. Nik—on, citing facts to show the slow growth in the number of factory workers, a growth which is lagging behind the growth of population, "that in our country capitalism, far from fulfilling its 'historical mission,' is itself setting limits to its own development. That is why incidentally, those who seek 'for their fatherland a path of development different from the one Western Europe has been following' are a thousand times right." (And this is written by a man who admits that Russia is following the same capitalist path!) The reason why Mr. Nik—on considers that this "historical mission" is not being fulfilled is because "an economic tendency (*i.e.*, capitalism) hostile to the community is de-

<sup>1</sup> Generally speaking, Mr. Nik—on, in his articles in *Russkoye Bogatstvo*, endeavours, it seems, to prove that he is not as remote from petty-bourgeois radicalism as one might think; that he too is capable of discerning in the rise of a peasant bourgeoisie (No. 6. p. 118—the spread among the "peasants" of improved implements, phosphates, etc.) symptoms of the fact that "the peasantry itself [the peasantry that is being expropriated in masses?] realises the necessity of escaping from the position it finds itself in."

stroying the very foundations of its existence without bringing that modicum of uniting value which is so characteristic of Western Europe and which is beginning to manifest itself with particular force in North America."

In other words, what we have here is the official argument against the Social-Democrats which was invented by the notorious Mr. V. V., who regarded capitalism from the standpoint of a government official deciding a problem of state, namely, "the introduction of capitalism into the national life": if it is fulfilling its "mission," it may be allowed; if it is not, "stop it!" Apart from all the other virtues of this brilliant argument, the very "mission" of capitalism was understood by Mr. V. V.—and is apparently understood by Mr. Nik—on—in an impossible and preposterously false and narrow way. And again, of course, these gentlemen uncereemoniously attribute the narrowness of their own conception to the Social-Democrats: they can be maligned like the dead, seeing that the legal press is closed to them!

As Marx saw it, the progressive, revolutionary work of capitalism consists in the fact that, by socialising labour, it at the same time "disciplines, unites, organises" the working class by the very mechanism of the process, trains it for the struggle, organises its "revolt," unites it for the "expropriation of the expropriators," for the seizure of political power and for taking over the means of production from the "few usurpers" and turning them over to society (*Capital*, p. 650).<sup>1</sup>

That is how Marx formulates it.

And, of course, there is not even a mention here of "the number of factory workers": it is the concentration of the means of production and the socialisation of labour that is spoken about. It is quite clear that there is nothing in common between these criteria and "the number of factory workers."

But our peculiar interpreters of Marx reinterpreted this to mean that the socialisation of labour under capitalism amounts to the performance of work by factory workers under one roof, and that therefore the degree of progressiveness of the work of capitalism is to be

<sup>1</sup> See *Capital*, Vol. I, pp. 836-37.—*Trans.*

measured by . . . the number of factory workers!!! If the number of factory workers is increasing, then capitalism is doing its progressive work well; if the number is decreasing, then it is "badly fulfilling its historical mission" (p. 103 of Mr. Nik—on's article), and it behoves the "intelligentsia" "to seek different paths for their fatherland."

And so the Russian intelligentsia sets about seeking "different paths." And it has been seeking them for decades, and finding them, trying with might and main to prove<sup>1</sup> that capitalism is a "wrong" development, for it leads to unemployment and crises. We faced a crisis, they say, in 1880, and again in 1893; it is time to leave this path, for evidently things are going badly with us.

But the Russian bourgeoisie "listens but goes on eating": of course things are going "badly" when it is no longer possible to make fabulous profits. And so it sings in chorus with the liberals and radicals and, thanks to liberated and cheaper capital, actively sets about building new railways. Things are going badly with "us" because in the old places "we" have already picked the people clean and we now have to enter the field of industrial capital, which cannot enrich us as much as merchant capital. And so "we" will go to the eastern and northern border regions of European Russia, where "primitive accumulation," which yields hundreds of per cent in profits, is still possible, and where the bourgeois disintegration of the peasantry is still far from complete. The intelligentsia perceives all this and constantly admonishes us that "we" are again making for a collapse. And a new collapse is really approaching. The mass of small capitalists are being ruined by the big capitalists; the mass of peasants are being squeezed out of agriculture, which is increasingly passing into the hands of the bourgeoisie; the sea of poverty, unemployment and death by starvation is growing immense—and the

<sup>1</sup> These arguments are wasted, not because they are wrong—the ruin, impoverishment and starvation of the people are unquestionable and inevitable concomitants of capitalism—but because these arguments are addressed to the thin air. "Society," even under the cloak of democracy, furthers the interests of the plutocracy, and it is not to be expected, of course, that the plutocracy will attack capitalism. The "government" . . . I will cite the comment of an opponent, Mr. N. K. Mikhailovsky: however little we know the programmes of our government, he once wrote, we know them enough to be certain that the "socialisation of labour" is not part of them.

"intelligentsia," with a clear conscience, point to their prophecy and again grumble about the wrong path, trying to prove that the instability of our capitalism is due to the absence of foreign markets.

But the Russian bourgeoisie "listens but goes on eating"; while the "intelligentsia" is seeking for new paths, it is undertaking gigantic railway construction in its colonies, creating a market for itself there, introducing the charms of the bourgeois system to the young countries, there too creating an industrial and agricultural bourgeoisie at a fast rate, and casting the mass of the producers into the ranks of the chronically starving unemployed.

Can it really be that the Socialists will continue to confine themselves to grumbling about wrong paths and try to prove the instability of capitalism . . . by the slow growth in the number of factory workers!?

Before passing to this childish idea,<sup>1</sup> I cannot refrain from mentioning that Mr. Nik—on quoted the criticised passage from Mr. Struve's article very inaccurately. What his article states is literally the following:

"When the author [*i.e.*, Mr. Nik—on] points to the difference in the occupational composition of the Russian and American populations—he says that in Russia 80 per cent of the total gainfully employed population (*erwerbstätigen*) are engaged in agriculture, and in the United States only 44 per cent—he fails to observe that the capitalist development of Russia will tend to obliterate this difference between 80 per cent and 44 per cent; that, one might say, is its historical mission."

It might be said that the word "mission" is very inappropriate here, but Mr. Struve's idea is clear: Mr. Nik—on failed to observe that the capitalist development of Russia (he himself admits that this development is really a capitalist one) will diminish the agricultural population, whereas this is a general law of capitalism. Consequently, in order to dispose of this objection, Mr. Nik—on should have

<sup>1</sup> How can this idea be called anything but childish, when the progressive work of capitalism is determined not by the degree of socialisation of labour, but by such a fluctuating index as the development of *one* branch of national labour alone! Everybody knows that the number of workers cannot be anything but extremely inconstant under the capitalist method of production, and that it depends upon a host of secondary factors, such as crises, the size of the reserve army of labour, the degree of exploitation of labour, the degree of intensity of labour, and so on and so forth.



shown *either* (1) that he had not overlooked this tendency of capitalism, or (2) that capitalism has no such tendency.

Instead of this, Mr. Nik—on sets about analysing the figures for the number of factory workers (1 per cent of the population, according to his estimate). But was Mr. Struve referring to factory workers? Does the 20 per cent of the population in Russia and the 56 per cent in America represent factory workers? Are the concepts "factory workers" and "population not engaged in agriculture" identical? Can it be denied that the proportion of the population engaged in agriculture is diminishing in Russia too?

Having made this correction, which I consider all the more necessary because Mr. Krivenko has already distorted this passage once in this very magazine, let us pass to Mr. Nik—on's idea that "our capitalism is badly fulfilling its mission."

Firstly, it is absurd to identify the number of factory workers with the number of workers engaged in capitalist production, as the author of the *Essays* does. This is repeating (*and even accentuating*) the error of the petty-bourgeois Russian economists when they date the beginning of capitalism directly from large-scale machine industry. Are not the millions of Russian handicraftsmen who work for the merchants, with the latter's material and for ordinary wages, not engaged in capitalist production? Do not the farm hands and day labourers in agriculture receive wages from their employers, and do they not surrender surplus value to them? Are the workers engaged in the building industry (which has been rapidly developing in our country since the Reform) not subjected to capitalist exploitation? And so on.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I here confine myself to criticising Mr. Nik—on's *method* of judging the "uniting value of capitalism" by the number of factory workers. I cannot undertake an analysis of the figures, because I have not at my disposal the sources used by Mr. Nik—on. I cannot, however, refrain from noting that Mr. Nik—on has not selected these sources very successfully. He first takes from the *Military Statistical Handbook* figures for 1865 and from the *Directory of Mills and Factories* of 1894 figures for 1890. The number of workers (excluding mine workers) he arrives at is 829,573 and 875,764 respectively. The increase of 5.5 per cent is much less than the increase of population (from 61,420,000 to 91,000,000, or 48.1 per cent). But on the next page different figures are taken: both for 1865 and 1890 from the *Directory* of 1893. According to these figures, the number of workers is 392,718 and 716,792 respectively—an increase of 82 per cent. But this does not include

Secondly, it is absurd to compare the number of factory workers (1,400,000) with the total population and to express the ratio in the form of a percentage. This is directly comparing incommensurables: the able-bodied population with the non-able-bodied population, persons engaged in the production of material values with the "ideological classes," and so on. Does not each factory worker maintain a certain number of members of his family? Do not the factory workers maintain—apart from their employers and a whole flock of traders—a host of soldiers, government officials and similar gentlemen, whom you class with the agricultural population, contrasting this hotchpotch with the factory population? And then, are there not in Russia such trades as fishing and so forth, which it is again absurd to contrast with factory industry by combining them with agriculture? If you wanted to get an idea of the occupational composition of the population of Russia, you should, firstly, have separated into a special group the members of the population who are engaged in the production of material values (excluding, consequently, the non-working population, on the one hand, and soldiers, govern-

industries paying excise duties, in which the number of workers (p. 104) was 186,053 in 1865 and 144,322 in 1890. Combining these figures with the preceding ones we arrive at the following total numbers of workers (excluding mine workers): 578,771 in 1865 and 861,124 in 1890. An increase of 48.7 per cent, at a time when the population increased by 48.1 per cent. Thus in the space of five pages the author quotes figures some of which show an increase of 5 per cent and others an increase of 48 per cent! And it is on the basis of such contradictory figures that he judges the instability of our capitalism!!

And then, why did the author not take the figures for the number of workers which he quotes in the *Essays* (Tables XI and XII), and from which we see that the number of workers increased by 12-13 per cent in *three years* (1886-89), an increase that rapidly outstrips the growth of population? The author may perhaps say that the interval of time was too short. But then these figures are homogeneous, comparable and highly authentic. That in the first place; and in the second place, did not the author use these same figures, despite the short interval of time, to form a judgment of the growth of factory industry?

It is clear that the figures for one branch of national labour alone are bound to be shaky when one takes so fluctuating an index of the state of that branch as the number of workers. Just think what an infinitely naïve dreamer one must be to hope, on the basis of such figures, that our capitalism will collapse, dissolve into dust of its own accord, without a stubborn and desperate struggle, and to set up these figures against the unquestionable domination and development of capitalism in all branches of national labour!

ment officials, priests, etc., on the other); and, secondly, you should have attempted to class them under the various branches of national labour. If the data for this was not available, you should not have undertaken such calculations,<sup>1</sup> and should not have talked nonsense

<sup>1</sup> Nik—on attempted such a calculation in the *Essays*, but very unsuccessfully. On p. 302, we read:

"An attempt was recently made to determine the total number of free workers in the fifty provinces of European Russia (S. A. Korolenko, *Free Hired Labour*, St. Petersburg, 1892). An investigation made by the Department of Agriculture estimates the able-bodied agricultural population in the fifty provinces of European Russia at 35,712,000 persons, whereas the total number of workers required in agriculture and in the manufacturing, mining, transport and other industries is estimated in all at 30,124,000 persons. Thus the number of absolutely superfluous workers reaches the huge figure of 5,588,000 persons, which together with their families, according to the accepted standard, would amount to no less than 15,000,000 persons." (Repeated on p. 341.)

If we turn to this "investigation," we shall find that only the free hired labour employed by the landlords was "investigated," and that Mr. S. Korolenko appended to the investigation a "review" of European Russia "from the agricultural and industrial standpoint." This review makes an attempt (not on the basis of an "investigation," but on the basis of old available data) to class the working population of European Russia by occupation. The results Mr. S. A. Korolenko arrives at are as follows: the total number of workers in the fifty provinces of European Russia is 35,712,000, engaged in the following occupations:

Agriculture . . . . .	27,435,400	} 30,124,500
Cultivation of special crops . . . . .	1,466,400	
Factory and mining industry . . . . .	1,222,700	
Jews . . . . .	1,400,400	
Lumbering . . . . . about	2,000,000	
Stock breeding . . . . . "	1,000,000	
Railways . . . . . "	200,000	
Fisheries . . . . . "	200,000	
Local and outside trades, hunting, trapping, etc.—the remainder . . . . .	782,200	
Total . . . . .	35,712,100	

Thus Mr. Korolenko (rightly or wrongly) classed *all* the workers by occupation, but Mr. Nik—on arbitrarily takes the first three headings and talks about 5,588,000 "absolutely superfluous" (??) workers!

Apart from these errors, we cannot refrain from noting that Mr. Korolenko's estimates are extremely rough and inaccurate: the number of agricultural workers is determined by one general standard for the whole of Russia; the non-producing population has not been classed separately (under this head Mr. Korolenko, in deference to official anti-semitism, classed . . . the *Jews*! There must be over 1,400,000 non-productive workers: traders, paupers, vagabonds, criminals, etc.); the number of handicraftsmen (the last heading—out-

about 1 per cent (???) of the population being engaged in factory industry.

Thirdly—and this is the chief and most outrageous distortion of Marx's theory of the progressive and revolutionary work of capitalism—where did you get the idea that the “uniting value” of capitalism is expressed in uniting only the factory workers? Can it be that you borrowed your idea of Marxism from the articles on the socialisation of labour in the *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*? Can it be that you too identify it with work performed under one roof?

But no. It would appear that Nik—on cannot be accused of this, because he accurately describes the socialisation of labour by capitalism on the second page of his article in *Russkoye Bogatstvo*, No. 6, correctly indicating both tokens of this socialisation: (1) work for the whole of society, and (2) the uniting of individual labourers so as to obtain the product of common labour. But if that is so, why judge the “mission” of capitalism by the number of factory workers, when this “mission” is fulfilled by the development of capitalism and the socialisation of labour in general, by the creation of a proletariat in general, in relation to which the factory workers play the role only of a vanguard. It cannot be denied, of course, that the revolutionary movement of the proletariat depends on the number of these workers, on their concentration, on their degree of development, etc.; but all this does not give us the slightest right to identify the “uniting value” of capitalism with the NUMBER of factory workers. That would be narrowing Marx's idea to impossible limits.

I will give an example. In his pamphlet *The Housing Question*, Frederick Engels speaks of German industry and points out that in no other country—he is referring only to Western Europe—do there exist so many wage workers who own a garden or a field as in Germany. “*Rural domestic industry carried on in conjunction with horticulture or agriculture*,” he says, “*forms the broad basis of Germany's new large-scale industry*.” This domestic industry grows extensive with the growing distress of the German small peasant (as is the case in Russia, let us add), but the CONJUNCTION of industry side and local trades) is preposterously small, etc. It would have been better not to quote such estimates at all.

with agriculture is the basis not of the WELL-BEING of the handicraftsman but, on the contrary, of his greater OPPRESSION. Being tied to his locality, he is compelled to accept any price, and therefore surrenders to the capitalist not only surplus value but a large part of his wages as well (as is the case in Russia, with her huge development of domestic large-scale production).

*"That is one side of the matter," Engels continues, "but it also has its reverse side. . . . With the expansion of the domestic industry, one peasant area after the other is being drawn into the present-day industrial movement. It is this revolutionisation of the rural areas by domestic industry which spreads the industrial revolution in Germany over a far wider territory than is the case in England and France. . . . This explains why in Germany, in contrast to England and France, the revolutionary working class movement has spread so tremendously over the greater part of the country instead of being confined exclusively to the urban centres. And this further explains the steady, certain and irresistible progress of the movement. It is perfectly clear that in Germany a victorious rising in the capital and in the other big towns will be possible only when the majority of the smaller towns and a great part of the rural areas have become ripe for the change."*<sup>1</sup>

So you see, it appears that not only the "uniting value of capitalism," but even the success of the working class movement depends not only on the number of factory workers, but also on the number of . . . *handicraftsmen*! Yet our theorists of peculiar development, ignoring the purely capitalist organisation of the vast majority of the Russian handicraft industries, contrast them, as a sort of "popular" industry, to capitalism and judge "the percentage of the population which is at the direct disposal of capitalism" by the number of factory workers! This is reminiscent of the following argument by Mr. Krivenko: the Marxists want all attention to be directed to the factory workers; but as there are only one million of them out of one hundred million, they constitute only a small corner of life, and to consecrate oneself to it is just like confining oneself to work in guild or charitable institutions (*Russkoye Bogatstvo*, No. 12). Mills and factories are just such a small corner of life as guild and charitable institutions! What genius, Mr. Krivenko! No doubt it is the guild institutions that produce goods for the whole of society? No doubt it is the state of affairs in the guild institutions that ex-

<sup>1</sup> See F. Engels, *The Housing Question*, Eng. ed., 1935, pp. 11-16.—*Trans.*

plains the exploitation and expropriation of the toilers? No doubt it is in the guild institutions that one must look for the advanced representatives of the proletariat who are capable of raising the banner of emancipation of the workers?

It is not surprising to hear such things from the lips of petty philosophers of the bourgeoisie; but when you meet the same sort of thing in the writings of Mr. Nik—on it is somehow vexatious.

On p. 393<sup>1</sup> of *Capital*, Marx quotes figures showing the composition of the English population. In 1861 there were 20,000,000 people in England and Wales in all. It seems that there were 1,605,440 persons employed in the main branches of factory industry.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, there were 1,208,648 members of the servant class, and in a footnote to the second edition Marx refers to the very rapid growth of this class. Now just imagine “Marxists” in England who, in order to judge the “uniting value of capitalism,” began to divide 1,600,000 by 20,000,000!! The result would be 8 per cent—*less than one-twelfth!!!* How can one speak of the “mission” of capitalism when it has not united even one-twelfth of the population, and when, moreover, there is a more rapid increase in the “domestic slave” class—which represents a dead loss of “national labour,” testifying to the fact that “we,” the English, are following a “false path”! Is it not clear that “we,” must “seek different,” non-capitalist “paths of development for our fatherland”?

There is still another point in Mr. Nik—on’s argument: when he says that our capitalism does not possess that uniting value which is “so characteristic of Western Europe and which is *beginning to manifest itself with particular force in North America*,” he is apparently referring to the working class movement. And so, we must seek different paths because our capitalism does not lead to a working class movement. This argument, it seems to me, was anticipated

<sup>1</sup> See *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 488.—*Trans.*

<sup>2</sup> There were 642,607 persons employed in the textile, stocking making and lace industry (in our country tens of thousands of women engaged in stocking making and lace making are incredibly exploited by the “tradeswomen” for whom they work. Wages are sometimes as low as *three* [a fact!] kopeks a day! Do you mean to say, Mr. Nik—on, that they are not “at the direct disposal of capitalism”?), 565,835 persons employed in coal mines and metal mines and 396,998 persons employed in metal works and metal manufactures.

by Mr. Mikhailovsky. Marx operated with a ready-made proletariat—he admonished the Marxists. And when a Marxist told him that all he saw in poverty was poverty, he replied that, as usual, this remark was wholly taken from Marx, but that if we turned to this passage in *The Poverty of Philosophy* we would find that it is not applicable in our case and that our poverty is just poverty. But, as a matter of fact, you will find nothing of the kind in *The Poverty of Philosophy*. Marx there speaks of the Communists of the old school, and says that all they saw in poverty was just poverty and that they failed to observe its revolutionary, destructive side, which would in fact overthrow the old society. Evidently, what Mr. Mikhailovsky takes as grounds for asserting that it is not applicable in our case is the absence of any "manifestation" of a working class movement. In reference to this argument, let us remark, firstly, that only a very superficial acquaintance with the facts could give rise to the idea that Marx operated with a ready-made proletariat. Marx's Communist programme was drawn up before 1848. What working class movement<sup>1</sup> was there in Germany then? There was not even political liberty at that time, and the activities of the Communists were confined to secret circles (as in our country today). The Social-Democratic labour movement, which made the revolutionary and uniting value of capitalism quite clear to everybody, began two decades later, when the doctrine of scientific Socialism had been finally evolved, when large-scale industry had become more widespread and a number of talented and energetic disseminators of this doctrine had arisen among the working class. In addition to presenting historical facts in a false light and forgetting the vast amount of work expended by the Socialists in lending consciousness and organisation to the labour movement, our philosophers foist upon Marx the most senseless fatalistic views. They make out that in his opinion the organisation and association of the workers proceed of their own accord, and that, consequently, if we see capitalism but do not see a working class movement, it is only because capitalism is not fulfilling

<sup>1</sup> How small the working class at that time was may be judged from the fact that 27 years later, in 1875, Marx wrote that "the majority of the working people of Germany consist of peasants and not of proletarians." That is what is meant by "operating [??] with a ready-made proletariat"!

its mission, and not because we are still doing too little in the matter of organisation and propaganda among the workers. This cowardly petty-bourgeois artifice of our philosophers of peculiar development is not even worth refuting: it is being refuted by the activities of the Social-Democrats in all countries; it is refuted by every public speech made by any Marxist. Social-Democracy—as Kautsky justly remarks—is a combination of the labour movement with Socialism. And in order that the progressive work of capitalism might “manifest” itself in our country too, our Socialists must set to work with all their might and main; they must work out a detailed Marxist conception of Russian history and Russian conditions, and make a detailed investigation of all the forms of class struggle and exploitation, which are particularly involved and masked in Russia. They must further popularise this theory and make it known to the worker; they must help the worker to assimilate it and devise the most *SUITABLE form of organisation under our conditions for the dissemination of Social-Democracy and the welding of the workers into a political force*. And the Russian Social-Democrats, far from ever having said that they have already completed, fulfilled this work of ideologists of the working class (there is no end to this work), have always stressed the fact that they are only just beginning it, and that much effort by many, many persons will be required to create anything at all lasting.

Besides its unsatisfactory and preposterously narrow conception of the Marxian theory, this current objection that progressive work is lacking in our capitalism is based, it seems to us, on the absurd idea of a mythical “popular system.”

They refuse to see, when the “peasants” in the notorious “village commune” become split up into beggars and rich, into representatives of the proletariat and representatives of capital (especially merchant capital), that this is an embryonic, mediæval capitalism; and, evading the political and economic structure of rural life, they talk, in their search for “different paths for the fatherland,” about variations in the form of peasant *landownership*, with which they unpardonably confuse the form of economic organisation, as though a purely bourgeois disintegration of the peasantry were not in full swing within our “equalitarian village commune.” And when, in its



development, this capitalism passes beyond the narrow forms of mediæval, rural capitalism, shatters the feudal power of the land and compels the hungry peasant, who has long ago been picked clean, to abandon the land he holds in the commune to be equally divided up among the triumphant kulaks, and to go and work elsewhere, to wander over the face of Russia, unemployed much of the time, and to hire himself now to a landlord, now to a railway contractor, and now again as a manual labourer in the town, or as a farm hand to a rich peasant, and so on; when this "peasant," changing masters all over Russia, sees that everywhere, no matter where he stays, he is subjected to the most shameful robbery; when he sees that other beggars like himself are also robbed; when he sees that it is not necessarily the "squire" who robs him but also his "brother muzhik," provided the latter has money to purchase labour power; when he sees how everywhere the government serves his bosses, restricting the rights of the workers and suppressing as riots every attempt to protect their elementary rights; when he sees that the labour of the Russian worker is becoming more and more intense and wealth and luxury growing more and more rapidly, while the condition of the worker becomes steadily worse, expropriation more intense and unemployment a normal thing—at such a time our critics of Marxism are seeking different paths for the fatherland; at such a time they are occupied in settling the profound question whether we can grant that the work of capitalism is progressive when we perceive the slow growth in the number of factory workers, or whether we should not reject and consider incorrect the path of our capitalism because it is "very, very badly fulfilling its historical mission."

An elevated and broadly humane occupation, is it not?

And what narrow doctrinaires these malicious Marxists are when they say that to seek different paths for the fatherland, when capitalist exploitation of the toilers exists everywhere in Russia, is to take refuge from realities in the sphere of utopia, and when they find that it is not our capitalism which is fulfilling its mission badly, but rather the Russian Socialists, who refuse to realise that to dream of the disappearance of the age-old economic struggle of the antagonistic classes of Russian society is to be guilty of Manilovism: who refuse to realise that we must strive to lend organisation and

consciousness to this struggle, and must therefore undertake Social-Democratic work.

\* \* \*

In conclusion, we cannot refrain from noting another attack made by Mr. Nik—on on Mr. Struve in this same issue, No. 6, of *Russkoye Bogatstvo*.

"We cannot help drawing attention," Mr. Nik—on says, "to another peculiarity of Mr. Struve's polemic. He wrote for the German public, in a serious German magazine; but he employed methods which would seem entirely unsuitable. It must be assumed that not only the German but also the Russian public has grown to 'the state of manhood,' and will not allow itself to be frightened by the various 'bugbears' with which his article abounds. 'Utopia,' 'reactionary programme' and similar expressions are to be met with in every column. But, alas, such 'terrible words' absolutely fail to produce any longer the effect on which Mr. Struve apparently calculates" (p. 128).

Let us try to examine whether "unsuitable methods" have been employed in this controversy between Messrs. Nik—on and Struve, and, if so, by whom.

Mr. Struve is accused of resorting to "unsuitable methods" on the grounds that in a serious article he tries to frighten the public with "bugbears" and "terrible words."

Resorting to "bugbears" and "terrible words" means giving a description of your opponent which is definitely unfavourable, but which at the same time is not clearly and precisely motivated, does not necessarily follow from the standpoint of the writer (a definitely stated standpoint), but is simply indicative of a desire to abuse and calumniate.

Obviously, it is only this last feature which turns a definitely disapproving epithet into a "bugbear." Mr. Slonimsky spoke trenchantly of Mr. Nik—on, but inasmuch as he clearly and definitely formulated his standpoint, the standpoint of an ordinary liberal who is absolutely incapable of understanding the bourgeois character of the present order of things, and quite definitely formulated his phenomenal conclusions, he may be accused of anything you like except of using "unsuitable methods." Mr. Nik—on also spoke trenchantly of Mr. Slonimsky, quoting, among other things, for admonition and edification, what Marx said—which is "justified in our country too" (as Mr. Nik—on admits)—about the *reactionary*

and *utopian* character of the defence of small domestic industry and small peasant landownership, which Mr. Slonimsky wants, and accusing him of "narrow-mindedness," "*naïveté*," and so on. Take a look at Mr. Nik—on's article, and you will find that it "abounds" in the same epithets (underscored) as Mr. Struve's article; but we cannot speak of "unsuitable methods" in this case, because it is all motivated, it all follows from the definite standpoint and system of views of the author, which may be false, but which, if accepted, lead one to regard the opponent as nothing but a naïve, narrow-minded and reactionary utopian.

Let us see how matters stand with Mr. Struve's article. Accusing Mr. Nik—on of utopianism, from which a reactionary programme is bound to follow, and of *naïveté*, he quite clearly indicates the grounds which led him to such an opinion. Firstly: desiring the "socialisation of production," Mr. Nik—on "appeals to society [*sic!*] and the state." This "proves that Marx's doctrine of the class struggle and the state is absolutely foreign to the Russian political economist." Our state is the "representative of the ruling classes." Secondly: "If we contrast to *real* capitalism an *imaginary* economic system, which *must* come about simply because we *want it to*, in other words, if it is desired to socialise production apart from capitalism, this only testifies to a naïve conception which does not conform to history." With the development of capitalism, the elimination of natural economy and the diminution of agriculture, "the modern state will emerge from the twilight in which it is still enveloped in our patriarchal times (we are speaking of Russia) and step into the clear light of the open class struggle, and other forces and factors will have to be sought for the socialisation of production."

Well, is this not a clear and precise motivation enough? Can one dispute the facts that Mr. Struve cites in illustration of the author's views? Did Mr. Nik—on really take into account the class struggle which is inherent in capitalist society? No. He speaks of society and the state, but forgets this struggle, excludes it. He says, for example, that the state supported capitalism instead of socialising labour through the village commune, and so on. He evidently believes that the state might have behaved one way, or might have behaved another way, and that, consequently, it stands *apart from*

*classes*. Is it not clear that to accuse Mr. Struve of having resorted to "bugbears" is a *crying* injustice? Is it not clear that a man who believes that our state is a class state cannot but regard as a naïve and reactionary utopian one who appeals to the state to socialise labour, that is, to remove the ruling classes? More, when you accuse your opponent of resorting to "bugbears," and at the same time *say nothing* about the views that led him to this opinion, despite the fact that he clearly formulated these views; and when, moreover, you accuse him of this in a censored magazine, where these views cannot appear—ought one not to regard this as "an absolutely unsuitable method"?

Let us proceed. Mr. Struve's second conclusion is formulated no less clearly. It cannot be doubted that the socialisation of labour apart from capitalism, through the village commune, is an imaginary system, for it does not exist in reality. This reality is described by Mr. Nik—on himself as follows: prior to 1861 the productive units were the "family" and the "village commune" (*Essays*, pp. 106-07). This "small, scattered, self-sufficing production could not develop to any considerable extent, and it is therefore characteristically very routine and little productive." The subsequent change consisted in the fact that "the social division of labour constantly penetrated deeper and deeper." Consequently, capitalism shattered the narrow bounds of the earlier productive units and socialised labour throughout society. *This socialisation of labour by our capitalism is admitted even by Mr. Nik—on*. Therefore, when he wanted to base the socialisation of labour, not on capitalism, which *had already socialised labour*, but on the village commune, *the destruction of which was the FIRST to bring about the socialisation of labour* THROUGHOUT SOCIETY, he was a reactionary utopian. That is Mr. Struve's train of thought. One may regard it as true or false, but it cannot be denied that the trenchant criticism of Mr. Nik—on followed logically and inevitably from this opinion, so that there can be no talk of "bugbears."

More, when Mr. Nik—on concludes his controversy with Mr. Struve by attributing to his opponent the desire to deprive the peasantry of land ("if a progressive programme is to be understood to mean depriving the peasantry of land . . . then the author of the

*Essays* is a conservative"), despite Mr. Struve's explicit statement that he desires the socialisation of labour, desires it through capitalism, and desires it to be brought about by the forces which will become apparent in "the clear light of the open class struggle"—one cannot but call this an interpretation which is diametrically opposed to the truth. And if one bears in mind that Mr. Struve could not in the censored press speak of the forces which are becoming apparent in the clear light of the class struggle, and that, consequently, the mouth of Mr. Nik—on's opponent was gagged—it can scarcely be denied that the method of Mr. Nik—on is an absolutely "unsuitable method."

### *Appendix III*

When I speak of the narrow conception of Marxism, I have the Marxists themselves in mind. One cannot in this connection refrain from noting that Marxism is most atrociously narrowed and distorted by our liberals and radicals when they set about expounding it in the pages of the legal press. What sort of exposition is this! Only think how this revolutionary doctrine must be mutilated in order to fit it into the bed of Procrustes of the Russian censorship! Yet our publicists lightheartedly perform such an operation: Marxism as they expound it is reduced as it were to the doctrine of how under the capitalist system individual property, based on the labour of the owner, undergoes its dialectical development, how it becomes converted into its negation, and is then socialised. And with an air of seriousness, they assume the whole content of Marxism to lie in this "scheme," avoiding all the peculiarities of its sociological method, avoiding the doctrine of the class struggle and avoiding the direct purpose of the enquiry, namely, to expose all the forms of antagonism and exploitation in order to help the proletariat get rid of them. It is not surprising that the result is something so pale and meagre that our radicals begin to bewail the poor Russian Marxists. We should think so! Russian absolutism and Russian reaction would not be absolutism and reaction if it were possible while they exist to expound Marxism fully, exactly and completely, and to set forth all its conclusions to the full! And if our liberals and radicals knew Marxism as they should (at least, from German literature), they would have scrupled to disfigure it so in the pages of the censored press. If a theory cannot be expounded—keep silent, or make the reservation that you are expounding it far from completely, that you are omitting the most essential. But when you are expounding only fragments, why cry about narrowness?

Indeed, it is only in this way that there can arise such curiosi-

ties, possible only in Russia. that people are counted Marxists who have no conception of the class struggle, of the antagonism which is necessarily inherent in capitalist society, and of the development of this antagonism; who have no idea of the revolutionary role of the proletariat; who even directly come out with bourgeois projects, provided only that they contain such words as "money economy," its "necessity," and similar expressions, which to recognise as specially Marxist requires all the intellectual profundity of a Mr. Mikhailovsky.

Yet Marx considered that the whole value of his theory lay in the fact that it is "by its very nature a critical <sup>1</sup> and revolutionary theory." And this latter quality is indeed completely and unconditionally characteristic of *Marxism*, for this theory directly sets itself the aim of *revealing* all the forms of antagonism and exploitation in modern society, following their evolution, demonstrating their transient character, the inevitability of their transformation into a different form, *and thus serving the proletariat so that it may as quickly and easily as possible put an end to all exploitation.* The irresistible force of attraction which draws the Socialists of all countries to this theory consists indeed in the fact that it combines a strict and supreme scientific spirit (representing as it does the last word in social science) with a revolutionary spirit, and combines them not by chance, not only because the founder of the doctrine combined in his person the qualities of a man of learning and a revolutionary, but does so intrinsically and inseparably within the theory itself. Indeed, the purpose of theory, the aim of science, as directly laid down here, is to assist the class of the oppressed in its actual economic struggle.

*"We do not say to the world: Cease struggling—your whole struggle is valuelles. All we do is to provide it with a true slogan of the struggle."*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Note that Marx is speaking here of materialist criticism, which alone he regards as scientific—a criticism, that is, which compares the political, juridical and social facts, facts of everyday life, and so on, with economics, with the system of production relations, with the interests of the classes that are inevitably formed on the basis of all antagonistic social relations. That Russian social relations are antagonistic, hardly anybody is likely to doubt. But nobody has yet endeavoured to take them as a basis for *such* a criticism.

<sup>2</sup> Letter of Marx to Ruge, September 1843.—*Ed.*

Hence, according to Marx, the direct purpose of science is to provide a true slogan of the struggle, that is, to be able to present this struggle objectively, as a product of a definite system of production relations, to be able to *understand* the necessity of this struggle, its meaning, course and conditions of development. It is impossible to provide a "slogan of the struggle" unless every separate form of the struggle is minutely studied, unless every one of its steps in the transition from one form to another is followed, in order to be able to define the situation at any given moment, without losing sight of the general character of the struggle and its general aim, namely, the complete and final abolition of all exploitation and all oppression.

Try to compare with Marx's "critical and revolutionary" theory the insipid trash which "our well-known" N. K. Mikhailovsky expounded and contested in his "criticism," and you will be astonished that there can really be people who regard themselves as "ideologists of the toiling class" and who confine themselves—to that "flat disc" into which our publicists transform Marxian theory by expunging from it everything that is vital.

Try to compare with the demands of this theory our Narodist literature, which also, you know, is motivated by the desire to be the ideology of the toiler, a literature devoted to the history and to the present state of our economic system in general and of the peasantry in particular, and you will be astonished that Socialists could remain satisfied with such a theory, which confined itself to studying and describing distress and to moralising over this distress. Serfdom is depicted not as a definite form of economic organisation which gives rise to exploitation of such and such a kind, to such and such antagonistic classes, to such and such political, juridical and other systems, but simply as an abuse on the part of the landlords and an injustice to the peasants. The Peasant Reform is depicted not as a clash of definite economic forms and of definite economic classes, but as a measure of the authorities, who "chose" a "wrong path" by mistake, despite their very best intentions. Post-Reform Russia is depicted as a deviation from the true path, accompanied by the distress of the toiler, and not as a



certain system of antagonistic production relations with such and such a development.

Now, however, there can be no doubt that this theory has lost credit, and the sooner Russian Socialists realise that with the present level of knowledge there can be no revolutionary theory except Marxism, the sooner they devote all their efforts to applying this theory to Russia, theoretically and practically—the surer and quicker will be the success of revolutionary work.

\* \* \*

In order to give a clear illustration of the corruption brought by those gentlemen, the "friends of the people," into the "poor Russian thought" of today by their call to the intelligentsia to bring cultural influence to bear on the "people" so as to "create" a correct and genuine industry, etc.—let us cite the opinion of people who hold views sharply distinct from ours, namely, the "*Narodopravtsi*," those direct and immediate successors of the *Narodovoltsi*.<sup>1</sup> See the pamphlet entitled *An Urgent Question*, 1894, Narodnoye Pravo Party Publishing House.

After giving a splendid rebuttal to the kind of Narodniks who say that "under no circumstances, even on the condition of broad liberty, must Russia part with her economic organisation, which ensures [!] the toiler an independent place in production," and that "what we need are not political reforms but systematic and planned economic reforms," the *Narodopravtsi* go on to say:

"We are not defenders of the bourgeoisie, still less are we worshippers of its ideals; but if a malicious fate were to present the people with the choice either of 'systematic economic reforms' under the protection of the rural prefects, who are zealously safeguarding them from the encroachments of the bourgeoisie, or of the bourgeoisie, on the basis of political liberty, that is, under conditions which would ensure the people the organised defence of their interests—we think that in choosing the latter the people would be sheer gainers. Just now we do not have 'political reforms' which threaten to deprive the people of their fictitious independent economic organisation; what we do have is something which everybody everywhere is accustomed to regard as a bourgeois policy, expressed in the gross exploitation of the labour of the

<sup>1</sup> *Narodopravtsi*—the *Narodnoye Pravo* (Peoples' Justice) Party; *Narodovoltsi*—the *Narodnaya Volya* (Peoples' Freedom) Party.—*Trans.*

people. Just now we have neither broad liberty nor narrow liberty; what we do have is the protection of the interests of the social estates, of which the agrarians and capitalists of constitutional countries have ceased to dream. Just now we do not have 'bourgeois parliamentarism'—society is not allowed within a gun-shot of administration; but what we do have are Messrs. the Naidenovs, Morozovs, Kazis and Belovs, who demand that a Chinese Wall be set up for the defence of their interests, side by side with representatives of 'our loyal nobility,' who go so far as to demand free credit for themselves to the amount of 100 rubles per desyatin. They are invited on to commissions, they are listened to with respect, and they have a decisive voice in the most important questions of the economic life of the country. Yet who stands up in defence of the interests of the people, and where? Is it they, the rural prefects? Is it for the people that the agricultural labour squads are being projected? Was it not in these days that it was declared, with a frankness bordering on cynicism, that the only reason the people have been granted land allotments is to enable them to pay duties and to perform services, as the Governor of Vologda put it in one of his circulars? He only formulated and expressed aloud what the policy of the autocracy, or, more correctly, of the bureaucratic absolutism, is fatally leading to."

However nebulous the ideas of the Narodopravtsi still are about the "people," whose interests they wish to espouse, and about "society," which they continue to regard as a trustworthy organ for the protection of the interests of labour, at any rate it must be admitted that the formation of the Narodnoye Pravo Party is a step forward, a step towards the complete abandonment of the illusions and dreams about "other paths for the fatherland," a step towards the fearless recognition of the actual paths, a step towards the search on this basis for elements for a revolutionary struggle. Here we see clearly revealed a striving for the formation of a democratic party. I say only a "striving," because, unfortunately, the Narodopravtsi do not carry out their basic views consistently. They still talk of amalgamation and alliance with the Socialists, refusing to realise that to draw the workers into mere political radicalism would only mean severing the working class intellectuals from the working class masses and condemning the working class movement to impotence; because it can be strong only by means of a complete and all-round defence of the interests of the working class and by means of an economic struggle against capital, a struggle inseparably merging with a political struggle against the servants of capital. They refuse to realise that the "amalgamation" of all the revolutionary elements can be much better achieved by the separate organisation of the rep-

representatives of the various interests<sup>1</sup> and by the joint action in certain cases of both parties. They still go on calling their party a "social-revolutionary" party (see the Manifesto of the "Narodnoye Pravo" Party, dated February 19, 1894), although at the same time they confine themselves exclusively to political reforms, most carefully evading our "accursed" Socialist problems. A party which so warmly calls for a fight against illusions should not foster illusions in others by the very first words of its "manifesto"; it should not speak of *Socialism* where there is nothing but *constitutionalism*. However, I repeat, one cannot form a judgment of the Narodopravtsi unless one bears in mind their origin in the Narodovoltsi. It cannot therefore but be admitted that they are making a forward stride by starting an exclusively political struggle—which has no relation to Socialism—with an exclusively political programme. The Social-Democrats wholeheartedly wish success to the Narodopravtsi, wish that their party may grow and develop, and that they may form closer contact with those social elements which favour the present economic system<sup>2</sup> and whose *everyday* interests are really bound up with *democracy* in the most intimate fashion.

The conciliatory, timid and sentimentally dreaming Narodism of the "friends of the people" cannot last long when attacked from two sides: by the political radicals, because they can express confidence in the bureaucracy and because they do not realise the absolute necessity of a political struggle; and by the Social-Democrats, because they pretend to be almost Socialists, although they have not the slightest relation to Socialism and have not the slightest inkling of the causes of the oppression of the toiler or of the character of the class struggle now going on.

<sup>1</sup> They themselves protest against faith in the miracle-working powers of the intelligentsia; they themselves talk of the need to draw the people themselves into the struggle. But that requires that this struggle be bound up with definite everyday interests and, consequently, that a distinction be made between the separate interests, and that they be drawn separately into the struggle. . . . But if these separate interests are obscured by sheer political demands comprehensible only to the intelligentsia, will this not mean again turning back, again confining oneself to the struggle of the intelligentsia, whose impotence has only just been admitted?

<sup>2</sup> (I.e., the capitalist system)—and not the necessary rejection of this system and the waging of a ruthless struggle against it.

## THE ECONOMIC CONTENT OF NARODISM AND THE CRITICISM OF IT IN MR. STRUVE'S BOOK

### MARXISM AS REFLECTED IN BOURGEOIS LITERATURE

In reference to: *Critical Remarks on the Question of the Economic Development of Russia*, by P. Struve, St. Petersburg, 1894

### CHAPTER II<sup>1</sup>

#### *A Criticism of Narodnik Sociology*

THE "essence" of Narodism, its "basic idea," according to the author, is contained in the "theory of the peculiar economic development of Russia." This theory, as he puts it, has "two basic sources: (1) a definite doctrine of the role of the individual in the historical process, and (2) a direct conviction that the Russian people possess a specific national character and spirit and a special historical destiny" (p. 2). In a footnote to this passage the author declares that "Narodism is characterised by quite definite social ideals,"<sup>2</sup> and adds that he deals with the economic world outlook of the Narodniks later on in the book.

This description of the essence of Narodism, it seems to me, requires some correction. It is too abstract and idealistic; it indicates the prevailing theoretical ideas of Narodism, but does not indicate either its "essence" or its "source." It remains absolutely unclear why the ideals indicated were combined with a belief in a peculiarly Russian development and with a definite doctrine of the role of the

<sup>1</sup> Only Chapter II is given here. An excerpt from Chapter III is contained in *Selected Works*, Vol. I.—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> Of course, this expression "quite definite ideals" must not be taken literally, that is, as meaning that the Narodniks "quite definitely" knew what they wanted. That would be absolutely untrue. "Quite definite ideals" should be understood as meaning nothing more than the ideology of direct producers, even though this ideology was a very vague one.

individual, and why these theories became "the most influential" trend in our social thought. If, when speaking of "The Sociological Ideals of Narodism" (the title of the first chapter), the author was unable to confine himself to purely sociological questions (method in sociology), but also dealt with the Narodniks' views on Russian economic reality, he should have told us of the essence of these views. Yet in the footnote referred to this is done only incompletely. The essence of Narodism is that it represents the interests of producers from the standpoint of the small producer, the petty bourgeois. In his German article on Mr. N—on's book (*Sozialpolitisches Zentralblatt*, 1893, No. 1), Mr. Struve called Narodism "national Socialism" (*Russkoye Bogatstvo*, 1893, No. 12, p. 185). Instead of "national" he should have said "peasant" in reference to old Russian Narodism, and "petty-bourgeois" in reference to present-day Russian Narodism. The "source" of Narodism lies in the predominance of the class of small producers in post-Reform capitalist Russia.

This description requires explanation. I use the expression "petty bourgeois" not in the ordinary sense, but in the political-economic sense. A small producer, operating under a system of commodity production—these are the two earmarks of the concept "petty bourgeois," or *Kleinbürger*. It therefore includes both the peasant and the handicraftsman, whom the Narodniks always placed on the same footing—and quite rightly, for they are both producers working for the market, and differ only in the degree of development of commodity production. Further, I make a distinction between old<sup>1</sup> and present-day Narodism, on the grounds that the former was to some extent a well-knit doctrine evolved in an era when capitalism was still very feebly developed in Russia, when the petty-bourgeois character of peasant economy was still altogether unrevealed, when the practical side of the doctrine was purely utopian, and when the Narodniks definitely held themselves aloof from liberal "society" and "went among the people." It is different now: the capitalist path of development of Russia is no longer denied by anybody, the disintegration of the rural population is an indisputable fact. Of the

<sup>1</sup> By the old Narodniks I do not mean those who backed the *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*, for instance, but those who "went among the people."

Narodniks' well-knit doctrine, with its childish faith in the "village commune," nothing but rags and tatters remain. From the practical aspect, in place of a utopia we now have a quite un-utopian programme of petty-bourgeois "progressive" measures, and only the pompous phraseology remains to remind us of the historical connection between these paltry compromises and the dream of better and peculiar paths for the fatherland. In place of the aloofness from liberal society we observe a touching intimacy with it. And it is this change that compels us to draw a distinction between the ideology of the peasantry and the ideology of the petty bourgeoisie.

This correction on the subject of the real content of Narodism seemed all the more necessary for the fact that Mr. Struve's aforementioned abstractness of exposition is his fundamental defect. That in the first place. And in the second place, "certain basic" propositions of the doctrine by which Mr. Struve is not bound demand that social ideas should be expressed in terms of social-economic relations.

And we shall now endeavour to show that unless this is done it is impossible to understand even the purely theoretical ideas of Narodism, such as the question of method in sociology.

Having pointed out that the Narodnik doctrine of a special method in sociology is best expounded by Mr. Mirtov and Mr. Mikhailovsky, Mr. Struve goes on to describe this doctrine as "subjective idealism," and in corroboration quotes from the works of the persons mentioned a number of passages on which it is worth while dwelling.

Both authors take as a cornerstone the thesis that history was made by "solitary fighting individuals." "Individuals make history" (Mirtov). Mr. Mikhailovsky puts it even more clearly:

"The living individual, with all his thoughts and feelings, becomes a maker of history on his own account. He, and not some mysterious force, sets aims in history and impels events towards them through the gauntlet of obstacles placed in his way by the elemental forces of nature and historical conditions" (p. 8).

This thesis that history is made by individuals is absolutely meaningless from the theoretical standpoint. All history consists of the actions of individuals, and it is the task of social science to explain

these actions; so that "the right of interfering in the course of events" (Mr. Mikhailovsky's words, quoted by Mr. Struve on page 8) is but an empty tautology. This is very clearly revealed in Mr. Mikhailovsky's last effusion. The living individual, he argues, impels events through the gauntlet of obstacles placed by the elemental forces of historical conditions. And of what do these "historical conditions" consist? According to the logic of the author, they consist in their turn of the actions of other "living individuals." A profound philosophy of history, is it not? The living individual impels events through the gauntlet of obstacles placed by other living individuals! And why are the actions of certain individuals called elemental, while of others it is said that they "impel events" towards previously established aims? It is obvious that to search for any theoretical meaning here would be an almost hopeless undertaking. The fact of the matter is that the historical conditions that provided our subjectivists with material for the "theory" consisted (as they still consist) of antagonistic relations and gave rise to the expropriation of the producer. Unable to comprehend these antagonistic relations, unable to find *in these latter* the social elements with which the "solitary individuals" could join forces, the subjectivists confined themselves to inventing theories which consoled the "solitary" individuals with the statement that history was made by "living individuals." The famous "subjective method in sociology" expresses nothing, absolutely nothing, but good intentions and bad comprehension. This is strikingly borne out by Mr. Mikhailovsky's subsequent reasoning, as quoted by the author.

European life, Mr. Mikhailovsky says,

"took shape just as senselessly and amorally as a river flows or a tree grows in nature. A river flows along the line of least resistance, washes away whatever it can wash away, even if it be a diamond mine, and flows around whatever it cannot wash away, even if it be a dungheap. Sluices, dams, canals and backwaters are erected by the initiative of human reason and sentiment. Such reason and sentiment, it may be said, were absent (?—P. S.) when the present economic system in Europe arose. They were in an embryonic state, and their influence on the natural, elemental course of things was insignificant" (p. 9).

Mr. Struve inserts a mark of interrogation, but it perplexes us why he inserts it only after one word and not after all of them, so meaningless is this whole effusion! What nonsense it is to say that

reason and sentiment were absent when capitalism arose! In what does capitalism consist if not in definite relations between people—and people without reason and sentiments are so far unknown. And how false it is to say that the influence of the reason and sentiments of the “living individuals” of that time on the “course of things” was “insignificant”! Quite the contrary. People in sound mind and judgment at that time erected extremely skilful sluices and dams, which forced the refractory peasant into the channel of capitalist exploitation; they created extremely artful channels of political and financial measures through which capitalist accumulation and capitalist expropriation swept, and were not content with the action of economic laws alone. In a word, all Mr. Mikhailovsky’s statements here quoted are so preposterously false that they cannot be attributed to theoretical mistakes only. They are entirely due to this author’s petty-bourgeois standpoint. Capitalism has already revealed its tendencies quite clearly; it has developed its inherent antagonism to the full; the contradiction of interests has already begun to assume definite forms and has even been reflected in Russian legislation—but the small producer stands aloof from this struggle. He is still tied by his tiny enterprise to the old bourgeois society, and therefore, while he is oppressed by the capitalist system, he is incapable of understanding the true causes of his oppression, and continues to console himself with the illusion that all misfortunes are due to the fact that the reason and sentiments of people are still in an “embryonic state.”

“Of course,” the ideologist of this petty bourgeois continues, “people have always endeavoured to influence the course of things in one way or another.”

But “the course of things” consists in the actions and “influences” of people, and in nothing else, so that this again is an empty phrase.

“But they were guided in this by the promptings of the most meagre experience and of the grossest interests; and it is obvious that it was only very rarely that these guides could chance upon the path indicated by modern science and modern moral ideas” (p. 9).

This is a petty-bourgeois morality, which condemns “grossness of interests” because of its inability to connect its “ideals” with any



immediate interests—it is a petty-bourgeois way of shutting one's eyes to the split which has already taken place and which is clearly reflected both in modern science and in modern moral ideas.

Naturally, the peculiarities of Mr. Mikhailovsky's method of reasoning remain unchanged when he passes to Russia. He "welcomes with all his heart" the equally strange assertions of a certain Mr. Yakovlev that Russia is a *tabula rasa*, that she can begin from the beginning, avoid the mistakes of other countries, and so on and so forth. And all this is said in the full knowledge that this *tabula rasa* still affords a firm foothold for representatives of the "old aristocratic" system, with its large-scale landed proprietorship and tremendous political privileges, and that on it capitalism, with all its "progressive" features, is rapidly developing. The petty bourgeois timidly closes his eyes to these *facts* and flies to the realm of innocent daydreams, such as that "we are beginning to live, now that science has already mastered certain truths and gained a certain amount of authority."

And so, the class origin of the sociological ideas of Narodism is already clear from those arguments of Mr. Mikhailovsky's which Mr. Struve quotes.

We cannot leave uncontested a remark which Mr. Struve directs against Mr. Mikhailovsky.

"According to his view," the author says, "there are no insurmountable historical tendencies which, as such, should serve on the one hand as a starting point, and on the other as compulsory bounds to the purposeful activity of individuals and social groups" (p. 11).

That is the language of an objectivist, and not of a Marxist (materialist). Between these two conceptions (systems of views) there is a difference, which should be dwelt on, since an incomplete grasp of this difference is one of the fundamental defects of Mr. Struve's book and manifests itself in the majority of his arguments.

The objectivist speaks of the necessity of a given historical process; the materialist makes an exact record of the given social-economic formation and of the antagonistic relations to which it gives rise. When demonstrating the necessity for a given series of facts, the objectivist always runs the risk of becoming an apologist for these facts. The materialist discloses the class contradictions and

in so doing defines his standpoint. The objectivist speaks of "insurmountable historical tendencies"; the materialist speaks of the class which "manages" the given economic system, giving rise to certain forms of counteraction on the part of other classes. Thus, on the one hand, the materialist is more consistent, more profound, fuller in his objectivism than the objectivist. He does not limit himself to speaking of the necessity of a process, but ascertains exactly what social-economic formation gives the process its content, *exactly what class* determines this necessity. In the present case, for example, the materialist would not content himself with recording the "insurmountable historical tendencies," but would point to the existence of certain classes, which determine the content of the given system and preclude the possibility of any solution except by the action of the producers themselves. On the other hand, materialism includes, so to speak, partisanship,<sup>1</sup> which enjoins the direct and open adoption of the standpoint of a definite social group in any judgment of events.<sup>2</sup>

From Mr. Mikhailovsky the author passes to Mr. Yuzhakov, who represents nothing independent or interesting. Mr. Struve quite justly describes his sociological arguments as "verbosity" which is "devoid of all meaning." It is worth dwelling on an extremely characteristic (for Narodism in general) difference between Mr. Yuzhakov and Mr. Mikhailovsky. Mr. Struve notes this difference by calling Mr. Yuzhakov a "nationalist," whereas, he says "all nationalism has always been absolutely alien" to Mr. Mikhailovsky, and for him, as he himself says, "the question of right embraces not only the Russian people but the toiling folk of the whole civilised world." It seems to me that this distinction also reflects the dual position of the small producer, who is a progressive element inasmuch as he is beginning, as Mr. Yuzhakov, with unconscious aptness, puts it, "to differentiate himself from society," and a reactionary element inasmuch as he is fighting for the preservation of his position as a small master and is striving to retard economic

<sup>1</sup> Regarding partisanship in philosophy, see pp. 387-93 in this volume.—*Ed.*

<sup>2</sup> Concrete examples of Mr. Struve's incomplete application of materialism and the lack of consistency in his theory of the class struggle will be given below in each particular instance.

development. That is why Russian Narodism is able to combine progressive, democratic features in its doctrine with the reactionary features which evoke the sympathy of *Moskovskiye Vedomosti*. As to the latter features, it would be difficult, it seems to me, to express them more clearly than was done by Mr. Yuzhakov in the following passage, which is quoted by Mr. Struve.

"Only the peasantry has always and everywhere been the vehicle for the pure idea of labour. Apparently, this same idea has been brought into the arena of modern history by the so-called fourth estate, the urban proletariat. But the changes its meaning has undergone are so considerable that the peasant would hardly recognise it as the customary basis of his existence. The *right* to work, instead of the sacred *duty* of working, the duty of earning one's bread by the sweat of one's brow [so that is what was concealed behind the "pure idea of labour"! The purely feudal idea of the "duty" of the peasant to earn bread . . . so that he may perform compulsory service? This "sacred" duty is preached to the poor nag that is browbeaten and crushed by it!];<sup>1</sup> then, the singling out of labour and the reward for it, all this agitation about a just reward for labour, as though labour itself did not create that reward by its own fruits ["What is this?"—Mr. Struve asks—"*sancta simplicitas*, or something else?" Worse. This is an apotheosis of the docility of the labourer tied to the soil and accustomed to work for others almost for nothing!; the differentiation of labour from life into some abstract (?!—P. S.) category, depicted by so many hours of work in the factory and having no other (?!—P. S.) relation, no tie with the daily interests of the worker [the purely petty-bourgeois cowardice of the small producer, who at times suffers very severely from the modern capitalist organisation, but who fears nothing on earth more than a serious movement against this organisation on the part of elements who have become completely "differentiated" from every tie with it]; finally, the absence of a settled existence, a domestic hearth created by labour, the changing field of labour—all this is entirely alien to the idea of peasant labour. The labour hearth, inherited from their fathers and forefathers; labour, whose interests permeate the whole of life and build its morals; love of the soil, watered by the sweat of many generations—all this, which constitutes an inalienable and distinguishing feature of peasant life, is absolutely unknown to the working class proletariat; and therefore, while the life of the latter, although the life of a toiler, is built up on bourgeois morality (an individualistic morality based on the principle of acquired right) or, at best, on abstract philosophical morality, at the basis of peasant morality there lies labour, its logic and its demands" (p. 18).

Here the reactionary features of the small producer are already revealed in their pure form: his meekness, which induces him to

<sup>1</sup> The author—as befits a petty bourgeois—presumably does not know that the West European toiling folk have long ago outgrown the stage of development in which they demanded the "right to work," and that they are now demanding the "right to leisure," the right to rest from the excessive toil which cripples and oppresses them.

believe that he is condemned forever to the "sacred duty" of being a beast of burden; his servility, "inherited from his fathers and forefathers"; his attachment to a tiny individual enterprise, the fear of losing which compels him to renounce even the very thought of a "just reward" and to be an enemy of all "agitation," and which, because of the low productivity of labour and the fact that the labourer is tied to one place, turns him into a savage and, by virtue of economic conditions alone, necessarily engenders his meekness and servility. The breakdown of these reactionary features must unquestionably be placed to the credit of our bourgeoisie; the progressive work of the latter consists precisely in the fact that it severed all the ties that bound the toiler to the feudal system and to feudal traditions. It replaced, and is still replacing, the mediæval forms of exploitation—which were concealed by the *personal* relations of the lord to his vassal, of the local kulak and merchant to the local peasants and handicraftsmen, of the patriarchal "modest and bearded millionaire" to his "lads," and which as a result gave rise to ultra-reactionary ideas—by the exploitation of the "entrepreneur of the nonchalant European type," exploitation which is impersonal, naked and unconcealed, and which therefore shatters absurd illusions and dreams. It has destroyed the old aloofness ("settled existence") of the peasant, who refused to know, *and could not know*, anything but his plot of land, and has begun—by socialising labour and vastly increasing its productivity—to force the producer into the arena of social life.

In respect to Mr. Yuzhakov's argument here given, Mr. Struve says: "Thus Mr. Yuzhakov quite clearly documents the Slavophilic roots of Narodism" (p. 18); and somewhat later, summarising his exposition of the sociological ideas of Narodism, he adds that the belief in "a peculiar development of Russia" constitutes "a historical tie between Slavophilism and Narodism," and that therefore the dispute between the Marxists and the Narodniks is "a natural continuation of the differences between Slavophilism and Westernism" (p. 29). This latter statement, it seems to me, requires limitation. It is indisputable that the Narodniks are very much to blame for a jingoism of the lowest type (Mr. Yuzhakov, for instance). It is also indisputable that ignoring Marx's sociological method and

his formulation of questions concerning the direct producers is, to those Russian people who desire to represent the interests of these direct producers, equivalent to complete alienation from Western "civilisation." But the essence of Narodism lies still deeper; it lies not in the doctrine of peculiar development and in Slavophilism, but in the representation of the interests and ideas of the Russian small producer. It is for this reason that there were writers among the Narodniks (and they were the best of the Narodniks) who, as Mr. Struve himself admitted, had nothing in common with Slavophilism, who even admitted that Russia had entered the same road as Western Europe. You can make nothing of such categories as Slavophilism and Westernism in the problems of Russian Narodism. Narodism reflected a fact in Russian life which was still almost non-existent in the period when Slavophilism and Westernism arose, namely, the antithetic character of the interests of labour and *capital*. It reflected this *fact* through the prism of the living conditions and interests of the small producer; it therefore reflected it distortedly, timidly, and created a theory which gave prominence not to the antagonism of social interests, but to sterile hopes in a different path of development. And it is our duty to correct this mistake of Narodism by showing which social group can become the real representative of the interests of the direct producer.

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Let us now pass to the second chapter of Mr. Struve's book.

The author's plan of exposition is as follows: first he mentions the general considerations which induce us to regard materialism as the only correct method of social science; then he sets forth the views of Marx and Engels; and, finally, he applies the conclusions arrived at to certain phenomena of Russian life. In view of the particular importance of the subject of this chapter, we shall endeavour to analyse its contents in greater detail and to note those points which provoke disagreement.

The author begins with the entirely correct contention that a theory which reduces the social process to the actions of "living individuals," who "set themselves aims" and "impel events," is the result of a misunderstanding. Nobody, of course, ever thought of

ascribing to "a social group an existence independent of the individuals forming it" (p. 31), but the point is that "the concrete individual is a product of all past and contemporary individuals, i.e., of a social group" (p. 31). Let us explain the author's thought. History, Mr. Mikhailovsky argues, is made by "the living individual with all his thoughts and feelings." Quite true. But what determines these "thoughts and feelings"? Can one seriously advocate the opinion that they arise fortuitously and do not necessarily follow from the given social milieu, which serves as the material, the object of the spiritual life of the individual, and which is reflected in his "thoughts and feelings" either positively or negatively, in the representation of the interests of one social class or another? And further, by what tokens are we to judge of the *real* "thoughts and feelings" of *real* individuals? Naturally, there can be only one such token, namely, the *actions* of these individuals. And since we are dealing only with social "thoughts and feelings," one should add: the *social actions* of individuals, i.e., *social facts*.

"Distinguishing the social group from the individual." Mr. Struve says, "we understand by the former all the heterogeneous interactions between individuals which arise out of social life and acquire objective form in custom and law, in morals and morality, in religious ideas" (p. 32).

In other words: the materialist sociologist, taking the definite social relations of people as the object of his inquiry, by that very fact also studies the real *individuals* from whose actions these relations are formed. The subjectivist sociologist, beginning his argument supposedly with "living individuals," actually begins by endowing these individuals with such "thoughts and feelings" as he considers rational (for by isolating his "individuals" from the concrete social environment he deprived himself of the possibility of studying their *real* thoughts and feelings), i.e., he "begins with a utopia," as Mr. Mikhailovsky was obliged to admit.<sup>1</sup> And since, further, this sociologist's own ideas of what is rational reflect (without his realizing it) the given social milieu, the final conclusions he draws from his arguments, which seem to him a "pure" product of "modern science and modern moral ideas," in fact only reflect the standpoint and interests of . . . the petty bourgeois.

<sup>1</sup> *Works*, Vol. III, p. 155, "Sociology Must Begin With a Utopia."

This last point—*i.e.*, that a special sociological theory of the role of the individual, or of the subjective method, replaces a critical, materialist enquiry by a utopia—is particularly important and, since it has been omitted by Mr. Struve, it deserves to be dwelt on a little.

Let us take as an illustration the common Narodist argument about the handicraftsman. The Narodnik depicts the pitiable condition of the handicraftsman, the poverty of his enterprise, the monstrous way in which he is exploited by the merchant, who pockets the lion's share of the product and leaves the producer a few pennies for a sixteen or eighteen hour day, and concludes that the wretched level of production and the exploitation of the labour of the handicraftsman is a bad side of the given system. But the handicraftsman is not a wage worker, and that is a good side. The good side must be preserved and the bad side destroyed, and for this purpose handicraft artels must be organised. Here you have the complete Narodnik argument.

The Marxist argues in a different way. Acquaintance with the condition of an industrial pursuit evokes in him, in addition to the question whether it is good or bad, the question how the industry is organised, *i.e.*, what forms the relations between handicraftsmen in the production of a given product take, *and why these forms and no others*. And he sees that this organisation is commodity production, *i.e.*, production by *separate* producers, connected among themselves by the *market*. The product of the individual producer, designed for consumption by others, can reach the consumer and give the producer the right to receive another social product only after it has assumed the form of *money*, *i.e.*, after it has undergone preliminary social evaluation, both qualitatively and quantitatively. And this evaluation takes place behind the back of the producer, through the fluctuations of the market. These market fluctuations, which are unknown to the producer and independent of him, are bound to cause inequality among the producers, are bound to accentuate this inequality, impoverishing some and putting others in possession of money, which is the product of social labour. The reason for the power of the owner of money, the merchant, is therefore clear: it consists in the fact that among the handicrafts-

men, who live from day to day, at most from week to week, he alone possesses money, *i.e.*, the product of earlier *social* labour, which in his hands becomes *capital*, an instrument for appropriating the surplus product of other handicraftsmen. Hence, the Marxist concludes, under such a system of social economy the expropriation and exploitation of the producer are absolutely inevitable, and the subordination of the propertyless to the propertied and the contradiction of their interests, which provides the content of the *scientific* conception of the *struggle of classes*, are absolutely necessary. And, consequently, the interest of the producer lies not in the reconciliation of these contradictory elements, but, on the contrary, in the development of the contradiction and in the development of the consciousness of this contradiction. We see that the growth of commodity production is leading to such a development of the contradiction in our country too, in Russia: as the market widens and production grows, merchant capital becomes transformed into industrial capital. Machine industry, by finally destroying small, isolated production (it has already been radically undermined by the merchant), socialises labour. The system of *Plusmacherei*,<sup>1</sup> which in handicraft production is obscured by the apparent independence of the handicraftsman and the apparent fortuitousness of the power of the merchant, now becomes clear and unconcealed. "Labour," which even in handicraft industry participated in "life" only by the fact that it presented the surplus product to the merchants, is now becoming finally "differentiated from the life" of bourgeois society. This society discards it with utter frankness, giving full fruition to its basic principle, that the producer can secure the means of subsistence only when he finds an owner of money who will condescend to appropriate the surplus product of his labour. And what the handicraftsman (and his ideologist—the Narodnik) could not understand, namely, the profound, class character of the aforementioned contradiction, becomes self-evident to the producer. That is why the interests of the handicraftsman can be represented only by this advanced producer.

Let us now compare these arguments from the standpoint of their sociological method.

<sup>1</sup> Profit-squeezing.—*Trans.*



The Narodnik assures us that he is a realist. "History is made by living individuals," and I, he declares, begin with the "feelings" of the handicraftsman, whose attitude is hostile to the present system, and with his thoughts on the creation of a better system, whereas the Marxist argues about some sort of a necessity and inevitability. He is a mystic and a metaphysician.

It is true, this mystic rejoins, that history is made by "living individuals"—and I, when examining the question why social relations in handicraft industry assumed such a form and no other (you have not even raised this question!), in fact examined *how* "living individuals" *have made their history* and are still making it. And I had a reliable criterion to show that I am dealing with "living," real individuals, with real thoughts and feelings: this criterion was that their "thoughts and feelings" had already found expression in actions and had created definite social relations. True, I never say that "history is made by living individuals" (because it seems to me that this is an empty phrase), but when I investigate *actual* social relations and their *actual* development, I am in fact examining the product of the activities of living individuals. But you, while you talk of "living individuals," as a matter of fact take as your starting point not the "living individual," with the "thoughts and feelings" that are actually created by his conditions of life, by the given system of relations of production, but a marionette, and stuff its head with your own "thoughts and feelings." Naturally, such a pursuit only leads to pious dreams; life holds aloof from you, and you from life.<sup>1</sup> But that is not all. Just see *what* you are stuffing into the head of this marionette, and what measures you are advocating. In recommending to the toilers the artel, as "the path indicated by modern science and modern moral ideas," you failed to note one little circumstance, namely, the whole organisation of our social economy. Not understanding that this is a capitalist economy, you did not note that *on this basis* all possible artels will be nothing but feeble palliatives, which will do absolutely nothing to remove

<sup>1</sup> "Practice mercilessly curtails it" ("the possibility of a new historical path"); "it shrinks, one might say, from day to day" (Mr. Mikhailovsky, as quoted by P. Struve, p. 16). What shrinks, of course, is not the "possibility," which never existed, but illusions. And a good thing too.

either the concentration of the means of production, including money, in the hands of a minority (this concentration is an indisputable fact), or the complete impoverishment of the vast mass of the population—palliatives which at the best will only elevate a handful of individual handicraftsmen to the ranks of the petty bourgeoisie. You are turning from an ideologist of the toilers into an ideologist of the petty bourgeoisie.

Let us, however, return to Mr. Struve. Having shown the emptiness of the Narodniks' arguments regarding the "individual," he continues:

"That sociology does indeed always strive to reduce the elements of individuality to social sources is corroborated by every attempt to explain any big phase in historical evolution. When the 'historical individual' or the 'great man' is referred to, there is always a tendency to represent him as the 'vehicle' of the spirit of a certain era, as the representative of his time, and his actions, his successes and failures, as a necessary result of the whole preceding course of affairs" (p. 32).

This general tendency of every attempt to *explain* social phenomena, *i.e.*, to create a social science,

"is clearly expressed in the doctrine that the class struggle is the basic process in social evolution. Since the individual had been discarded, some other element had to be found. The social group proved to be such an element" (p. 33).

Mr. Struve is absolutely right when he says that the theory of the class struggle culminates, so to speak, the general endeavour of sociology to reduce "the elements of individuality to social sources." More, the theory of the class struggle is the first to pursue this endeavour so completely and consistently as to elevate sociology to the level of a science. This was achieved by the materialist definition of the concept "group." In itself, this concept is still too indefinite and arbitrary: religious, ethnographical, political, juridical and other phenomena may also be considered a criterion for distinguishing "groups." There is no firm token by which particular "groups" in each of these spheres can be distinguished. The theory of the class struggle represents a tremendous acquisition for social science for the very reason that it lays down the methods by which the individual can be reduced to the social with absolute precision

and definition. Firstly, this theory evolved the concept of the *economic formation of society*. Taking as a basis a fact that is fundamental to all human society, namely, the mode of procuring the means of subsistence, it connected up with this the relations between people that are formed under the influence of the given modes of procuring the means of subsistence, and showed that this system of relations ("relations of production," to use Marx's terminology) is the *basis* of society, which invests itself in political and legal forms and in definite trends of social thought. According to Marx's theory, each of these systems of production relations is a separate social organism, whose inception, functioning, and transition to a higher form, conversion into another social organism, are governed by special laws. This theory applied to social science that objective, general scientific criterion of repetition which the subjectivists declared could not be applied to sociology. They argued in fact that owing to the tremendous complexity and variety of social phenomena it is impossible to study these phenomena without separating the important from the unimportant, and that such a separation demands the standpoint of "critically thinking" and "morally developed" individuals. And they thus happily arrived at transforming social science into a series of sermons on petty-bourgeois morality, samples of which we have seen in the case of Mr. Mikhailovsky, who philosophised about the inexpediency of history and about paths directed by "the light of science." It was these arguments that Marx's theory severed at the very root. The distinction between the important and the unimportant was replaced by the distinction between the economic structure of society, as the *content*, and the political and ideological *form*. The very concept economic structure was explained with exactitude by a refutation of the views of the earlier economists, who discerned laws of nature where there is room only for the laws of a special, historically-defined system of relations of production. The subjectivists' arguments about "society" in general, meaningless arguments that did not go beyond petty-bourgeois utopias (because even the possibility of generalising the most varied social systems into special forms of social organisms was not ascertained), were replaced by an *investigation* of definite forms of structure of society. Secondly, the

actions of "living individuals" within the limits of each such economic formation of society, actions infinitely varied and apparently not lending themselves to systematisation, were generalised and reduced to the actions of groups of individuals differing from each other in the role they played in the system of production relations, in the conditions of production, and, consequently, in their conditions of life and the interests determined by these conditions—in a word, to the actions of *classes*, the struggle between which determines the development of society. This refuted the childishly naïve and purely mechanical view of history held by the subjectivists, who rested content with the absolutely meaningless thesis that history is made by living individuals, and who refused to examine what social conditions determined their actions, and how exactly. Subjectivism was replaced by the view that the social process is a process of natural history—without which view, of course, there could be no social science. Mr. Struve very justly remarks that "ignoring the individual in sociology, or rather, removing him from sociology, is essentially a particular instance of the striving for scientific knowledge" (p. 33), and that "individuality" exists not only in the spiritual but also in the physical world. The whole point of the matter is that the reduction of "individuality" to certain general laws was accomplished for the physical realm long ago, while for the social realm it was firmly established only by Marx's theory.

Another objection made by Mr. Struve to the sociological theory of the Russian subjectivists is that, in addition to all the above-mentioned arguments.

"sociology cannot under any circumstances recognise what we call individuality as a primary fact, since the very concept individuality (which is not subject to further explanation) and the fact that corresponds to it are the result of a long social process" (p. 36).

This is a very true thought, which is all the more worthy of being dwelt on because the author's argument contains certain inaccuracies. He cites the views of *Simmel*, who, he declares, in his work *Social Differentiation* proved the direct interdependence between the development of the individual and the differentiation of the group to which the individual belongs. Mr. Struve contrasts this thesis with M. Mikhailovsky's theory of the inverse dependence between the

development of the individual and the differentiation ("heterogeneity") of society.

"In an undifferentiated milieu," Mr. Struve objects, "the individual will be 'harmoniously integral' . . . in his 'homogeneity and impersonality.' . . . A real individual cannot be 'an aggregate of all the features inherent in the human organism in general,' simply because such a fullness of content exceeds the powers of the real individual. . . .

"In order that the individual may be differentiated, he must live in a differentiated milieu" (pp. 38-39).

It is not clear from this exposition how exactly Simmel formulates the question and how he argues. But as transmitted by Mr. Struve the formulation of the question suffers from the same defects that we find in the case of Mr. Mikhailovsky. Abstract reasoning about the nature of the dependence of the development (and welfare) of the individual on the differentiation of society is quite unscientific, because no correlation can be established that will suit every form of social structure. The very concepts "differentiation," "heterogeneity," and so on, acquire absolutely different meanings, depending on the particular social milieu to which they are applied. Mr. Mikhailovsky's fundamental error consists precisely in the abstract dogmatism of his reasoning, which endeavours to embrace "progress" in general instead of studying the concrete "progress" of some concrete social formation. When Mr. Struve sets his own general theses (described above) against Mr. Mikhailovsky, he repeats the latter's mistake by abandoning the depiction and explanation of a concrete process for the realm of nebulous and unfounded dogmas. Let us take an example: "The harmonious integrity of the individual in its content is determined by the degree of development, *i.e.*, the differentiation of the group," says Mr. Struve, and puts this phrase in italics. But what are we to understand here by the "differentiation" of the group? Has the abolition of serfdom accentuated or weakened this "differentiation"? Mr. Mikhailovsky answers the question in the latter sense ("What Is Progress?"); Mr. Struve would most likely have answered it in the former sense, on the grounds of the increased social division of labour. The one had in mind the abolition of distinctions of rank; the other, the creation of economic distinctions. The term, as you see, is so indefinite that it can be applied to opposite things. Another example. The transition

from capitalist manufacture to large-scale machine industry may be regarded as a diminution of "differentiation," for the detailed division of labour among specialised workers ceases. Yet there can be no doubt that the conditions for the development of the individual are far more favourable (for the worker) precisely in the latter case. The conclusion is that the very formulation of the question is incorrect. The author himself admits that there is also an antagonism between the individual and the group (to which Mr. Mikhailovsky also refers).

"But life," he adds, "is never made up of *absolute* contradictions: in life everything is *mobile* and *relative*, and at the same time all the separate sides are in a state of constant interaction" (p. 39).

If that is so, why was it necessary to speak of absolute interrelations between the group and the individual, interrelations having no connection with the strictly defined factor of the development of a definite social formation? Why could not the whole argument have been transferred to the concrete process of evolution of Russia? The author has made an attempt to formulate the question in this way, and if he had adhered to it consistently his argument would have gained a great deal thereby.

"It was only the division of labour—that fall from grace, according to Mr. Mikhailovsky's doctrine—that created the conditions for the development of the 'individual,' in whose name Mr. Mikhailovsky justly protests against the modern forms of division of labour" (p. 38).

That is excellently put; only in place of "division of labour" he should have said "capitalism," and, even more narrowly, *Russian capitalism*. The progressive feature of capitalism consists precisely in the fact that it destroyed the old, cramped conditions of human life, which dulled the mind and prevented the producers from taking their destinies into their own hands. The tremendous development of trade relations and world exchange and the constant migrations of vast masses of the population shattered the ancient fetters of the tribe, family and territorial community and created that variegation of development, that "variegation of talents and wealth of social relations,"<sup>1</sup> which plays so great a role in the modern history of the

<sup>1</sup> K. Marx, *Der achtzehnte Brumaire*, S. 98 usw. (Karl Marx, *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, p. 98 et seq. Lenin referred to the German text

West. In Russia this process was fully manifested in the post-Reform era, when the ancient forms of labour very rapidly collapsed and prime place was assumed by the purchase and sale of labour power, which tore the peasant from the patriarchal, semi-feudal family, from the stupefying conditions of village life, and which replaced the semi-feudal forms of appropriation of surplus profit by purely capitalist forms. This economic process was reflected in the social sphere by a "general heightening of the sense of individuality," by the squeezing of the landlord class out of "society" by the commoners, by a heated literary war against senseless mediæval restrictions on the individual, and so on. That it was post-Reform Russia which produced this heightened sense of individuality, of personal dignity, the Narodniks will probably not deny. But they do not ask themselves what material conditions led to this. Nothing of the kind, of course, could have happened under serfdom. And so the Narodnik welcomes the "emancipatory" Reform, not observing that he is guilty of the same shortsighted optimism as the bourgeois historians of whom Marx wrote that they regarded the peasant Reform through the chiaroscuro of "emancipation," without observing that this "emancipation" consisted only in the replacement of one form by another, the replacement of feudal surplus product by bourgeois surplus value. Exactly the same thing has happened in our country. It was the "old manorial" economy, which tied men to their localities and divided the population into handfuls of subjects of individual lords, that caused the suppression of the individual. And, furthermore, it was capitalism that freed the individual from all feudal fetters, that placed him in independent relation to the market, that made him a commodity owner (and as such the equal of all other commodity owners), and that heightened the sense of individuality. If the Narodnik gentlemen are pharisaically shocked when they hear speak of the progressiveness of Russian capitalism, it is only because they do not reflect on the material conditions which make for those "benefits of progress" that mark post-Reform Russia. When Mr. Mikhailovsky begins his "sociology" with the "individual" who protests against Russian capitalism as a fortuitous and transitory deviation

both because of the censorship and because no Russian translation was at that time available.—*Ed.*)

of Russia from the right path, he destroys his own position by failing to realise that it was capitalism alone that created the conditions which make this protest of the individual possible. This example once more shows us what amendments have to be made to Mr. Struve's arguments. The question should have been made entirely one of Russian realities, of ascertaining what actually exists and why it is so and not otherwise. It was not without good reason that the Narodniks did not base their whole sociology on an analysis of reality but on arguments about what "might be"; they could not help seeing that reality was mercilessly destroying their illusions.

The author concludes his examination of the theory of "individuals" with the following formulation:

"To sociology, the individual is a function of the environment . . . the individual is here a formal concept, whose content is supplied by an investigation of the social group" (p. 40).

This last comparison brings out the contrast between subjectivism and materialism very well. When they argued about the "individual" the subjectivists defined the *content* of this concept *i.e.*, the "thoughts and feelings" of the individual, his social acts) *a priori*, that is, they insinuated their utopias instead of "investigating the social group."

Another "important aspect" of materialism, Mr. Struve continues, "consists in the fact that economic materialism subordinates the idea to the fact, consciousness and what ought to be to being" (p. 40). Here, of course, to "subordinate" means to assign to a subordinate position in the explanation of social phenomena. The Narodnik subjectivists do exactly the opposite: they base their arguments on "ideals," without realising that these ideals can only be a certain reflection of reality, and, consequently, must be verified by facts, based on facts. But then this latter thesis will be incomprehensible to the Narodnik without explanation. How is that?—he asks himself; ideals should judge facts, show how they should be changed, verify facts, and not be verified by them. To the Narodnik, who is accustomed to hover in the clouds, this appears to be a compromise with facts. Let us explain.

The existence of "business at the expense of others," the existence



of exploitation, will always engender ideals antithetical to this system among the exploited themselves and among certain representatives of the "intelligentsia."

These ideals are extremely valuable to the Marxist; he argues with Narodism only on the basis of these ideals; he argues exclusively about the construction of these ideals and their realisation.

The Narodnik thinks it enough to note the fact that gives rise to such ideals, then to refer to the legitimacy of the ideal from the standpoint of "modern science and modern moral ideas" (and he does not realise that these "modern ideas" are only concessions made by West European "social opinion" to the new force that is arising), and then to cry to "society" and the "state": Ensure it, protect it, organise it!

The Marxist proceeds from the same ideal; but he compares it not with "modern science and modern moral ideas,"<sup>1</sup> but with *the existing class contradictions*, and therefore formulates it not as a demand of "science," but as a demand of such and such a class, provoked by such and such social relations (which must be objectively investigated), and achievable only in such and such a way in consequence of such and such properties of these relations. If ideals are not based on facts *in this way*, they will remain but pious wishes with no chance of being accepted by the masses and, hence, of being realised.

Having thus stated the general theoretical propositions which compel us to regard materialism as the only correct method of social science, Mr. Struve proceeds to expound the views of Marx and Engels, quoting principally the works of the latter. This is an extremely interesting and instructive part of the book.

Extremely just is the author's statement that "nowhere does one meet with such misunderstanding of Marx as among the Russian publicists" (p. 44). In illustration, he first of all cites Mr. Mikhailovsky, who regards Marx's "historico-philosophical theory" only as an explanation of the "genesis of the capitalist system." Mr. Struve

<sup>1</sup> Engels, in *Herrn E. Dührings Umwälzung der Wissenschaft* (*Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science—Ed.*), very aptly points out that this is the old psychological method of comparing one's concept not with the fact it reflects, but with another concept, with a cast of another fact.

quite rightly protests against this. Indeed, it is a highly characteristic fact. Mr. Mikhailovsky has written about Marx several times, but he has never even hinted of the relation of *Marx's method* to the "subjective method of sociology." Mr. Mikhailovsky has written about *Capital* and has declared his "solidarity" (?) with Marx's economic doctrine, but he has passed over in complete silence the question—for example—whether the Russian subjectivists do not conform to the method of Proudhon, who wanted to refashion commodity production in accordance with his ideal of justice.<sup>1</sup> In what way does this criterion (of justice—*justice éternelle*<sup>2</sup>) differ from Mr. Mikhailovsky's criterion: "modern science and modern moral ideas"? And why did Mr. Mikhailovsky, who has always protested so vigorously against identifying the method of the social sciences with the method of the natural sciences, not quarrel with Marx's statement that this method of Proudhon's is just as absurd as if a chemist had desired instead of "studying the real laws of metabolism" to alter metabolism in accordance with the laws of "affinity"? Why did he not quarrel with Marx's view that the social process is a "process of natural history"? It cannot be explained by lack of acquaintance with the literature; the explanation evidently lies in an utter failure or refusal to understand. Mr. Struve, it seems to me, is the first in our literature to have pointed this out—and that is greatly to his credit.

Let us now pass to those statements of the author on the subject of Marxism which evoke criticism.

"We cannot but admit," says Mr. Struve, "that a *purely philosophical proof* of this doctrine has not yet been provided, and that it has not yet coped with the vast concrete material presented by world history. What is needed, evidently, is a reconsideration of the facts from the standpoint of the new theory; what is needed is a criticism of the theory in accordance with facts. Perhaps many one-sidednesses and over-hasty generalisations would be abandoned" (p. 46).

It is not quite clear what the author means by "a purely philosophical proof"? From the standpoint of Marx and Engels, philosophy has no right to a separate, independent existence, and its material is

<sup>1</sup> *Das Kapital*. I. B., 2te Aufl., S. 62 u. 38 (*Capital*, Vol. I 2nd German edition, pp. 62, 38.—*Trans.*).

<sup>2</sup> Eternal justice.—*Trans.*

divided among the various branches of positive science. Thus one might understand philosophical proof to mean *either* a comparison of its premises with the firmly-established laws of other sciences (and Mr. Struve himself admitted that psychology already provides propositions that make it necessary to abandon subjectivism and to adopt materialism), *or* experience in the application of this theory. And in this connection we have the statement of Mr. Struve himself that

"materialism will always be entitled to credit for having provided a profoundly scientific and truly *philosophical* [author's italics] interpretation of a number [*nota bene*] of historical facts of vast importance" (p. 50).

This latter statement contains the recognition by the author that materialism is the only scientific method in sociology, and hence, of course, a "reconsideration of the facts" is required from this standpoint, especially a reconsideration of the facts of Russian history and life, which have been so zealously distorted by the Russian subjectivists. As regards the last remark about possible "one sidednesses" and "over-hasty generalisations," we shall not dwell on this general, and therefore vague, statement, but shall turn directly to one of the amendments made by the author, "who is not infected with orthodoxy," to the "over-hasty generalisations" of Marx.

It is on the question of the state. Denying the state, "Marx and his followers . . . allowed themselves . . . to go too far in their criticism of the *modern state*" and were guilty of "one-sidedness."

"This state," Mr. Struve says, correcting this, "is first of all the *organisation of order*; it is, however, the organisation of rule (class) in a society in which the subordination of certain groups to others is determined by its economic structure" (p. 53).

Tribal life, in the opinion of the author, knew the state; and it will remain even after classes are abolished, for the earmark of a state is coercive power.

It is simply astonishing that with such a surprising lack of arguments the author criticises Marx from his professorial standpoint. First of all, he quite wrongly regards coercive power as the earmark of the state: there is a coercive power in every human community; and there was one in the tribal system and in the family, but there was no state. "The essential feature of the state," says Engels in the work from which Mr. Struve took the quotation about

the state, "is a public power separated from the mass of the people" (*Ursprung der Familie* usw., 2-te Aufl., S. 84);<sup>1</sup> and somewhat earlier he speaks of the institution of the naucrary and says that it "undermined the tribal system in two ways: firstly, by creating a public power (*öffentliche Gewalt*), which no longer simply coincided with the sum-total of the armed people." Thus the earmark of a state is the existence of a separate class of people in whose hands power is concentrated. Obviously, nobody could use the term state of a community in which the "organisation of order" is administered in turn by *all* its members. Furthermore, Mr. Struve's arguments are still more unsubstantial in relation to the modern state. To say of it that it is "first of all [*sic!*] the organisation of order" is to fail to comprehend one of the most important points in Marx's theory. The particular stratum with which the power in modern society lies is the bureaucracy. The direct and intimate connection between this organ and the class of the bourgeoisie, which rules modern society, is apparent both from history (the bureaucracy was the first political weapon of the bourgeoisie against the feudal lords, and against the representatives of the "old nobility" system in general, and the first appearance in the arena of political rule of people who were not high-born landowners, but commoners, "petty bourgeois") and from the very conditions of the formation and recruitment of this class, access to which is open only to bourgeois who have "risen from the people," and which is connected with that bourgeoisie by thousands of very strong ties.<sup>2</sup> The author's mistake is all the more vexing because it is precisely the Russian Narodniks, against whom he conceived the excellent idea of doing battle, who do not realise that every bureaucracy, by its historical origin, its present-day source, and its purpose, is purely and exclusively a bourgeois insti-

<sup>1</sup> *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State.—Trans.*

<sup>2</sup> Cf. K. Marx. *Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, S. 23, Leipzig 1876 (*The Civil War in France—Trans.*), and *Der achtzehnte Brumaire*, S. 45-46, Hamburg 1885 (*The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte—Trans.*): "But it is with the maintenance of that extensive state machine in its numerous ramifications [*i.e.*, the bureaucracy] that the material interests of the French bourgeoisie are interwoven in precisely the closest fashion. Here it finds posts for its surplus population and makes up in the form of state salaries for what it cannot pocket in the form of profits, interests, rents and honorariums." (*The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, p. 54, Eng. ed., Moscow, 1934.—*Trans.*

tution, to which only ideologists of the petty bourgeoisie are capable of turning in the interests of the producer.

It is also worth while to dwell a little on the attitude of Marxism to ethics. On pp. 64-65 the author quotes the excellent explanation given by Engels of the relation between freedom and necessity: "Freedom is the understanding of necessity." Far from assuming fatalism, determinism in fact provides a basis for reasonable action. One cannot refrain from adding that the Russian subjectivists could not understand even so elementary a question as freedom of will. Mr. Mikhailovsky helplessly confused determinism with fatalism and found a solution . . . in falling between two stools: not desiring to deny the rule of law, he asserted that freedom of will is a fact of consciousness (properly speaking, this is an idea which Mr. Mikhailovsky borrowed from Mirtov) and can therefore serve as a basis of ethics. It is clear that, applied to sociology, these ideas could provide nothing but a utopia or a vapid morality which ignores the class struggle that is going on in society. One therefore cannot deny the justice of Sombart's remark that "in Marxism itself there is not a grain of ethics from beginning to end": theoretically, it subordinates "the ethical standpoint" to the "principle of causality"; practically, it reduces it to the class struggle.

Mr. Struve supplements the exposition of materialism by an evaluation from the materialist standpoint of "two factors which play a very important part in all Narodnik arguments . . . the intelligentsia and the state" (p. 70). This evaluation again reflects the "unorthodoxy" of the author that was noted above in connection with his objectivism,

"If . . . all social groups in general represent a real force only to the extent that . . . they coincide with social classes or belong to them, then, evidently, 'the non-estate intelligentsia' is not a real social force" (p. 70).

Of course, in the abstract and theoretical sense the author is right. He catches the Narodniks on their own statements, so to speak. You say that it is the intelligentsia that must direct Russia along "different paths"—but you do not understand that since it does not belong to any class, it is a cipher. You boast that the Russian non-estate intelligentsia has always been distinguished for the "purity" of its ideas—but that is exactly why it has always been impotent. The

author's criticism is confined to comparing the absurd Narodnik *idea* of the omnipotence of the intelligentsia with his perfectly correct *idea* of the "impotence of the intelligentsia in the economic process" (p. 71). But this comparison is not enough. In order to judge the Russian "non-estate intelligentsia" as a special group in Russian society which is so characteristic of the whole post-Reform era—an era in which the noble was finally squeezed out by the commoner—and which undoubtedly played and is still playing a certain historical role, we must compare the ideas, and still more the programmes, of our "non-estate intelligentsia" *with the position and the interests of the given classes of Russian society*. To remove the possibility of our being suspected of partiality, we shall not make this comparison ourselves, but shall confine ourselves to referring to the Narodnik whose article was commented on in Chapter I. The conclusion that follows from all his comments is quite definite, namely, that the advanced, liberal, "democratic" intelligentsia of Russia was a bourgeois intelligentsia. The fact that the intelligentsia was "non-estate" in character in no way precludes the class origin of its ideas. The bourgeoisie has always and everywhere risen against feudalism in the name of the abolition of the social estates—and in our country, too, the non-estate intelligentsia rose against the ancient aristocratic system of social estates. The bourgeoisie has always and everywhere opposed the obsolete framework of the estates and other mediæval institutions in the name of the whole "people," within which class contradictions were still undeveloped. And it was right, both in the West and in Russia, because the institutions criticised were actually hampering *everybody*. As soon as the social estate system in Russia was dealt a vigorous blow (1861), the antagonism within the "people" immediately became apparent, and at the same time, and by virtue of this, antagonism became apparent within the non-estate intelligentsia—between the liberals and the Narodniks, the ideologists of the peasants (among whom the first Russian ideologists of the direct producers still did not, and could not, see the formation of antithetical classes). Subsequent economic development led to a more complete disclosure of the social antitheses within Russian society and compelled the recognition of the fact that the peasantry was becoming disintegrated into a rural bourgeoisie and a prole-

ariat. Narodism had already almost completely become an ideology of the petty bourgeoisie, Marxism having separated off from it. The Russian "non-estate intelligentsia," therefore, represents "a real social force" *inasmuch as it defends general bourgeois interests*.<sup>1</sup> If, nevertheless, this force *was unable* to create institutions suitable to the interests it defended, if it was unable to change "the atmosphere of modern Russian culture" (Mr. V. V.), if "active democracy in the era of the political struggle" gave way to "social indifferentism" (Mr. V. V. in *Nedelya*, 1894, No. 47), the cause of this lies not only in the dreaminess of our native "non-estate intelligentsia," but, and chiefly, in the position of those classes from which it emerged and from which it drew its strength, in their duality. It is undeniable that the Russian "atmosphere" entailed many disadvantages for them, but it also gave them certain advantages.

In Russia, especially great is the historical role of the class which, in the opinion of the Narodniks, is not the vehicle of "the pure idea of labour"; its "activity cannot be lulled by promises in the sweet by-and-by. Therefore, the fact that the Marxists refer to it, far from "breaking the democratic thread"—as is asserted by Mr. V. V., who specialises in the invention of the most incredible absurdities about the Marxists—catches up this "thread," which an indifferent "society" allows to fall from its hands, and demands that it be developed, strengthened and brought closer to life.

Connected with Mr. Struve's incomplete appraisal of the intelligentsia is his not altogether happy formulation of the following proposition:

"It must be proved," he says, "that the disintegration of the old economic system is inevitable" (p. 71).

Firstly, what does the author mean by "the old economic system"? Serfdom? But its disintegration does not have to be proved. "Popu-

<sup>1</sup> The petty-bourgeois nature of the vast majority of the wishes of the Narodniks has been pointed out in Chapter I. Wishes which do not come under this description (such as the "socialisation of labour") hold a minute place in modern Narodism. Both *Russkoye Bogatsvo* (1893, No. 11-12, Yuzhakov's article on "Problems of the Economic Development of Russia") and Mr. V. V. (*Essays in Theoretical Economics*, St. Petersburg, 1895) protest against Mr. N—on, who "severely" (Mr. Yuzhakov's expression) commented on the outworn panacea of credits, extension of agriculture, migration, etc.

lar production"? But he himself later says, and quite justly, that this word-combination "does not correspond to any real historical system" (p. 177), in other words, that it is a myth, because after the abolition of "serfdom" commodity production began to develop in our country very rapidly. The author was probably referring to that stage in the development of capitalism when it had not yet entirely disentangled itself from mediæval institutions, when merchant capital was still strong and when small-scale production still prevailed for the greater part of the producers. Secondly, what does the author regard as the criterion of this inevitability? The rule of certain classes or other, or the properties of the given system of production relations? In either case it amounts to *recording the existence* of one or another (capitalist) system; it amounts to *recording a fact*, and under no circumstances should it have been transplanted to the realm of reflections on the future. Such reflections should have been left the monopoly of Messieurs the Narodniks, who are seeking "different paths for the fatherland." The author himself says on the very next page that every state is "an expression of the rule of definite social classes" and that "there must be a re-distribution of the social force between various classes for the state to radically change its course" (p. 72). All this is profoundly true and very accurately aimed against the Narodniks; and, consequently, the question should be put in a different way: the *existence* (and not the "inevitable disintegration," etc.) of capitalist relations of production in Russia must be proved; it must be proved that the Russian data also justifies the law that "commodity production is capitalist production," i.e., that in our country too commodity production is everywhere growing into capitalist production; it must be proved that everywhere a system prevails which by its very nature is bourgeois, and that it is the rule of this class, and not the famous Narodnik "fortuitousnesses," or "policy," etc., that leads to the liberation of the producer from the means of production and to his conducting his business everywhere for the account of others.

With this we shall conclude our examination of the first part of Mr. Struve's book, which bears a general character.



## THE STATE

*A Lecture Delivered at the Sverdlov University, July 11, 1919*

COMRADES, according to the plan adopted by you and conveyed to me, the subject of today's talk is the state. I do not know how familiar you are already with this subject. If I am not mistaken your courses have only just begun and this is the first time you have had to approach this subject systematically. If that is so, then it may very well be that I may not succeed in the first lecture on this difficult subject in making my exposition sufficiently clear and comprehensible to many of my hearers. And if this should prove to be the case, I would request you not to be perturbed by the fact, because the question of the state is a most complex and difficult one, perhaps one that more than any other has been confused by bourgeois scholars, writers and philosophers. It should not therefore be expected that a clear understanding of this subject can be obtained from one brief talk, at a first sitting. After the first talk on this subject you should make a note of the passages which you have not understood or which are not clear to you, and return to them a second, a third and a fourth time, so that what you have not understood may be further supplemented and explained afterwards, both by reading and by various lectures and talks. I hope that we may manage to meet once again and that then we shall be able to exchange opinions on all supplementary questions and to see what has remained most unclear. I also hope that in addition to talks and lectures you will devote some time to reading at least some of the most important works of Marx and Engels. I have no doubt that these most important works are to be found in the catalogues of literature and in the handbooks which are available to the pupils of the Soviet and Party school; and although, again, some of you may at first be dismayed by the difficulty of the exposition, I must again warn you that you should not

be perturbed by this fact and that what is unclear at a first reading will become clear at a second reading, or when you subsequently approach the question from a somewhat different angle. For I once more repeat that the question is so complex and has been so confused by bourgeois scholars and writers that anybody who desires to study this question seriously and to master it independently must attack it several times, return to it again and again and consider the question from various angles in order to attain a clear and definite understanding of it. And it will be all the easier to return to this question because it is such a fundamental, such a basic question of all politics, and because not only in such stormy and revolutionary times as the present, but even in the most peaceful times, you will come across this question in any newspaper in connection with any economic or political question. Every day, in one connection or another, you will be returning to this question: what is the state, what is its nature, what is its significance and what is the attitude of our Party, the Party that is fighting for the overthrow of capitalism, the Communist Party—what is its attitude to the state? And the chief thing is that as a result of your reading, as a result of the talks and lectures you will hear on the state, you should acquire the ability to approach this question independently, since you will be meeting this question on the most varied occasions, in connection with the most trifling questions, in the most unexpected conjunctures, and in discussions and disputes with opponents. Only when you learn to find your way about independently in this question may you consider yourself sufficiently confirmed in your convictions and able with sufficient success to defend them against anybody and at any time.

After these brief remarks, I shall proceed to deal with the question itself—what is the state, how did it arise and what fundamentally should be the attitude to the state of the Party of the working class, which is fighting for the complete overthrow of capitalism—the Communist Party?

I have already said that you will scarcely find another question which has been so confused, deliberately or not, by the representatives of bourgeois science, philosophy, jurisprudence, political economy and journalism, as the question of the state. To this day this question is very often confused with religious questions; not only

representatives of religious doctrines (it is quite natural to expect it of them), but even people who consider themselves free from religious prejudice, very often confuse the special question of the state with questions of religion and endeavour to build up a doctrine—often a complex one, with an ideological, philosophical approach and foundation—which claims that the state is something divine, something supernatural, that it is a certain force, by virtue of which mankind has lived, and which confers on people, or which can confer on people, which brings with it, something that is not of man, but is given him from without—that it is a force of divine origin. And it must be said that this doctrine is so closely bound up with the interests of the exploiting classes—the landlords and the capitalists—so serves their interests, has so deeply permeated all the customs, views and science of the gentlemen who represent the bourgeoisie, that you will meet with relics of it on every hand, even the view of the state held by the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, who reject with disgust the suggestion that they are under the sway of religious prejudices and are convinced that they can regard the state with sober eyes. This question has been so confused and complicated because it affects the interests of the ruling classes more than any other (yielding in this respect only to the foundations of economic science). The doctrine of the state serves as a justification of social privilege, a justification of the existence of exploitation, a justification of the existence of capitalism—and that is why it would be the greatest mistake to expect impartiality on this question. To approach this question in the belief that people who claim to be scientific can give you a purely scientific view on the subject. When you have become familiar with this question and have gone into it sufficiently deeply, you will always discern in the question of the state, in the doctrine of the state, in the theory of the state, the mutual struggle of different classes, a struggle which is reflected or expressed in the conflict of views on the state, in the estimate of the role and significance of the state.

To approach this question as scientifically as possible we must cast at least a fleeting glance back on the history of the rise and development of the state. The most reliable thing in a question of social science and one that is most necessary in order really to ac-

quire the habit of approaching this question correctly and not allowing oneself to get lost in the mass of detail or in the immense variety of conflicting opinions—the most important thing in order to approach this question scientifically is not to forget the underlying historical connection, to examine every question from the standpoint of how the given phenomenon arose in history and what principal stages this phenomenon passed through in its development, and, from the standpoint of its development, to examine what the given thing has become today.

I hope that in connection with the question of the state you will acquaint yourselves with Engels' book *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. This is one of the fundamental works of modern Socialism, every phrase of which can be accepted with confidence, in the assurance that it has not been said at random but is based on immense historical and political material. Undoubtedly, not all the parts of this work have been expounded in an equally popular and comprehensible way: some of them assume that the reader already possesses certain knowledge of history and economics. But I again repeat that you should not be perturbed if on reading this work you do not understand it at once. That hardly happens to anyone. But returning to it later, when your interest has been aroused, you will succeed in understanding the greater part of it, if not the whole of it. I mention this book because it gives the correct approach to the question in the sense mentioned. It begins with a historical sketch of the origin of the state.

In order to approach this question correctly, as every other question, for example, the question of the origin of capitalism, the exploitation of man by man, Socialism, how Socialism arose, what conditions gave rise to it—every such question can be approached soundly and confidently only if we cast a glance back on the history of its development as a whole. In connection with this question it should first of all be noted that the state has not always existed. There was a time when there was no state. It appears wherever and whenever a division of society into classes appears, whenever exploiters and exploited appear.

Before the first form of exploitation of man by man arose, the first form of division into classes—slaveowners and slaves—there

existed the patriarchal family, or, as it is sometimes called, the clan family. Fairly definite traces of these primitive times have survived in the life of many primitive peoples; and if you take any work whatsoever on primitive culture, you will always come across more or less definite descriptions, indications and recollections of the fact that there was a time, more or less similar to primitive Communism, when the division of society into slaveowners and slaves did not exist. And in those times there was no state, no special apparatus for the systematic application of force and the subjugation of people by force. Such an apparatus is called the state.

In primitive society, when people still lived in small tribes and were still at the lowest stages of their development, in a condition approximating to savagery—an epoch from which modern, civilised human society is separated by several thousands of years—there were yet no signs of the existence of a state. We find the predominance of custom, authority, respect, the power enjoyed by the elders of the tribe; we find this power sometimes accorded to women<sup>1</sup>—the position of women then was not like the unfranchised and oppressed condition of women today—but nowhere do we find a special category of people who are set apart to rule others and who, in the interests and with the purpose of rule, systematically and permanently command a certain apparatus of coercion, an apparatus of violence, such as is represented at the present time, as you all realise, by the armed detachments of troops, the prisons and the other means of subjugating the will of others by force—all that which constitutes the essence of the state.

If we abstract ourselves from the so-called religious teachings, subtleties, philosophical arguments and the various opinions advanced by bourgeois scholars, and try to get at the real essence of the matter, we shall find that the state really does amount to such an apparatus of rule separated out from human society. When there appears such a special group of men who are occupied with ruling and nothing else, and who in order to rule need a special apparatus of coercion and of subjugating the will of others by force—prisons, special detachments of men, armies, etc.—there appears the state.

<sup>1</sup> This is a reference to the form of society known as the "matriarchate."  
—Ed.

But there was a time when there was no state, when general ties, society itself, discipline and the ordering of work were maintained by force of custom and tradition, or by the authority or the respect enjoyed by the elders of the tribe or by women—who in those times not only frequently enjoyed equal status with men, but not infrequently enjoyed even a higher status—and when there was no special category of persons, specialists in ruling. History shows that the state as a special apparatus for coercing people arose only wherever and whenever there appeared a division of society into classes, that is, a division into groups of people some of whom are permanently in a position to appropriate the labour of others, when some people exploit others.

And this division of society into classes must always be clearly borne in mind as a fundamental fact of history. The development of all human societies for thousands of years, in all countries without exception, reveals a general conformity to law, regularity and consistency in this development; so that at first we had a society without classes—the first patriarchal, primitive society, in which there were no aristocrats; then we had a society based on slavery—a slaveowning society. The whole of modern civilised Europe has passed through this stage—slavery ruled supreme two thousand years ago. The vast majority of the peoples of other parts of the world also passed through this stage. Among the less developed peoples traces of slavery survive to this day; you will find the institution of slavery in Africa, for example, at the present time. Slaveowners and slaves were the first important class divisions. The former group not only owned all the means of production—the land and tools, however primitive they may have been in those times—but also owned people. This group was known as slaveowners, while those who laboured and supplied labour for others were known as slaves.

This form was followed in history by another—feudalism. In the great majority of countries slavery evolved into feudalism. The fundamental divisions of society were now the feudal landlords and the peasant serfs. The form of relations between people changed. The slaveowners had regarded the slaves as their property; the law had confirmed this view and regarded the slave as a chattel completely owned by the slaveowner. As far as the peasant serf was

concerned, class oppression and dependence remained, but it was not considered that the feudal landlord owned the peasants as chattels, but that he was only entitled to their labour and to compel them to perform certain services. In practice, as you know, feudalism, especially in Russia, where it survived longest of all and assumed the grossest forms, in no way differed from slavery.

Further, with the development of trade, the appearance of the world market and the development of money circulation, a new class arose within feudal society—the capitalist class. From the commodity, the exchange of commodities and the rise of the power of money, there arose the power of capital. During the eighteenth century—or rather, from the end of the eighteenth century and during the nineteenth century—revolutions took place all over the world. Feudalism was eliminated in all the countries of Western Europe. This took place latest of all in Russia. In 1861 a radical change took place in Russia as well, as a consequence of which one form of society was replaced by another—feudalism was replaced by capitalism, under which division into classes remained as well as various traces and relics of feudalism, but in which the division into classes fundamentally assumed a new form.

The owners of capital, the owners of the land, the owners of the mills and factories in all capitalist countries constituted and still constitute an insignificant minority of the population who have complete command of the labour of the whole people, and who therefore command, oppress and exploit the whole mass of labourers, the majority of whom are proletarians, wage-workers, that procure their livelihood in the process of production only by the sale of their labour power. With the transition to capitalism, the peasants, who were already impoverished and downtrodden in feudal times, were converted partly (the majority) into proletarians, and partly (the minority) into wealthy peasants who themselves hired workers and who constituted a rural bourgeoisie.

This fundamental fact—the transition of society from primitive forms of slavery to feudalism and finally to capitalism—you must always bear in mind, for only by remembering this fundamental fact, only by inserting all political doctrines into this fundamental framework will you be able properly to appraise these doctrines and to

understand what they refer to; for each of these great periods in the history of mankind—slaveowning, feudal and capitalist—embraces scores and hundreds of centuries and presents such a mass of political forms, such a variety of political doctrines, opinions and revolutions, that we can understand this extreme diversity and immense variety—especially in connection with the political, philosophical and other doctrines of bourgeois scholars and politicians—only if we firmly hold to the guiding thread, this division of society into classes and this change in the forms of class rule, and from this standpoint examine all social questions—economic, political, spiritual, religious, etc.

If you examine the state from the standpoint of this fundamental division, you will find that before the division of society into classes, as I have already said, no state existed. But as the social division into classes arose and took firm root, as class society arose, the state also arose and took firm root. The history of mankind knows scores and hundreds of countries that have passed through and are still passing through slavery, feudalism and capitalism. In each of these countries, despite the immense historical changes that have taken place, despite all the political vicissitudes and all the revolutions associated with this development of mankind, in the transition from slavery through feudalism to capitalism and to the present world-wide struggle against capitalism, you will always discern the rise of the state. It has always been a certain apparatus which separated out from society and consisted of a group of people engaged solely, or almost solely, or mainly, in ruling. People are divided into ruled and into specialists in ruling, those who rise above society and are called rulers, representatives of the state. This apparatus, this group of people who rule others, always takes command of a certain apparatus of coercion, of physical force, irrespective of whether this coercion of people is expressed in the primitive club, or—in the epoch of slavery—in more perfected types of weapons, or in the firearms which appeared in the Middle Ages, or, finally, in modern weapons, which in the twentieth century are marvels of technique and are entirely based on the latest achievements of modern technology. The methods of coercion changed, but whenever there was a state there existed in every society a group of



persons who ruled, who commanded, who dominated and who in order to maintain their power possessed an apparatus of physical coercion, an apparatus of violence, with those weapons which corresponded to the technical level of the given epoch. And by examining these general phenomena, by asking ourselves why no state existed when there were no classes, when there were no exploiters and exploited, and why it arose when classes arose—only in this way shall we find a definite answer to the question of the essence of the state and its significance.

The state is a machine for maintaining the rule of one class over another. When there were no classes in society, when, before the epoch of slavery, people laboured in primitive conditions of greater equality, in conditions when productivity of labour was still at its lowest, and when primitive man could barely procure the wherewithal for the crudest and most primitive existence, a special group of people especially separated off to rule and dominate over the rest of society had not yet arisen, and could not have arisen. Only when the first form of the division of society into classes appeared, only when slavery appeared, when a certain class of people, by concentrating on the crudest forms of agricultural labour, could produce a certain surplus, when this surplus was not absolutely essential for the most wretched existence of the slave and passed into the hands of the slaveowner, when in this way the existence of this class of slaveowners took firm root—then in order that it might take firm root it was essential that a state should appear.

And this state did appear—the slaveowning state, an apparatus which gave the slaveowners power and enabled them to rule over the slaves. Both society and the state were then much smaller than they are now, they possessed an incomparably weaker apparatus of communication—the modern means of communication did not then exist. Mountains, rivers and seas were immeasurably greater obstacles than they are now, and the formation of the state was confined within far narrower geographical boundaries. A technically weak state apparatus served a state confined within relatively narrow boundaries and a narrow circle of action. Nevertheless, there did exist an apparatus which compelled the slaves to remain in slavery, which kept one part of society subjugated to and oppressed

by another. It is impossible to compel the greater part of society to work systematically for the other part of society without a permanent apparatus of coercion. So long as there were no classes, there was no apparatus like this. When classes appeared, everywhere and always as this division grew and took firmer hold, there also appeared a special institution—the state. The forms of state were extremely varied. During the period of slavery we already find diverse forms of the state in the most advanced, cultured and most civilised countries according to the standards of the time, for example, in ancient Greece and Rome, which rested entirely on slavery. At that time the difference was already arising between the monarchy and the republic, between the aristocracy and the democracy. 'A monarchy is the power of a single person, a republic is the absence of any non-elected power; an aristocracy is the power of a relatively small minority, a democracy is the power of the people (democracy in Greek literally means the power of the people). All these differences arose in the epoch of slavery. Despite these differences, the state in slave times was a slave state, irrespective of whether it was a monarchy or a republic, aristocratic or democratic.

In every course on the history of ancient times, when hearing a lecture on this subject you will hear about the struggle which was waged between the monarchical and republican states. But the fundamental fact is that the slaves were not regarded as human beings—they were not only not regarded as citizens, but not even as human beings. Roman law regarded them as chattels. The law on murder, not to mention the other laws for the protection of the person, did not extend to slaves. It defended only the slaveowners, who were alone recognised as citizens with full rights. But whether a monarchy was instituted or a republic, it was a monarchy of the slaveowners or a republic of the slaveowners. All rights under them were enjoyed by the slaveowners, while the slave was a chattel in the eyes of the law; and not only could any sort of violence be perpetrated against a slave, but even the murder of a slave was not considered a crime. Slaveowning republics differed in their internal organisation: there were aristocratic republics and democratic republics. In an aristocratic republic a small number of privileged persons took part in the elections; in a democratic republic everybody took part in the

elections—but again only the slaveowners, everybody except the slaves. This fundamental fact must be borne in mind, because it throws more light than any other on the question of the state and clearly demonstrates the nature of the state.

The state is a machine for the oppression of one class by another, a machine for keeping in subjugation to one class other, subordinated classes. There are various forms of this machine. In the slaveowning state we had a monarchy, an aristocratic republic or even a democratic republic. In fact the forms of government varied extremely, but their essence was always the same: the slaves enjoyed no rights and constituted an oppressed class; they were not regarded as human beings. We find the same state of affairs in the feudal state.

The change in the form of exploitation transformed the slave state into the feudal state. This was of immense importance. In slave society the slave enjoys no rights whatever and is not regarded as a human being; in feudal society the peasant is tied to the soil. The chief feature of feudalism was that the peasants (and at that time the peasants constituted the majority; there was a very poorly developed urban population) were considered attached, or in fee, to the land—hence the term feudalism. The peasant might work a definite number of days for himself on the plot assigned to him by the landlord; on the other days the peasant serf worked for this lord. The essence of class society remained: society was based on class exploitation. Only the landlords could enjoy full rights; the peasants had no rights at all. In practice their condition differed very little from the condition of slaves in the slave state. Nevertheless a wider road was opened for their emancipation. for the emancipation of the peasants, since the peasant serf was not regarded as the direct property of the landlord. He could work part of his time on his own plot, could, so to speak, belong to himself to a certain extent; and with the wider opportunities for the development of exchange and trade relations the feudal system steadily disintegrated and the scope of emancipation of the peasantry steadily widened. Feudal society was always more complex than slave society. There was a greater element of the development of trade and industry, which even in those days led to capitalism. In the Middle Ages feudalism predominated. And here too the forms of state differed, here too we find

both monarchies and republics, although much more weakly expressed. But always the feudal landlord was regarded as the only ruler. The peasant serfs were absolutely excluded from all political rights.

Both under slavery and under the feudal system the small minority of people could not dominate over the vast majority without coercion. History is full of the constant attempts of the oppressed classes to rid themselves of oppression. The history of slavery contains records of wars of emancipation from slavery which lasted for decades. Incidentally, the name "Spartacist" now adopted by the German Communists—the only German party which is really fighting the yoke of capitalism—was adopted by them because Spartacus was one of the most prominent heroes of one of the greatest revolts of slaves which took place about two thousand years ago. For many years the apparently omnipotent Roman Empire, which rested entirely on slavery, experienced the shocks and blows of a vast uprising of slaves who armed and united to form a vast army under the leadership of Spartacus. In the end they were defeated, captured and tortured by the slaveowners. Such civil wars mark the whole history of the existence of class society. I have just mentioned an example of the greatest of these civil wars in the epoch of slavery. The whole epoch of feudalism is likewise marked by constant uprisings of the peasants. For example, in Germany in the Middle Ages the struggle between the two classes—the landlords and the serfs—assumed wide dimensions and was transformed into a civil war of the peasants against the landlords. You are all familiar with similar examples of repeated uprisings of the peasants against the feudal landlords in Russia.

In order to maintain their rule and to preserve their power, the landlords had to have an apparatus by which they could subjugate a vast number of people and subordinate them to certain laws and regulations; and all these laws fundamentally amounted to one thing—the maintenance of the power of the landlords over the peasant serfs. And this was the feudal state, which in Russia, for example, or in extremely backward Asiatic countries, where feudalism prevails to this day—it differed in form—was either republican or monarchical. When the state was a monarchy, the rule of one per-

son was recognised; when it was a republic, the participation in one degree or another of the elected representatives of landlord society was recognised—this was in feudal society. Feudal society represented a division of classes under which the vast majority—the peasant serfs—were completely subjected to an insignificant minority—the landlords, who owned the land.

The development of trade, the development of commodity exchange, led to the crystallisation of a new class—the capitalists. Capital arose at the close of the Middle Ages, when, after the discovery of America, world trade developed enormously, when the quantity of precious metals increased, when silver and gold became the means of exchange, when money circulation made it possible for individuals to hold tremendous wealth. Silver and gold were recognised as wealth all over the world. The economic power of the landlord class declined and the power of the new class—the representatives of capital—developed. The reconstruction in society was such that all citizens supposedly became equal, the old division into slave-owners and slaves disappeared, all were regarded as equal before the law irrespective of what capital they owned; whether they owned land as private property, or were starvelings who owned nothing but their labour power—they were all equal before the law. The law protects everybody equally; it protects the property of those who have it from attack by the masses who, possessing no property, possessing nothing but their labour power, grow steadily impoverished and ruined and become converted into proletarians. Such is capitalist society.

I cannot dwell on it in detail. You will return to this question when you come to discuss the programme of the Party—you will then hear a description of capitalist society. This society advanced against serfdom, against the old feudal system, under the slogan of liberty. But it was liberty for those who owned property. And when feudalism was shattered, which occurred at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century—it occurred in Russia later than in other countries, in 1861—the feudal state was superseded by the capitalist state, which proclaims liberty for the whole people as its slogan, which declares that it expresses the will of the whole people and denies that it is a class state. And here there

developed a struggle between the Socialists, who are fighting for the liberty of the whole people, and the capitalist state—a struggle which has now led to the creation of the Soviet Socialist Republic and which embraces the whole world.

To understand the struggle that has been started against world capital, to understand the essence of the capitalist state, we must remember that when the capitalist state advanced against the feudal state it entered the fight under the slogan of liberty. The abolition of feudalism meant liberty for the representatives of the capitalist state and served their purpose, inasmuch as feudalism was breaking down and the peasants had acquired the opportunity of owning as their full property the land which they had purchased for compensation or in part by quit rent—this did not concern the state: it protected property no matter how it arose, since it rested on private property. The peasants became private owners in all the modern civilised states. Even when the landlord surrendered part of his land to the peasant, the state protected private property, rewarding the landlord by compensation, sale for money. The state as it were declared that it would fully preserve private property, and it accorded it every support and protection. The state recognised the property rights of every merchant, industrialist and manufacturer. And this society, based on private property, on the power of capital, on the complete subjection of the propertyless workers and labouring masses of the peasantry, proclaimed that its rule was based on liberty. Combating feudalism, it proclaimed freedom of property and was particularly proud of the fact that the state had supposedly ceased to be a class state.

Yet the state continued to be a machine which helped the capitalists to hold the poor peasants and the working class in subjection. But externally it was free. It proclaimed universal suffrage, and declared through its champions, preachers, scholars and philosophers that it was not a class state. Even now, when the Soviet Socialist Republics have begun to fight it, they accuse us of violating liberty, of building a state based on coercion, on the suppression of certain people by others, whereas they represent a popular, democratic state. And now, when the world Socialist revolution has begun, and just when the revolution has succeeded in certain countries,

when the fight against world capital has grown particularly acute, this question of the state has acquired the greatest importance and has become, one might say, the most burning one, the focus of all political questions and of all political disputes of the present day.

Whatever party we take in Russia or in any of the more civilised countries, we find that nearly all political disputes, disagreements and opinions now centre around the conception of the state. Is the state in a capitalist country, in a democratic republic—especially one like Switzerland or America—in the freest democratic republics, an expression of the popular will, the sum total of the general decision of the people, the expression of the national will, and so forth; or is the state a machine that enables the capitalists of the given country to maintain their power over the working class and the peasantry? That is the fundamental question around which all political disputes all over the world now centre. What do they say about Bolshevism? The bourgeois press abuses the Bolsheviks. You will not find a single newspaper which does not repeat the current accusation that the Bolsheviks violate popular rule. If our Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries in their simplicity of heart (perhaps it is not simplicity, or perhaps it is the simplicity which they say is worse than robbery) think that they discovered and invented the accusation that the Bolsheviks have violated liberty and popular rule, they are ludicrously mistaken. Today not a single one of the rich newspapers in the wealthy countries, which spend tens of millions on their distribution and disseminate bourgeois lies and the imperialist policy in tens of millions of copies—there is not one of these newspapers which does not repeat these fundamental arguments and accusations against Bolshevism, namely, that America, England and Switzerland are advanced states based on popular rule, whereas the Bolshevik Republic is a state of bandits in which liberty is unknown, and that the Bolsheviks have violated the idea of popular rule and have even gone so far as to disperse the Constituent Assembly. These terrible accusations against the Bolsheviks are repeated all over the world. These accusations bring us fully up against the question—what is the state? In order to understand these accusations, in order to examine them and have a fully intelligent attitude

towards them, and not to examine them on hearsay but with a firm opinion of our own, we must have a clear idea of what the state is. Here we have capitalist states of every kind and the theories in defence of them which were created before the war. In order to proceed to answer the question properly we must critically examine all these doctrines and views.

I have already advised you to turn for help to Engels' book, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. This book says that every state in which private property in land and in the means of production exists, in which capital prevails, however democratic it may be, is a capitalist state, a machine used by the capitalists to keep the working class and the poor peasants in subjection; while universal suffrage, a Constituent Assembly, parliament are merely a form, a sort of promissory note, which does not alter matters in any essential way.

The forms of domination of the state may vary: capital manifests its power in one way where one form exists, and in another way where another form exists—but essentially the power is in the hands of capital, whether there are voting qualifications or not, or whether the republic is a democratic one or not—in fact the more democratic it is the cruder and more cynical is the rule of capitalism. One of the most democratic republics in the world is the United States of America, yet nowhere (and those who were there after 1905 probably know it) is the power of capital, the power of a handful of billionaires over the whole of society, so crude and so openly corrupt as in America. Once capital exists, it dominates the whole of society, and no democratic republic, no form of franchise can alter the essence of the matter.

The democratic republic and universal suffrage were a great progressive advance on feudalism: they have enabled the proletariat to achieve its present unity and solidarity, to form those firm and disciplined ranks which are waging a systematic struggle against capital. There was nothing even approximately resembling this among the peasant serfs, not to speak of the slaves. The slaves as we know revolted, rioted, started civil wars, but they could never create a class-conscious majority and parties to lead the struggle. they could not clearly realise what they were aiming for, and even



in the most revolutionary moments of history they were always pawns in the hands of the ruling classes. The bourgeois republic, parliament, universal suffrage all represent great progress from the standpoint of the world development of society. Mankind moved towards capitalism, and it was capitalism alone which, thanks to urban culture, enabled the oppressed class of proletarians to learn to know itself and to create the world working class movement, the millions of workers who are organised all over the world in parties—the Socialist parties which are consciously leading the struggle of the masses. Without parliamentarism, without elections, this development of the working class would have been impossible. That is why all these things have acquired such great importance in the eyes of the broad masses of people. That is why a radical change seems to be so difficult.

It is not only the conscious hypocrites, scientists and priests that uphold and defend the bourgeois lie that the state is free and that it is its duty to defend the interests of all, but also a large number of people who sincerely adhere to the old prejudices and who cannot understand the transition from the old capitalist society to Socialism. It is not only people who are directly dependent on the bourgeoisie, not only those who are oppressed by the yoke of capital or who have been bribed by capital (there are a large number of all sorts of scientists, artists, priests, etc., in the service of capital), but even people who are simply under the sway of the prejudice of bourgeois liberty that have taken up arms against Bolshevism all over the world because of the fact that when it was founded the Soviet Republic rejected these bourgeois lies and openly declared: you say that your state is free, whereas in reality, as long as there is private property, your state, even if it is a democratic republic, is nothing but a machine used by the capitalists to suppress the workers, and the freer the state, the more clearly is this expressed. Examples of this are Switzerland in Europe and the United States in the Americas. Nowhere does capital rule so cynically and ruthlessly, and nowhere is this so apparent, as in these countries, although they are democratic republics, no matter how finely they are painted and notwithstanding all the talk about labour democracy and the equality of all citizens. The fact is that in Switzerland and

America capital dominates, and every attempt of the workers to achieve the slightest real improvement in their condition is immediately met by civil war. There are fewer soldiers, a smaller standing army in these countries—Switzerland has a militia and every Swiss has a gun at home, while in America there was no standing army until quite recently—and so when there is a strike the bourgeoisie arms, hires soldiery and suppresses the strike; and nowhere is this suppression of the working class movement accompanied by such ruthless severity as in Switzerland and in America, and nowhere does the influence of capital in parliament manifest itself as powerfully as in these countries. The power of capital is everything, the stock exchange is everything, while parliament and elections are marionettes, puppets. . . . But the eyes of the workers are being opened more and more, and the idea of Soviet government is spreading wider and wider, especially after the bloody carnage through which we have just passed. The necessity for a merciless war on the capitalists is becoming clearer and clearer to the working class.

Whatever forms a republic may assume, even the most democratic republic, if it is a bourgeois republic, if it retains private property in land, mills and factories, and if private capital keeps the whole of society in wage slavery, that is, if it does not carry out what is proclaimed in the programme of our Party and in the Soviet Constitution, then this state is a machine for the suppression of certain people by others. And we shall place this machine in the hands of the class that is to overthrow the power of capital. We shall reject all the old prejudices about the state meaning universal equality. That is a fraud: as long as there is exploitation there cannot be equality. The landlord cannot be the equal of the worker, the hungry man the equal of the full man. The proletariat casts aside the machine which was called the state and before which people bowed in superstitious awe, believing the old tales that it means popular rule—the proletariat casts aside this machine and declares that it is a bourgeois lie. We have deprived the capitalists of this machine and have taken it over. With this machine, or bludgeon, we shall destroy all exploitation. And when the possibility of exploitation no longer exists anywhere in the world, when there are no longer owners

of land and owners of factories, and when there is no longer a situation in which some gorge while others starve—only when the possibility of this no longer exists shall we consign this machine to the scrap heap. Then there will be no state and no exploitation. Such is the view of our Communist Party. I hope that we shall return to this subject in subsequent lectures, and return to it again and again.

## SOCIALISM AND RELIGION

MODERN society is entirely based on the exploitation of the vast mass of the working class by an insignificant minority of the population who belong to the classes of landowners and capitalists. This society is a slaveowning society, for the "free" workers, who labour all their lives for the capitalists, "have the right" only to such means of subsistence as are essential for the maintenance of profit-producing slaves and for guaranteeing and perpetuating capitalist slavery.

The economic oppression of the workers inevitably calls forth and gives rise to all forms of political oppression, social humiliation and the coarsening and vitiation of the spiritual and moral life of the masses. The workers may achieve a greater or lesser degree of political liberty [for the struggle] for their economic emancipation; but no liberty can save them from poverty, unemployment and oppression until the power of capital is overthrown. Religion is one of the forms of spiritual oppression that everywhere weighs on the masses of the people, who are crushed by perpetual toil for the benefit of others, and by want and isolation. The impotence of the exploited classes in the struggle against the exploiters engenders faith in a better life beyond the grave just as inevitably as the impotence of the savage in his struggle against nature engenders faith in gods, devils, miracles and so forth. To him who toils and suffers want all his life religion teaches humility and patience on earth, consoling him with the hope of reward in heaven. And to those who live on the labour of others religion teaches charity on earth, offering them a very cheap justification for their whole existence as exploiters and selling them at a suitable price tickets for admission to heavenly bliss. Religion is the opium of the people. Religion is a kind of spiritual gin in which the slaves of capital drown their human shape and their claims to any decent human life.

But a slave who has realised his slavery and has risen up to fight

for his emancipation is already only half a slave. The present-day class-conscious worker, trained by large-scale factory industry and educated by urban life, rejects religious superstitions with contempt, leaves heaven to the priests and the bourgeois hypocrites and fights for a better life here on earth. The modern proletariat is coming over to Socialism, which enlists science in the struggle against religious obscurity and emancipates the workers from belief in a life hereafter by welding them together for a real fight for a better life on earth.

Religion should be declared a private affair—these are the words in which the attitude of Socialists to religion is customarily expressed. But the meaning of these words must be precisely defined so as to leave no room for misunderstanding. We demand that religion should be a private affair as far as the state is concerned, but under no circumstances can we regard religion as a private affair as far as our own party is concerned. The state must not be concerned with religion, religious societies should have no connection with the state power. Everybody must be absolutely free to profess any religion he pleases or not to believe in any religion at all, that is, to be an atheist, as every Socialist usually is. No distinction whatever between citizens, as regards their rights, depending upon their religious beliefs can be tolerated. Every reference to the belief of citizens must be unconditionally expunged from all official documents. There must be absolutely no subsidies to a state church, no grants of government funds to church and religious societies, which must become associations absolutely free and independent of the state, associations of citizens holding the same ideas. Only the complete fulfilment of these demands can put an end to the disgraceful and accursed past, when the church was in feudal dependence on the state and the Russian citizens were in feudal dependence on the state church, when mediæval, inquisitorial laws existed and were enforced (laws which to this day remain on our criminal statute books), laws which prosecuted people for their faith or lack of faith, which did violence to the conscience of man, which associated government posts and government incomes with the distribution of the state-clerical gin. The complete separation of the church from the state—that is the demand which the Socialist proletariat makes of the modern state and the modern church.

The Russian revolution must accomplish this demand as an essential and integral part of political liberty. In this respect the Russian revolution is in a particularly favourable position, for the repulsive officiousness of the political-feudal autocracy has provoked discontent, ferment and indignation even among the clergy itself. Downtrodden and ignorant as it was, even the Russian orthodox clergy has now been awakened by the thunderous collapse of the old mediæval order in Russia. Even it is joining in the demand for liberty and is protesting against the officiousness and arbitrary actions of the government officials, against the police spies imposed upon the "servants of God." We Socialists must support this movement and bring the demands of honest and sincere clergymen to their logical conclusion, taking them up on their talk about liberty and demanding that they resolutely sever all connection between religion and the police. Either you are sincere—in which case you must be in favour of the complete separation of the church from the state and of the school from the church, and of the complete and unconditional declaration that religion is a private affair; or else you do not support these consistent demands for liberty, which means that you are still under the sway of the traditions of the Inquisition, that you still cling to official posts and official incomes, that you do not believe in the spiritual strength of your weapon, that you continue to take bribes from the state power—and in that case the class-conscious workers of all Russia will declare relentless war on you.

Religion is not a private affair in relation to the Party of the Socialist proletariat. Our Party is a league of class-conscious and advanced fighters for the emancipation of the working class. Such a league must not be indifferent to unenlightenment, ignorance and obscurantism in the form of religious beliefs. We demand the complete separation of the church from the state in order to combat religious darkness with a purely ideological, and exclusively ideological, weapon, our printed and oral propaganda. One reason why we have founded our league, the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, is just to wage such a fight against all religious stultification of the workers. For us therefore the ideological fight is not a private affair but a general affair of the Party and the proletariat.

If that is so, why do we not declare in our programme that we

are atheists? Why do we not refuse Christians and those who believe in God admission to our Party?

The reply to this question should serve to explain a very important difference between the bourgeois-democratic and the Social-Democratic attitude towards religion.

Our programme is entirely based on the scientific, that is, the materialist world outlook. The explanation of our programme therefore necessarily includes an explanation of the true historical and economic roots of religious obscurantism. Our propaganda necessarily includes the propaganda of atheism; the publication of appropriate scientific literature, which the feudal-autocratic government has hitherto strictly prohibited and persecuted, must now constitute one of the branches of our party work. We shall now, apparently, have to follow the advice which Engels once gave the German Socialists, namely, to translate and widely disseminate the literature of the French enlighteners and atheists of the eighteenth century.

But in this connection we must not under any circumstances fall into the abstract and idealist error of arguing the religious question from the standpoint of "reason," apart from the class struggle—as is not infrequently done by bourgeois radical democrats. It would be absurd to think that in a society which is based on the endless oppression and stultification of the working class masses religious prejudices can be dispelled merely by preaching. It would be bourgeois narrow-mindedness to forget that the yoke of religion on mankind is only a product and reflection of the economic yoke in society. No books or sermons can enlighten the proletariat if it is not enlightened by its own struggle against the dark forces of capitalism. Unity in this truly revolutionary struggle of the oppressed class for the creation of a paradise on earth is more important to us than unity of opinion among the proletarians about a paradise in heaven.

That is why we do not and must not proclaim our atheism in our programme; that is why we do not and must not forbid proletarians who still cherish certain relics of the old superstitions to approach our Party. We shall always preach a scientific outlook, it is essential for us to combat the inconsistency of "Christians"; but this does not mean that the religious question must be given a prominence which

it does not deserve, that we must consent to a division of the forces of the truly revolutionary economic and political struggle for the sake of unimportant opinions or ravings which are rapidly losing all political significance and are being rapidly cast on to the scrap heap by the very course of economic development.

The reactionary bourgeoisie has everywhere taken care, and is now beginning to do so in our country, to inflame religious enmity in order to divert the attention of the masses in this direction, away from really important and fundamental economic and political questions, questions that are now being settled practically by the proletariat of all Russia, which is uniting in its revolutionary struggle. This reactionary policy of splitting the proletarian forces, which is today chiefly manifested in the Black Hundred pogroms, may tomorrow perhaps devise some other, more subtle reforms. At any rate, we shall confront it with the advocacy of proletarian solidarity and a scientific outlook, a calm, persistent and patient advocacy, to which all intention of inflaming secondary differences is alien.

The revolutionary proletariat will succeed in making religion truly a private affair as far as the state is concerned. And in this political system, purged of mediæval mildew, the proletariat will wage a broad and open struggle for the abolition of economic slavery, which is the real source of the religious stultification of mankind.

December 1905



## THE ATTITUDE OF THE WORKERS' PARTY TOWARDS RELIGION

THE speech made by deputy Surkov in the State Duma during the debate on the estimates of the Synod, and the discussion that took place within our Duma fraction on the draft of this speech, which we print elsewhere in this issue, have raised a question which is of extreme importance and urgency at this particular moment.<sup>1</sup> An interest in all questions connected with religion is undoubtedly being evinced today by wide circles of "society," and it has penetrated to the ranks of the intellectuals who are close to the working-class movement and to certain circles of the workers. It is the absolute duty of Social-Democrats to make a public statement of their attitude towards religion.

Social-Democracy bases its whole world outlook on scientific Socialism, i.e., Marxism. The philosophical basis of Marxism, as Marx and Engels repeatedly declared, is dialectical materialism, which fully embodies the historical traditions of the materialism of the eighteenth century in France and of Feuerbach (first half of the nineteenth century) in Germany—a materialism which is absolutely atheistic and resolutely hostile to all religion. Let us recall that the whole of Engels' *Anti-Dühring*, which Marx read in manuscript, is an indictment of the materialist and atheist Dühring for not being a consistent materialist and for leaving loopholes for religion and religious philosophy. Let us recall that in his essay on Ludwig Feuerbach, Engels reproaches Feuerbach for combating religion not in order to destroy it, but in order to renovate it, to create a new, "exalted" religion, and so forth.

<sup>1</sup> Surkov, a Social-Democratic deputy, in speaking in the course of the debate in the Third Duma on the estimates of the Holy Synod, described the church as a bulwark of the autocracy and referred to its connections with the Black Hundred organisations.—*Ed.*

Religion is the opium of the people—this dictum of Marx's is the cornerstone of the whole Marxist view on religion. Marxism has always regarded all modern religions and churches and all religious organisations as instruments of bourgeois reaction that serve to defend exploitation and to drug the working class.

Yet at the same time Engels frequently condemned the efforts of people who desired to be "more Left" or "more revolutionary" than the Social-Democrats to introduce an explicit avowal of atheism, in the sense of declaring war on religion, into the programme of the workers' party. Commenting in 1874 on the famous manifesto of the Blanquist fugitive Communards who were living in exile in London, Engels called their vociferous proclamation of war on religion foolishness, and stated that such a declaration of war was the best means of reviving interest in religion and of preventing it from really dying out. Engels blamed the Blanquists for failing to understand that only the class struggle of the working-class masses could in fact, by drawing large numbers of the proletariat into conscious and revolutionary *practical* social work, free the oppressed masses from the yoke of religion; whereas to proclaim war on religion a political task of the workers' party was just anarchistic phrasemongering. And Engels in 1877, while ruthlessly attacking in his *Anti-Dühring* every concession, even the slightest, made by Dühring the philosopher to idealism and religion, no less resolutely condemns Dühring's pseudo-revolutionary idea that religion should be prohibited in a Socialist society. To declare such a war on religion, Engels says, is to "out-Bismarck Bismarck," i.e., to repeat the folly of Bismarck's struggle against the clericals (the notorious "Struggle for Culture," *Kulturkampf*, i.e., the struggle Bismarck waged in 1870 against the German Catholic party, the party of the "Centre," by means of a police persecution of Catholicism). By this struggle Bismarck only *stimulated* the militant clericalism of the Catholics and only injured the work of real culture, because he gave prominence to religious divisions rather than political divisions and diverted the attention of certain sections of the working class and the democracy from the urgent tasks of the class and revolutionary struggle to a most superficial and mendacious bourgeois anti-cler-

icism. Accusing the would-be ultra-revolutionary Dühring of wanting to repeat Bismarck's folly in another form, Engels demanded that the workers' party should know how to work patiently at the task of organising and educating the proletariat, which would lead to the dying out of religion, and not venture into a political war on religion. This view has thoroughly permeated German Social-Democracy, which, for example, advocated freedom for the Jesuits, their admission into Germany, and the complete cessation of police methods of combating any particular religion. "Religion is a private matter"; this famous point in the Erfurt Programme (1891) endorsed the political tactics of Social-Democracy mentioned.

These tactics have now managed to become a mere matter of routine; they have already managed to give rise to a new distortion of Marxism in the opposite direction, in the direction of opportunism. This point in the Erfurt Programme has come to be interpreted as meaning that we Social-Democrats, that our Party *considers* religion to be a private matter, that religion is a private matter for us as Social-Democrats, for us as a Party. Without entering into a direct controversy with this opportunist view, Engels in the 'nineties deemed it necessary to oppose it resolutely in a positive, and not a polemical form. To wit: Engels did this in a statement, which he deliberately underlined, that Social-Democrats regard religion as a private matter *in relation to the state*, but not in relation to themselves, not in relation to Marxism, and not in relation to the workers' party.<sup>1</sup>

Such is the external history of the utterances of Marx and Engels on the question of religion. To people who are careless of Marxism, to people who cannot or will not think, this history is a skein of meaningless Marxist contradictions and waverings, a hodge-podge of "consistent" atheism and "sops" to religion, "unprincipled" wavering between a r-r-revolutionary war on God and a cowardly desire to "ingratiate" oneself with religious workers, a fear of scaring them away, etc., etc. The literature of the anarchist phrasemongers is full of attacks of this kind on Marxism.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Engels' Introduction to Marx's *The Civil War in France*.—Ed.

But anybody who is able to treat Marxism at all seriously, to ponder over its philosophical principles and the experience of international Social-Democracy, will readily see that the Marxist tactics in regard to religion are thoroughly consistent and were carefully thought out by Marx and Engels, and that what the dilettantes or ignoramuses regard as wavering is but a direct and inevitable deduction from dialectical materialism. It would be a profound mistake to think that the apparent "moderation" of the Marxist attitude towards religion is to be explained by supposed "tactical" considerations, by the desire "not to scare away" anybody, and so forth. On the contrary, the political line of Marxism is inseparably bound up with its philosophical principles on this question too.

Marxism is materialism. As such, it is as relentlessly hostile to religion as was the materialism of the Encyclopædists of the eighteenth century or the materialism of Feuerbach. This is beyond doubt. But the dialectical materialism of Marx and Engels goes further than the Encyclopædists and Feuerbach by applying the materialist philosophy to the field of history, to the field of the social sciences. We must combat religion—that is the rudiment of *all* materialism, and consequently of Marxism. But Marxism is not a materialism which stops at rudiments. Marxism goes further. It says: We must *know how* to combat religion, and in order to do so we must explain the source of faith and religion among the masses *materialistically*. The fight against religion must not be confined to abstract ideological preaching or reduced to such preaching. The fight must be linked up with the concrete practical work of the class movement, which aims at eliminating the social roots of religion. Why does religion retain its hold over the backward sections of the urban proletariat, over the broad sections of the semi-proletariat, and over the peasant mass? Because of the ignorance of the people, replies the bourgeois progressivist, the radical and the bourgeois materialist. And so, down with religion and long live atheism!—the dissemination of atheist views is our chief task. The Marxist says that this is not true, that it is a superficial view and narrow, bourgeois culturism. This view does not profoundly enough explain the roots of religion; it explains them not mate-

rialistically but idealistically. In modern capitalist countries these roots are mainly *social*. The deepest root of religion today is the social oppression of the working masses and their apparently complete helplessness in face of the blind forces of capitalism, which every day and every hour inflicts upon ordinary working people the most horrible suffering and the most savage torment, a thousand times more severe than those inflicted by extraordinary events, such as wars, earthquakes, etc. "Fear created the gods." Fear of the blind force of capital—blind because it cannot be foreseen by the masses of the people—a force which at every step in life threatens to inflict, and does inflict on the proletarian and small owner "sudden," "unexpected," "accidental" destruction, ruin, pauperism, prostitution and death from starvation—such is *the root* of modern religion which the materialist must bear in mind first and foremost if he does not want to remain an infant-school materialist. No educational book can eradicate religion from the minds of the masses, who are crushed by the grinding toil of capitalism and who are at the mercy of the blind destructive forces of capitalism, until these masses themselves learn to fight this *root* of religion, *the rule of capital* in all its forms, in a united, organised, planned and conscious way.

Does this mean that educational books against religion are harmful or unnecessary? No, nothing of the kind. It means that Social-Democracy's atheistic propaganda must be *subordinated* to its basic task—the development of the class struggle of the exploited *masses* against the exploiters.

This proposition may not be understood (or at least not immediately understood) by one who has not pondered over the principles of dialectical materialism, *i.e.*, the philosophy of Marx and Engels. How is that?—he will say: is ideological propaganda, the preaching of definite ideas, the struggle against the enemy of culture and progress for thousands of years (*i.e.*, religion) to be subordinated to the class struggle, *i.e.*, a struggle for definite practical aims in the economic and political field?

This is one of those current objections to Marxism which testify to a thorough misunderstanding of Marxian dialectics. The contradiction which perplexes those who object in this way is a

real and living contradiction, *i.e.*, a dialectical contradiction, and not a verbal or fictitious contradiction. To draw a hard and fast line between the theoretical propaganda of atheism, *i.e.*, the destruction of religious beliefs among certain sections of the proletariat, and the success, progress and conditions of the class struggle of these sections, is to reason undialectically, to transform a movable and relative boundary into an absolute boundary; it is forcibly to disconnect what is indissolubly connected in actual life. Let us take an example. The proletariat in a given district and in a given branch of industry is divided, let us assume, into an advanced section of fairly class-conscious Social-Democrats, who are, of course, atheists, and rather backward workers who are still connected with the countryside and the peasantry, still believe in God, go to church, or are even under the direct influence of the local priest, who, let us suppose, has organised a Christian labour union. Let us assume furthermore that the economic struggle in this locality has resulted in a strike. It is the duty of a Marxist to place the success of the strike movement above everything else, to vigorously resist the division of the workers in this struggle into atheists and Christians, to vigorously combat such a division. Under such circumstances, atheist propaganda may be both unnecessary and harmful—not from the philistine fear of scaring away the backward sections, of losing a seat in the elections, and so on, but from consideration for the real progress of the class struggle, which in the conditions of modern capitalist society is a hundred times better adapted to convert Christian workers to Social-Democracy and to atheism than bald atheistic preaching. He who preached atheism at such a moment and in such circumstances would only be playing *into the hands* of the priest and the priests, who desire nothing better than that the division of the workers according to their participation in the strike movement should be replaced by their division according to their beliefs in God. An anarchist who preached war against God at all costs would in practice be helping the priests and the bourgeoisie (as the anarchists always help the bourgeoisie *in practice*). A Marxist must be a materialist, *i.e.*, an enemy of religion; but he must be a dialectical materialist, *i.e.*, one who puts the fight

against religion not abstractly, not on the basis of abstract, purely theoretical, unvarying propaganda, but concretely, on the basis of the class struggle which is going on *in practice* and educating the masses more and better than anything else. A Marxist must be able to take cognizance of the concrete situation as a whole, must always be able to determine the boundary between anarchism and opportunism (this boundary is relative, movable and changeable, but it exists), and must not succumb either to the abstract, verbal, and in fact empty "revolutionism" of the anarchist, or to the philistinism and opportunism of the petty-bourgeois or liberal intellectual, who fears to fight religion, forgets that this is his duty, reconciles himself to the belief in God, and is guided not by the interests of the class struggle, but by the petty and mean consideration of offending nobody, repelling nobody and scaring nobody—by the sage rule: "live and let live," etc., etc.

It is from this standpoint that all particular questions concerning the attitude of Social-Democrats to religion must be determined. For example, the question often arises whether a priest can be a member of the Social-Democratic Party, and the question is usually answered in an unqualified affirmative, the experience of European Social-Democratic Parties being cited in support. But this experience was the result not only of the application of the Marxist doctrine to the workers' movement but also of special historical conditions in Western Europe which are absent in Russia (we will say more about these conditions later), so that an unqualified affirmative in this case is incorrect. We must not declare once and for all that priests cannot be members of the Social-Democratic Party; but neither must we once and for all affirm the contrary rule. If a priest comes to us to engage in joint political work and conscientiously performs Party duties, and does not come out against the programme of the Party, he may be allowed to join the ranks of Social-Democrats; for in such a case the contradiction between the spirit and principles of our programme and the religious convictions of the priest would remain something that concerned him alone, his own private contradiction; and a political organisation cannot examine its members to see if there is no contradiction between their views and the pro-

gramme of the party. But, of course, such a case might be a rare exception even in Western Europe, while in Russia it is altogether improbable. And if, for example, a priest joined the Social-Democratic Party and made it his chief and almost sole work actively to propagate religious views in that Party, the Party would unquestionably have to expel him from its ranks. We must not only admit workers who preserve the belief in God into the Social-Democratic Party but must deliberately set out to recruit them; we are absolutely against giving the slightest offence to their religious convictions; but we recruit them in order to educate them in the spirit of our programme, and not to permit an active struggle against our programme. We allow freedom of opinion *inside* the Party, but within certain limits, determined by freedom of grouping; we are not obliged to march shoulder to shoulder with active preachers of views that are repudiated by the majority of the Party.

Another example: should members of the Social-Democratic Party be censured equally under all circumstances for declaring "Socialism is my religion," and for advocating views corresponding to this declaration? No! The deviation from Marxism (and consequently from Socialism) is here indisputable, but the significance of the deviation, its relative importance, so to speak, may vary with circumstances. It is one thing when an agitator or a person addressing the workers speaks in this way in order to make himself better understood, as an introduction to his subject, in order to present his views more vividly in terms to which the backward masses are most accustomed. It is another thing when a writer begins to preach "God-building," or God-building Socialism (in the spirit, for example, of our Lunacharsky and Co.). While in the first case censure would be mere quibbling or even an inappropriate restriction on the freedom of the agitator, on the freedom of the use of "pedagogical" methods, in the second case party censure is necessary and essential. For some the statement "Socialism is my religion" is a form of transition *from* religion to Socialism; for others it is a form of transition *from* Socialism to religion.

Let us now pass to the conditions which in the West gave rise to the opportunist interpretation of the thesis "religion is a



private matter." Of course, here we have the influence of those general factors which gave rise to opportunism in general as a sacrifice of the fundamental interests of the workers' movement for momentary advantages. The party of the proletariat demands *that the state* should declare religion a private matter, but does not regard the fight against the opium of the people, the fight against religious superstition, etc., as a "private matter." The opportunists distort the question to mean that the *Social-Democratic Party regards* religion as a private matter!

But in addition to the usual opportunist distortion (which was not explained at all in the discussion by our Duma fraction of the speeches in the debate on religion), there are special historical conditions which have given rise to the modern, and if one may so express it, excessive indifference of European Social-Democrats to the question of religion. These conditions are of a twofold nature. Firstly, the task of combating religion is the historical task of the revolutionary bourgeoisie, and in the West this task was to a large extent performed (or tackled) by bourgeois democracy in the epoch of its revolutions, or its attacks upon feudalism and mediævalism. There is a tradition of bourgeois war on religion both in France and in Germany, a war which was begun long before Socialism (the Encyclopædists, Feuerbach). In Russia, because of the conditions of our bourgeois-democratic revolution, this task too falls almost entirely on the shoulders of the working class. Petty-bourgeois (*Narodnik*) democracy in our country has in this respect not done too much (as the newly-appeared Black Hundred Cadets, or Cadet Black Hundreds, of *Vekhi* think), but rather *too little* in comparison with what has been done in Europe.

On the other hand, the tradition of the bourgeois war on religion has given rise in Europe to a specifically bourgeois *distortion* of this war by anarchism, which, as the Marxists have long ago explained time and time again, takes its stand on the bourgeois world outlook in spite of all the "fury" of its attacks upon the bourgeoisie. The anarchists and Blanquists in the Latin countries, Most (who, incidentally, was a pupil of Dühring) and Co. in Germany, and the anarchists in Austria in the 'eighties carried revolutionary phrasemongering in the struggle against religion to

a *nec plus ultra*. It is not surprising that the European Social-Democrats now go to the other extreme of the anarchists. This is quite understandable and to a certain extent legitimate, but it is not seemly of us Russian Social-Democrats to forget the special historical conditions that prevailed in the West.

Secondly, in the West, *after* the national bourgeois revolutions were over, *after* the introduction of more or less complete freedom of conscience, the problem of the democratic struggle against religion had been already so forced into the historical background by the struggle of bourgeois democracy against Socialism that the bourgeois governments *deliberately* tried to divert the attention of the masses from Socialism by organising a quasi-liberal "drive" against clericalism. Such was the character of the *Kulturkampf* in Germany and of the fight of the bourgeois republicans against clericalism in France. The spread of the modern spirit of "indifference" to the fight against religion among the Social-Democrats in the West was preceded by bourgeois anti-clericalism, the purpose of which was to divert the attention of the masses of the workers from Socialism. And this again is quite understandable and legitimate, because Social-Democrats had to counteract bourgeois and Bismarckian anti-clericalism by *subordinating* the struggle against religion to the struggle for Socialism.

Conditions are entirely different in Russia. The proletariat is the leader of our bourgeois-democratic revolution. Its Party must be the ideological leader in the fight against every form of mediævalism, including the old official religion and every attempt to renovate it or provide it with a new or different base, etc. Therefore, while Engels comparatively mildly corrected the opportunism of the German Social-Democrats—who substituted for the demand of the workers' party that the *state* should declare religion a private matter the *declaration* that religion is a private matter for Social-Democrats and the Social-Democratic Party—it is clear that Engels would have rebuked the Russian opportunists a *hundred times* more severely for having adopted this German distortion.

By declaring from the Duma tribune that religion is the opium of the people, our fraction acted quite correctly, and thus created a precedent which should serve as a basis for all utterances by

Russian Social-Democrats on the question of religion. Should they have gone further and developed their atheistic arguments in greater detail? We think not. This might have incurred the danger of the fight against religion being exaggerated by the political party of the proletariat; it might have resulted in obliterating the difference between the bourgeois and the Socialist fight against religion. The first duty of the Social-Democratic fraction in the Black Hundred Duma has been discharged with honour.

The second duty—and perhaps the most important for Social-Democrats—namely, to explain the class role of the church and the clergy in supporting the Black Hundred government and the bourgeoisie in its fight against the working class, has also been discharged with honour. Of course, very much more might be said on this subject, and the Social-Democrats in their future utterances will know how to amplify Comrade Surkov's speech; but still his speech was excellent, and its dissemination by all Party organisations is the direct duty of our Party.

The third duty was to explain in full detail the *correct* meaning of the proposition so often distorted by the German opportunists, namely, that "religion is a private matter." This, unfortunately, Comrade Surkov did not do. It is all the more a pity because in the earlier activity of the fraction a mistake was already committed on this question by Comrade Byeloussov, which was noted at the time by the *Proletary*. The discussion in the fraction shows that the dispute about atheism has overshadowed in its eyes the question of the proper interpretation of the famous demand that religion should be regarded as a private matter. We shall not blame Comrade Surkov alone for this error of the entire fraction. Moreover, we shall frankly admit that the whole Party was at fault here for not having sufficiently explained this question, for not having sufficiently prepared the minds of Social-Democrats for the significance of Engels' remark regarding the German opportunists. The discussion in the fraction proves that it was in fact due to a confused understanding of the question, and not to a desire to ignore the teachings of Marx, and we are sure that this error will be corrected in future utterances of the fraction.

We repeat that on the whole Comrade Surkov's speech was ex-

cellent and it should be disseminated by all the organisations. In its discussion of this speech the fraction has proved that it is fulfilling its Social-Democratic duty conscientiously. It remains to be desired that correspondence on discussions within the fraction should appear more often in the Party press so as to bring the fraction and the Party closer together, to acquaint the Party with the difficult work being done within the fraction, and to establish ideological unity in the work of the Party and the fraction.

May 1909

## LETTERS FROM LENIN TO A. M. GORKY

November 14, 1913

Dear A. M.,

What are you doing?—It is simply awful, really!

Yesterday I read in *Rech* your reply to the “howling” over Dostoyevsky and was prepared to rejoice, but today the Liquidators’ paper arrives *and there I find printed* a paragraph of your article which was not in *Rech*.

The paragraph is as follows:

“But ‘god-seeking’ must be laid aside *for the present* [only for the present?]—it is a fruitless occupation: it is no use seeking for what is not there. If you have not sown, you will not reap. You have no god—you have *not yet* [not yet!] created him. One does not seek for gods—*one creates them*; one does not invent life, one creates it.”

It follows then that you are opposed to “god-seeking” only “for the present”!! It follows that you are opposed to god-seeking *only* in order to replace it by god-building!!

Well, isn’t it awful that this should *follow* from what you write?

God-seeking no more differs from god-building, or god-making, or god-creating or the like than a yellow devil differs from a blue devil. To talk about god-seeking not in order to deny *all* devils and gods, all intellectual necrophilia (every god is necrophilia—even though it be the purest, ideal god, a god not sought for but in the making), but in order to prefer a blue devil to a yellow devil is a hundred times worse than saying nothing at all.

In the freest countries, countries in which an appeal “to the democracy, to the people, to the public and to science” would be *entirely* out of place—in such countries (America, Switzerland, and so on) the minds of the people and the workers are most assiduously blunted precisely by ideas of a pure and spiritual god, a god in the making. Every religious idea, every idea of god, even every flirtation with the idea of god, is unutterable vileness, vileness that is greeted very tolerantly (and often even favourably) by the *democratic* bourgeoisie—and for that very reason it is vileness of the

most dangerous kind, "contagion" of the most abominable kind. Millions of sins, filthy deeds, acts of violence and *physical* contagions are far more easily exposed by the crowd, and are therefore far less dangerous, than the *subtle*, spiritual ideas of a god decked out in the smartest "ideological" costumes. The Catholic priest who seduces young girls (of whom I happened to read in a German newspaper) is *far less* dangerous to democracy than a priest without a frock, a priest without a coarse religion, a democratic priest with ideas who preaches the making and creating of god. For the first priest is *easily* exposed, condemned and ejected, whereas the second *cannot* be ejected so easily; it is a thousand times harder to expose him, and not a single "frail and pitifully unstable" philistine will agree to "condemn" him.

And you, knowing the "frailty and pitiful instability" of the Russian (why the Russian? Is the Italian any better?) *philistine* soul, confuse this soul with poison, with the sweetest, most sugar-coated poison, concealed in all sorts of gaudy wrappings!!

It is awful, really.

"Enough of the self-disparagement which among us passes for self-criticism."

And is not god-building the *worst* form of self-disparagement? Any person who engages in building a *god*, or who even tolerates the idea of god-building, *disparages himself* in the worst possible fashion; for instead of "acting," he *in fact* devotes himself to self-contemplation, self-admiration; and, moreover, this person "contemplates" the most filthy, stupid and servile features or futilities of his ego, apotheosised by god-building.

From the social and not the personal standpoint, *all* god-building is just the *amorous self-contemplation* of stupid petty-bourgeoisdom, of frail philistinism, the dreamy "self-disparagement" of philistines and petty bourgeois who are "despairing and fatigued" (as you quite correctly said of the *soul*—only you should have said not the "Russian" soul, but the *philistine* soul; for the Jewish, Italian and English souls are *all the same*, scurvy philistinism is everywhere equally despicable, while "democratic philistinism," engaged in intellectual necrophilia, is thrice despicable).

Probing into your article and *trying to discover* how this *lapse*

of yours could have arisen, I am at a loss. What is this? Hangovers of the *Confessions*, which *you yourself* did not approve? Echoes of the *Confessions*?

Or is it something else—an unsuccessful attempt, for example, to stoop to a *general-democratic* standpoint instead of a *proletarian* standpoint? Perhaps for the purpose of speaking to the “democracy in general” you wanted (forgive the expression) to talk baby language? Perhaps “for the purpose of a popular exposition” for the *philistines* you wanted for a moment to admit *its*, or *their* (the *philistines*’) prejudices?

But this is a *wrong* method in all senses and respects.

I said above that in *democratic* countries an appeal by a proletarian writer “to the democracy, to the people, to the public and to science” would be *entirely* out of place. But what about our country, Russia? Such an appeal is *not quite* in place, because it too in a way flatters philistine prejudices. The appeal is general to the point of nebulosity—in our country even Izgoyev of the *Russkaya Mysl* would subscribe to it *with both hands*. Why use slogans which *you yourself* can easily distinguish from Izgoyevism, *but which the reader cannot*? Why cast a democratic veil over it for the sake of the reader, instead of making a *clear* distinction between the *philistines* (frail, pitifully unstable, fatigued, despairing, self-contemplating, god-contemplating, god-building, god-conning, self-disparaging, *ineptly-anarchistic*—marvelous word!!—and so on and so forth) and the *proletarians* (who can be courageous not in word alone and who can distinguish the “science and public opinion” of the *bourgeoisie* from their own, and bourgeois democracy from proletarian democracy)?

Why do you do it?

It is devilishly vexatious.

Yours, V. U.

P.S. We sent you the novel by book post. Have you received it?

P.P.S. Do take greater *care of your health*, so that you may be able to travel in the winter *without catching cold* (winter is dangerous).

Yours, V. Ulyanov

December 1913

. . . As regards god, the divine, and everything connected therewith, there is something contradictory in what you say—the very thing, in my opinion, which I pointed out in the course of our conversations during our last meeting on Capri: you broke (or appeared to have broken) with the *Vperyod*-ists, without observing the ideological foundations of *Vperyod*-ism.

And so now. You are “vexed,” you “cannot understand how the words ‘for the present’ crept in”—so you write—and at the same time you advocate the idea of god and god-building.

“God is a complex of those ideas elaborated by the tribe, the nation, mankind, which arouse and organise social sentiments with the purpose of binding the individual to society and of bridling animal individualism.”

This theory is obviously connected with the theory, or theories, of Bogdanov and Lunacharsky.

And it is obviously false and obviously reactionary. Like the Christian Socialists (the worst species and the worst distortion of “Socialism”), you employ a method which (despite your best intentions) repeats the hocus-pocus of the priests: all that is contained *historically and practically* in the idea of god is removed from it (filth, prejudice, the consecration of ignorance and submissiveness on the one hand and of feudalism and monarchism on the other), and in place of historical and practical reality a nice philistine phrase is inserted into the idea of god (god = “ideas which arouse and organise social sentiments”).

You mean to say something “nice and sweet” by this, to point to “Truth and Justice” and the like. But this good intention remains your own personal affair, a subjective “pious wish.” As soon as you wrote it, it became the possession of the *masses*, and its *significance* is determined not by your good intentions, but by the *relation of social forces*, the objective relations of classes. By virtue of these relations *it follows* (despite your wishes and independent of your consciousness) that you have gilded and sugar-coated the idea of the clericals, the Purishkeviches, Nicholas II, and Messieurs the Struves, for, *in practice*, the idea of god helps **THEM** to keep the people in slavery. By gilding the idea of god, you gilded the chains



with which they fetter the ignorant workers and muzhiks. See—the priests and their ilk will say—how fine and profound this idea (the idea of god) is, as even “*your*” loaders, Messieurs the Democrats, admit—and we (the priests and their like) are serving this idea.

It is not true that god is a complex of ideas which arouse and organise social sentiments. This is Bogdanovite *idealism*, which conceals the material origin of ideas. God is (from the historical and practical standpoint) primarily a complex of ideas begotten by the crass submissiveness of man, by external nature and by class oppression—ideas which tend to *perpetuate* this submissiveness, to *deadenthe force* of the class struggle. There was a time in history when, despite this origin and this true meaning of the idea of god, the struggle of democracy and the proletariat took the form of a struggle of *one religious* idea against another.

But this time too has long since passed.

Now, both in Europe and in Russia, *every* advocacy or justification of the idea of god, even the most subtle, even the best-intentioned, is a justification of reaction.

Your whole definition is thoroughly reactionary and bourgeois. God = a complex of ideas which “arouse and organise social sentiments with the purpose of binding the individual to society and of bridling animal individualism.”

Why is it reactionary? Because it gilds the feudal-clerical idea of “bridling” animalism.

Actually, “animal individualism” was not bridled by the idea of god; it was bridled by the primitive herd and by the primitive commune. The idea of god has *always* deadened and dulled “social sentiments,” for it substitutes a dead thing for a living thing, and has *always* been an idea of slavery (the worst, hopeless kind of slavery). The idea of god has never “bound the individual to society,” but has always *bound* the oppressed *classes* by belief in the *divinity* of the oppressors.

Your definition is bourgeois (not scientific, not historical), for it operates with wholesale, general, “Robinson Crusoe” concepts in general—and not with definite *classes* of a definite historical epoch.

The idea of god held by a Zyryani savage and the like (and by a semi-savage as well) is one thing; the idea of god held by Struve

and Co. is another. In both cases this idea is supported by class domination (and class domination is supported by it). The "popular" concept of god and the divine is "popular" stupidity, submissiveness and darkness, just like the "popular idea" of the tsar, the devil and wife-beating. How you can call the "popular idea" of god "democratic" I absolutely fail to comprehend.

It is not true that philosophical idealism "has always in mind only the interests of the individual." Did Descartes have the interests of the individual in mind more than Gassendi, or Fichte and Hegel more than Feuerbach?

It is absolutely terrible to say that "god-building is a process of further development and accumulation of social principles in the individual and in society"!! If there were freedom in Russia, why, the whole bourgeoisie would have made a hero of you for such things, for this sociology and theology of a purely bourgeois type and character.

Well, enough for the present—the letter is long enough as it is. Once more, I greet you warmly and wish you the best of health.

Yours,

V. U.

## LEO TOLSTOY AS A MIRROR OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

THE juxtaposition of the name of the great artist and the revolution which he obviously did not understand and from which he obviously held aloof may at the first glance appear strange and artificial. Can you use the term mirror of something which obviously does not reflect phenomena correctly? But our revolution is an extremely complex phenomenon; among the mass of those who are directly accomplishing it and participating in it there are many social elements who obviously have also not understood what is going on and have also held aloof from the real historical tasks laid upon them by the course of events. And if it is a really great artist we have before us, his works are bound to have reflected at least some of the essential aspects of the revolution.

The legal Russian press, packed as it is with articles, letters and comments on Tolstoy's eightieth birthday, is least of all interested in analysing his works from the standpoint of the character of the Russian revolution and of its motive forces. This press is chock full of hypocrisy to the point of nausea, hypocrisy of a two-fold character: official and liberal. The former is the gross hypocrisy of the venal hack, who yesterday was ordered to abuse L. Tolstoy and today is ordered to discover patriotism in him and to preserve the decencies in the eyes of Europe. That hacks of this type are paid for their writing everybody knows, and they cannot fool anybody. Far more subtle, and therefore far more harmful and dangerous, is liberal hypocrisy. To listen to the Cadet Balalaikins of *Rech*, it would appear that their sympathy for Tolstoy is of the most whole-hearted and cordial kind. As a matter of fact, this calculated oratory and florid verbosity about the "great god-seeker" is utterly false, because the Russian liberal neither believes in the Tolstoyan god nor sympathises with the Tolstoyan criticism of the existing order. He pays lip-service to a popular name in order to increase his own

political capital and to play the part of a leader of the national opposition; he endeavours by loud and fulsome phrases to *cover up* the necessity for a clear and direct answer to the question: What is the cause of the glaring contradictions of "Tolstoyism," what defects and weaknesses of our revolution do they reflect?

And the contradictions in Tolstoy's works, views, teachings and school are glaring indeed. On the one hand we have the brilliant artist who has produced not only incomparable pictures of Russian life but also first-class works of world literature. On the other hand we have a country squire acting the fool in Christ. On the one hand we have a remarkably powerful, direct and sincere protest against social lies and falsehood, while on the other we have the "Tolstoyan," *i.e.*, the washed-out, hysterical cry-baby known as the Russian intellectual, who publicly beats his breast and cries: "I am vile, I am wretched, but I am morally perfecting myself; I do not eat meat any more and now feed only on rice patties." On the one hand we have a ruthless criticism of capitalist exploitation, an exposure of the violence of the government, the farce of the courts and of the government administration, a revelation of the full profundity of the contradictions between increasing wealth and the achievements of civilisation and the increasing poverty, brutalisation and suffering of the working class masses; and on the other hand we have the fanatical preaching of "non-resistance to evil." On the one hand we have the most sober realism and the tearing away of all masks, while on the other hand we have the preaching of one of the most abominable things on earth—religion, the endeavour to replace priests officially appointed by priests who are priests by moral conviction, *i.e.*, the cultivation of the most subtle, and therefore particularly disgusting, clericalism. Verily,

Thou art beggarly, thou art abundant,  
Thou art powerful, thou art impotent  
—Mother Russia!<sup>1</sup>

That in view of such contradictions Tolstoy was absolutely incapable of comprehending either the working class movement and its role in the struggle for Socialism or the Russian revolution,

<sup>1</sup> From Nekrasov's *Who Lives Well in Russia*.—Ed.

goes without saying. But the contradictions in Tolstoy's views and preachings are not fortuitous; they are an expression of the contradictions in the conditions of Russian life during the last third of the nineteenth century. The patriarchal village, which had only just been emancipated from serfdom, was literally delivered over to capital and the treasury to be despoiled and plundered. The old pillars of peasant economy and peasant life, pillars that had actually stood for centuries, were razed to the ground with unusual rapidity. And the contradictions in Tolstoy's views must be judged not from the standpoint of the modern working class movement and modern Socialism (such a judgment is of course necessary, but it is not enough), but rather from the standpoint of the protest that was bound to be raised by the patriarchal Russian village against the onmarch of capitalism, against the impoverishment of the masses and their loss of land. Tolstoy is ridiculous as a prophet who has discovered new recipes for the salvation of mankind—and therefore the foreign and Russian "Tolstoyans" who desire to transform what is actually the weakest aspect of his teaching into a dogma are absolutely contemptible. Tolstoy is great when he expresses the ideas and sentiments which were engendered in millions of Russian peasants at the time the bourgeois revolution began in Russia. Tolstoy is original because the ensemble of his views, which are harmful as a whole, expresses just the peculiarities that mark our revolution as a *peasant* bourgeois revolution. From this standpoint the contradictions in Tolstoy's views are really a mirror of those contradictory conditions in which the historical activity of the peasantry was placed in our revolution. On the one hand the centuries of feudal oppression and the decades of accelerated post-Reform impoverishment accumulated profound hatred and anger and desperate determination. The endeavour to sweep away completely the official church, the landlords and the landlord government, to destroy all the old forms and systems of landownership, to disencumber the land and to establish a community of free and equal small peasants in place of the class police state, runs like a crimson thread through every historical step taken by the peasants in our revolution; and there is no doubt that the ideological content of Tolstoy's writings corresponds far more to this endeavour of the

peasants than to the abstract "Christian anarchism" which the "system" of his views is sometimes judged to be.

On the other hand the peasants, while striving for new forms of common life, had a very unenlightened, patriarchal and fanatical idea of what this common life should be, what struggle was required to win their freedom, who could be their leaders in this struggle, the attitude of the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois intellectuals to the interests of the peasant revolution, and why the forcible overthrow of the tsarist government was necessary in order to destroy landed proprietorship. The whole past life of the peasants had taught them to hate the lord and the official, but had not taught them, and could not have taught them, where to seek the reply to all these questions. In our revolution the smaller part of the peasantry really did fight, organising itself, at least to some extent, for this purpose, and a very small part took up arms for the extermination of its enemies and for the destruction of the tsarist servitors and defenders of the landlords. The greater part of the peasantry wept and prayed, reasoned and dreamed, wrote petitions and sent "intercessors"—quite in the spirit of Leo Nikolayich Tolstoy! And as always happens in such cases, the Tolstoyan abstention from politics, the Tolstoyan renunciation of politics, the lack of interest in politics or of comprehension of politics resulted in the fact that while the minority followed the class-conscious and revolutionary proletariat, the majority fell a prey to the unprincipled, time-serving bourgeois intellectuals, who, under the name of Cadets, ran from the meetings of the Trudoviks to the antechamber of Stolypin, implored, bargained, reconciled, promised to reconcile—until they were ejected by the soldier's jackboot. Tolstoyan ideas are a mirror of the weakness, the shortcomings of our peasant revolt, a reflection of the spinelessness of the patriarchal village and the ingrained timidity of the "thrifty muzhik."

Take the soldiers' uprisings of 1905-06. The social character of these fighters in our revolution lay midway between that of the peasant and that of the proletariat. The latter was in the minority. The movement among the troops therefore does not even approximately reveal the all-Russian solidarity, the party consciousness that was revealed by the proletariat, which became Social-Demo-

cratic as though by a wave of the hand. On the other hand, there is nothing more erroneous than the opinion that the failure of the soldiers' revolts was due to the absence of leaders from the officer ranks. On the contrary, the gigantic progress made by the revolution since the time of the "Narodnaya Volya" was manifested in the fact that it was precisely the "ignorant cattle," whose independence so startled the liberal landlords and the liberal officers, who took up arms against their superiors. The soldier fully sympathised with the cause of the peasants; his eyes lit up at the very mention of land. More than once the power in the army passed into the hands of the soldiers—but there was practically no determined utilisation of this power. The soldiers vacillated; within a couple of days, and sometimes within a few hours, after having killed some detested commander, they liberated the others, started negotiations with the government and then stood up to be shot, lay down to be flogged, and put their necks under the yoke again—quite in the spirit of Leo Nikolayich Tolstoy!

Tolstoy reflected accumulated hatred, ripe aspirations for a better life, desire to get rid of the past—and the immaturity of day-dreaming, lack of political training, and revolutionary spinelessness. Historical and economic conditions explain both the necessity for the appearance of the revolutionary struggle of the masses and their lack of preparation for the struggle, the Tolstoyan non-resistance to evil which was one of the most serious causes of the defeat of the first revolutionary campaign.

It is said that a defeated army learns well. Of course, a comparison of revolutionary classes with armies is true only in a very limited sense. The development of capitalism is hourly changing and aggravating the conditions which impelled the peasant millions, welded together by their hatred for the feudal landlords and their government, into the revolutionary-democratic struggle. Among the peasants themselves, the growth of exchange, of the domination of the market and of the power of money, is steadily squeezing out the old patriarchalism and the patriarchal philosophical ideology. But one acquisition made in the first years of the revolution and the first defeats in the mass revolutionary struggle is beyond question, namely, the mortal blow that has been

struck at the old flabbiness and flaccidity of the masses. Dividing lines have become sharper. Classes and parties have become demarcated. Under the hammer of the lessons of Stolypinism, and with the undeviating and persistent agitation of the revolutionary Social-Democrats, not only the Socialist proletariat but also the democratic masses of the peasantry will inevitably advance from their midst warriors who will be ever more steeled and ever less liable to fall a prey to our historical sin of Tolstoyism!

September 1908



## LEO TOLSTOY AND HIS ERA

THE era to which L. Tolstoy belongs, and which is reflected in remarkable relief both in his great literary works and in his teachings, is the era that lies between the years 1861 and 1905. True, Tolstoy's literary activity began before this period and ended after it, but L. Tolstoy became a full-fledged artist and thinker precisely in this period, the transitional character of which gave rise to *all* the distinguishing features and productions of Tolstoy and "Tolstoyism."

Through the mouth of Levin in *Anna Karenina*, L. Tolstoy very vividly expressed the nature of the change that Russian history had undergone during this half-century.

"... Talk about harvesting, hiring workers and so on, which Levin knew it was customary to regard as very low-class . . . now seemed to him to be alone important. 'It may have been unimportant under serfdom, or it may be unimportant in England. In both cases the conditions themselves are definite; but with us, now that everything has been overturned and is only just taking shape, the only important question for Russia is what shape these conditions will take'—Levin thought."

"With us everything has been overturned and is only just taking shape"—it would be difficult to imagine a more apt description of the period 1861-1905. Every Russian knows well, or is at least fully acquainted with what has been "overturned." It is serfdom and the entire "old order" corresponding to it. What is "only just taking shape" is absolutely unknown, strange and incomprehensible to the broad mass of the population. This bourgeois system which was "only just taking shape" assumed in Tolstoy's eyes the vague form of a bogey—England. Truly a bogey, for Tolstoy on principle, so to speak, rejects every attempt to ascertain the basic features of the social system of this "England," the connection between this system and the domination of capital, the role of money and the appearance and development of exchange. Like

the Narodniks, he refuses to see, he shuts his eyes to and turns away from the thought that what is "taking shape" in Russia is nothing but the bourgeois system.

It is true that the question how this system, the bourgeois system, which was assuming very different forms in "England," Germany, America, France, etc., would "take shape" was, if not the "only important," at least a very important question from the standpoint of the immediate aims of all social and political activity in Russia in the period 1861-1905 (yes, and in our time too). But such a definite and historically concrete statement of the question is something absolutely foreign to Tolstoy. He reasons abstractly, he admits only the standpoint of the "eternal" principles of morality, the eternal truths of religion, and does not realise that this standpoint is but the ideological reflection of the old ("overturned") system, the serf system, the system of life of the Oriental peoples.

In "Lucerne" (written in 1857), L. Tolstoy declares that the belief that "civilisation" is a blessing is "imagined knowledge" which "destroys the instinctive, most beatific and primitive demands of the good in human nature."

"We have one, only one, sinless guide—the Universal Spirit which permeates us," Tolstoy exclaims.

In "The Slavery of Our Times" (written in 1900), Tolstoy repeats this appeal to the Universal Spirit with even greater fervour and proclaims political economy to be a "false science" because it takes "little England, which is in a very exceptional position," as a "model," instead of taking "the position of the peoples of the whole world throughout all historical time" as a model. What he means by "the whole world" is revealed in the article "Progress and the Definition of Education" (1862). Tolstoy controverts the view of "the historians that progress is a general law of mankind" by pointing to the "whole so-called Orient."

"There is no general law of progress of mankind, as is proved by the unprogressing Oriental peoples," Tolstoy declares.

[— Precisely, in its true historical meaning, Tolstoyism is the ideology of the Oriental system, of the Asiatic system. Hence—asceticism, non-resistance to evil, the profound notes of pessimism,

the conviction that "all is nothing, everything material is nothing" ("The Meaning of Life"), faith in the "Spirit," "the principle underlying everything," in relation to which principle man is only "a labourer . . . who has been set the task of saving his soul," and so forth. Tolstoy remains true to this philosophy in *The Kreuzer Sonata* when he says that "woman's emancipation lies not in study courses and not in having a profession, but in the bedroom," and in an article written in 1862 in which it is stated that the universities train only "irritable and sickly liberals," who are "entirely useless to the people," are "aimlessly torn from their former environment," "cannot find a place for themselves in life," etc.

Pessimism, non-resistance, appeals to the "Spirit" constitute an ideology which inevitably appears in an era when the old order has been entirely "overturned," and when the masses who were educated under this old order and who imbibed with their mother's milk the principles, customs, traditions and beliefs of the old order, do not and cannot discern *what* the new order that is "taking shape" is, *what* social forces are "shaping" it and how exactly, and what social forces are *capable* of bringing salvation from the innumerable and very acute misfortunes that are peculiar to times of "break-up."

The period 1862-1904 was precisely such a period of break-up in Russia, when the old order had irrevocably and patently collapsed and when the new order was only just taking shape—the social forces creating this order first manifested themselves practically, on a wide national scale, in open mass actions in the most varied spheres, only in 1905. And the events of 1905 in Russia were followed by similar events in a number of other countries of this same "Orient," to whose "unprogressiveness" Tolstoy had referred in 1862. 1905 was the beginning of the end of "Oriental" unprogressiveness. It was precisely for this reason that that year witnessed the historical end of Tolstoyism, the end of that whole era which could beget and was bound to beget the teachings of Tolstoy—not as something individual, not as a caprice or eccentricity, but as the ideology of the conditions of life in which millions and millions of people actually found themselves during a certain period.

Tolstoy's teachings are undoubtedly utopian and, in their content, reactionary in the most precise and profound meaning of the term. But it does not follow either that these teachings were not Socialist or that they did not contain critical elements capable of providing valuable material for the enlightenment of the advanced classes.

There is Socialism and Socialism. In all countries in which the capitalist mode of production prevails there is a Socialism which expresses the ideology of the class that is about to replace the bourgeoisie, and there is a Socialism which corresponds to the ideology of the classes that the bourgeoisie is replacing. Feudal Socialism, for instance, is a Socialism of the latter kind; and long ago, more than sixty years ago, the nature of *this* Socialism was appraised by Marx together with other varieties of Socialism.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, critical elements are inherent in the utopian teachings of L. Tolstoy just as they are inherent in many utopian systems. But we must not forget Marx's profound remark to the effect that the value of critical elements in utopian Socialism "bears an inverse relation to historical development."<sup>2</sup> The more the activity of the social forces which are "shaping" the new Russia and bringing salvation from present-day social misfortunes develops, and the more definite its character becomes, the more rapidly critical-utopian Socialism "loses all practical value and all theoretical justification."

A quarter of a century ago the critical elements in Tolstoy's teachings could in practice benefit certain strata of the population at times, *despite* the reactionary and utopian features of Tolstoyism. This could not be the case during the last decade, let us say, because between the 'eighties and the end of the last century historical development made no inconsiderable progress. And in our day, *after* a number of events, mentioned above, have put an end to "Oriental" unprogressiveness, in our day, when the consciously reactionary ideas, reactionary in the narrow class, the selfish class sense, of the *Vekha*-ists have become so enormously widespread among

<sup>1</sup> See *The Communist Manifesto*, section on "Feudal Socialism."—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> See *The Communist Manifesto*, section on "Critical-Utopian Socialism and Communism."—Ed.

the bourgeois liberals, and when these ideas have infected even a section of the almost-Marxists and have created the "Liquidationist" tendency, every attempt to idealise Tolstoy's teachings, to justify or palliate his "non-resistance," his appeals to the "Spirit," his calls for "moral self-perfection," his doctrine of "conscience" and universal "love," his preaching of asceticism and quietism and so forth, causes the most direct and most profound damage.

January 1911

## IN MEMORY OF COUNT HEYDEN

### *What Our Non-Party "Democrats" Are Teaching the People*

"THE progressive press was unanimous in expressing its profound condolence over the severe loss suffered by Russia in the death of Count P. A. Heyden. The magnificent personality of Pyotr Alexandrovich attracted all decent people without distinction of party or trend. A rare and happy lot!" Then follows a lengthy quotation from the Right Cadet *Russkiye Vedomosti* containing a sentimental effusion on the life and activities of that "wonderful man" by Prince Pavl Dmitrievich Dolgorukov, one of that Dolgorukov breed whose representatives bluntly confessed the roots of their democracy: better come to terms with the peasants peacefully than wait until they seize the land themselves! . . .

"We profoundly share the feelings of grief evoked by the death of Count Heyden in all who are accustomed to value the *man* irrespective of the party guise in which he may be invested. And the late Heyden was first and foremost a *man*."

So writes the newspaper *Tovarishch*, No. 296, Tuesday, June 19, 1907.

The journalists of *Tovarishch* are not only the most fervent democrats of our legal press, but also regard themselves as Socialists—critical Socialists, of course. They are almost Social-Democrats; and the Mensheviks Plekhanov, Martov, Smirnov, Pereyaslavsky, Dan, etc., etc., meet with the most cordial hospitality in a paper whose columns are adorned with the signatures of Messrs. Prokopovich, Kuskova, Portugalov and other "former Marxists." In a word, there is not the slightest doubt that the journalists of *Tovarishch* are the most "Left" representatives of our "enlightened," "democratic," etc., society, to which narrow illegal activities are alien.

And when such lines as those quoted above meet the eye it is

difficult to refrain from exclaiming to these gentlemen: How fortunate it is that we, the Bolsheviks, obviously did not belong to *Tovarishch's* circle of *decent people*!

Messieurs the "decent people" of Russian enlightened democracy, you are stupefying the Russian people and are infecting them with the spirit of toadyism and servility a hundred times more than the notorious members of the Black Hundreds, Purishkevich, Krushevan and Dubrovin, against whom you are waging such a zealous, such a liberal, such a cheap, such a, for you, profitable and safe war. You shrug your shoulders and turn to all the "decent people" of your society with a scornful smile at such "absurd paradoxes"? Yes, yes, we fully realise that nothing on earth can shake your vulgar liberal smugness. And that is why we rejoice that we have succeeded in all our activities in setting up a solid wall between ourselves and the circle of decent people of Russian educated society.

Can one name an instance when the Black Hundreds have debauched and misled any considerable section of the population? No.

Neither their press nor their league, neither their meetings nor the elections to the First and the Second Dumas could provide any such instances. The violence and bestiality of the Black Hundreds, in which the police and the soldiery take part, enrage the people. The frauds, tricks and bribes of the Black Hundreds arouse hatred and contempt. With the help of government funds the Black Hundreds organise gangs and bands of drunkards who can act only with the consent and at the instigation of the police. In all this there is not even a trace of intellectual influence dangerous to any considerable section of the population.

And, on the other hand, it is just as unquestionable that such an influence is exercised by our legal, liberal and "democratic" press. The elections to the First and Second State Dumas, meetings, leagues and educational affairs all prove this. And *Tovarishch's* utterance in connection with the death of Heyden clearly shows what this intellectual influence is.

"... A severe loss ... magnificent personality ... happy lot ... was first and foremost a *man*."

Count Heyden, the noble landlord, magnanimously played the liberal before the October revolution. After the first victory of the people on October 17, 1905, he immediately, without the slightest hesitation, went over to the counter-revolutionary camp, to the Octobrist Party, the party of the landlords and the big capitalists who were incensed with the peasants and the democracy. In the First Duma this noble fellow defended the government, and after the First Duma was dispersed he bargained—but did not reach a bargain—to join the cabinet. Such are the principal stages in the career of this typical counter-revolutionary landlord.

And along come well-dressed, enlightened and educated gentlemen, mouthing phrases about liberalism, democracy and Socialism, and making speeches of sympathy for the cause of liberty, the cause of the peasants' struggle against the landlords for land—gentlemen who possess a virtual monopoly of the legal opposition in the press, in the leagues, and at meetings and elections—and, lifting up their eyes to the hills, preach to the people:

"Rare and happy lot! . . . The late Count was first and foremost a *man*."

Yes, Heyden was not only a man; he was also a citizen who was capable of comprehending the common interests of his class and of defending these interests very skilfully. And you, gentlemen, the enlightened democrats, are simply lachrymose fools, concealing under a cloak of liberal make-believe your inability to be anything but cultured lackeys of this landlord class.

There is nothing terrible in the influence of the landlords over the people. They will never succeed in fooling any large numbers of workers or even peasants for any considerable length of time. But the influence of the *intelligentsia*, who do not take a direct part in exploitation, who are trained to play with general phrases and concepts, who go in for every "good" idea and who sometimes from sincere stupidity elevate their mid-class position to a *principle* of non-class parties and non-class politics—the influence of this bourgeois intelligentsia over the people is dangerous. Here, and here alone, do we find an infection of the masses which is capable of doing real harm and which demands the exertion of all the forces of Socialism in an endeavour to counteract this poison.



"Heyden was an educated, cultured, humane and tolerant man"—ecstatically exclaim the liberal and democratic slobberers, imagining that they have elevated themselves above all "partisanship" to the level of a "general-human" standpoint.

You are mistaken, most worthy sirs. This is not a general-human standpoint but a general-servile standpoint. The slave who realises his slavery and fights it is a revolutionary. The slave who does not realise his slavery and languishes in his dumb, unenlightened, unvocal slavishness, is just a slave. The slave whose mouth waters when he smugly depicts the charms of a slave's life and goes into ecstasies over his good and kind master is a cad, a boor. And you, gentlemen of *Tovarishch*, are just such boors. With loathsome benignity you sentimentalise over the fact that a counter-revolutionary landlord, who supported the counter-revolutionary government, was an educated and humane man. You do not realise that instead of transforming the slave into a revolutionary you are transforming slaves into cads. Your talk about freedom and democracy is but sham veneer, phrases learnt by rote, fashionable babbling, or hypocrisy. It is but a painted signboard. And you yourselves are whited sepulchres. Your wretched little souls are utterly caddish, and your education, culture and enlightenment are but a species of downright prostitution. For you are selling your souls, and are selling them not from the pressure of want but from "love of the art."

Heyden was a convinced constitutionalist, you say sentimentally. You are lying, or else you have been completely hoodwinked by the Heydens. Publicly, before the people, to proclaim as a convinced constitutionalist a man who founded a party which supported the government of Witte, Dubasov, Goremykin and Stolypin is equivalent to proclaiming a cardinal a convinced opponent of the pope. Instead of giving the people a correct idea of the constitution you, the democrats, treat the constitution in your writings as something in the nature of salmon mayonnaise. For there can be no doubt that to the counter-revolutionary landlord the constitution is a sort of salmon mayonnaise, a way of best perfecting the methods of plundering and subjugating the muzhik and the whole people. If Heyden was a convinced constitutionalist, then

Dubasov and Stolypin were also convinced constitutionalists, for *in practice* Heyden supported *their* policy. Dubasov and Stolypin could not have been what they were and could not have pursued their policy without the support of the Octobrists, Heyden among them. By what signs, O ye sage democrats and "decent" people, are we to judge the political complexion of a man (a "constitutionalist")? By his speeches, by the fact that he beats his breast and sheds crocodile tears? Or by his actual deeds in the social arena?

What is characteristic and typical of Heyden's political activities? Is it the fact that he could not reach agreement with Stolypin about his participation in the cabinet after the dispersal of the First Duma, or the fact that after such an act he *went* to bargain with Stolypin at all? Is it the fact that formerly, at such and such a time, he uttered liberal phrases, or the fact that he became an Octobrist (which is equivalent to a counter-revolutionary) immediately after October 17? In calling Heyden a convinced constitutionalist, you teach the people that the former is characteristic and typical. And that means that you are senselessly repeating fragments of democratic slogans without understanding the very *rudiments* of democracy.

For democracy—remember this, you decent gentlemen and members of decent society—means fighting against that very rule of the country by counter-revolutionary landlords which was supported by Mr. Heyden and was expressed in his whole political career.

Heyden was an educated man—say our drawing-room democrats, sentimentally. Yes, we have already admitted this, and we willingly admit that he was better educated and *cleverer* (which is not always combined with education) than the democrats themselves, for he better understood the interests of his *own* class and his *own* counter-revolutionary social movement than you, gentlemen of *Tovarishch*, understand the interests of the movement for emancipation. The educated counter-revolutionary landlord knew how to defend the interests of his class subtly and artfully; he skilfully concealed the strivings and rapacious appetites of the feudal lords under a veil of noble words and external gentleman-

liness; he insisted (to Stolypin) on the protection of these interests by the most civilised forms of class domination. Heyden and his like brought all their "education" to the altar of the interests of the *landlords*. To a real democrat, and not to a "decent" cad who frequents Russian radical salons, this might have served as an excellent theme for a journalist who wanted to depict the *prostitution* of education in modern society.

When the "democrat" prates of education, he wants to create in the reader's mind an impression of rich stores of knowledge, a broad outlook and an ennobled mind and heart. Education for the Heydens is a thin veneer of training and "dexterity" in gentlemanly ways of performing the coarsest and filthiest political business. For all Heyden's Octobristism, all his "peaceful revivalism," all his negotiations with Stolypin after the dispersal of the First Duma were in fact the performance of the coarsest and filthiest political business, arranging how most reliably, craftily, artfully, how most durably inside and most unnoticeably outside, to defend the *rights* of the noble Russian aristocracy at the expense of the blood and sweat of the millions of "muzhiks," who have always and constantly been robbed by these Heydens, robbed before 1861, during 1861, after 1861, and after 1905.

In their time, Nekrasov and Saltykov taught Russian society to discern the predatory interests beneath the polished and oily surface of the feudal landlord's education; they taught it to hate the hypocrisy and callousness of such types. Yet the modern Russian intellectual, who imagines that he is the guardian of the democratic heritage of the Cadet Party<sup>1</sup> or of the Cadet supporters, teaches the people caddishness and exults over his impartiality as a non-party democrat. A spectacle almost more disgusting than that offered by the feats of Dubasov and Stolypin. . . .

Heyden was a "man"—says the drawing-room democrat, gulping with enthusiasm. Heyden was humane.

This sentimentality over Heyden's humaneness reminds us not only of Nekrasov and Saltykov, but also of Turgenev in his *A Hunt-*

<sup>1</sup> The Cadets have evinced a hundred times more caddishness in their appreciation of Heyden than the gentlemen of *Tovarishch*. We took the latter as an example of the "democracy" of the "decent people" of Russian "society."

*er's Diary*. Here we find depicted a civilised and educated landlord, cultivated, with soft manners and a European polish. The landlord is regaling his guest with wine and is talking of exalted themes. "Why has the wine not been warmed?"—he asks the lackey. The lackey blanches and does not answer. The landlord rings, and when the servant enters, without raising his voice, he says:

"About Fyodor . . . see to it."

Here you have an example of Heyden-like "humaneness," or humaneness à la Heyden. Turgenev's landlord is also "humane" . . . so humane, compared with Saltychikha for instance, that he does not go himself to the stables to see that the proper orders are given to flog Fyodor. He is so humane that he does not ask whether the birch with which Fyodor is to be flogged has been steeped in salt water. This landlord would never think of striking or abusing a lackey, he only "gives orders" from afar, like the educated man he is, in a gentle and humane manner, without noise, without fuss, without a "public scene." . . .

Heyden's humaneness was of exactly the same kind. He himself did not join the Luzhenovskys and Filonovs in flogging and torturing the peasants. He did not join the Rennenkamps and Meller-Zakomelskys in the punitive expeditions. He did not join Dubasov in bombarding Moscow. He was so humane that he refrained from such actions, leaving it to these heroes of the national "stable" to "see to it," and from his peaceful and cultured study controlling the political party which supported the government of the Dubasovs and whose leaders drank the health of the conqueror of Moscow, Dubasov. . . . Was it not humane indeed to send the Dubasovs—"about Fyodor . . . see to it"—instead of going to the stables himself? To the old women in charge of the political department of our liberal and democratic press, this is a model of humaneness. "He had a heart of gold, he wouldn't hurt a fly!"—"A rare and happy lot"—to support the Dubasovs, to enjoy the fruits of the vengeance wreaked by the Dubasovs, and not to be held responsible for the Dubasovs.

The drawing-room democrat considers it the height of democracy to sigh over the fact that we are not being governed by the Heydens (for it never enters the head of this drawing-room fool that there is a

"natural" division of labour between the Heydens and the Dubasovs). Listen to this:

"... and how sad that he [Heyden] has died just now, when he might have been most useful. He would now have fought the extreme Rights, displaying the finest aspects of his soul and defending constitutional principles with all the energy and fertility of mind natural to him." (*Tovarishch*, No. 299, Friday, June 22, "In Memory of Count Heyden," a letter from the Pskov Province.)

How sad that the educated and humane Heyden, the peaceful revivalist, is not here to cloak with his constitutional phrasemongering the nakedness of the Third Octobrist Duma, the nakedness of the autocracy which is destroying the Duma! It is not the aim of the "democratic" journalist to rend the false cloak, to expose to the people in all their nakedness the enemies who are oppressing them, but to regret the absence of the experienced hypocrites who adorn the ranks of the Octobrists. . . . *Was ist der Philister? Ein hohler Darm, voll Furcht und Hoffnung, dass Gott erbarm!* What is a philistine? A hollow gut, full of fear and hope, that God have mercy! What is the Russian liberal-democratic philistine of the Cadet and near-Cadet camp? A hollow gut, full of fear and hope, that the counter-revolutionary landlord have mercy!



**PART IV**

**THE STRUGGLE OF MARXISM  
AGAINST  
REVISIONISM AND OPPORTUNISM**





## MARXISM AND REVISIONISM

THERE is a saying that if geometrical axioms affected human interests attempts would certainly be made to refute them. Theories of the natural sciences which conflict with the old prejudices of theology provoked, and still provoke, the most rabid opposition. No wonder, therefore, that the Marxian doctrine, which directly serves to enlighten and organise the advanced class in modern society, which indicates the tasks of this class and which proves the inevitable (by virtue of economic development) replacement of the present system by a new order—no wonder that this doctrine had to fight at every step in its course.

There is no need to speak of bourgeois science and philosophy, which are officially taught by official professors in order to befuddle the rising generation of the possessing classes and to "coach" it against the internal and foreign enemy. This science will not even hear of Marxism, declaring that it has been refuted and annihilated. The young scientists who are building their careers by refuting Socialism, and the decrepit elders who preserve the traditions of all the various outworn "systems," attack Marx with equal zeal. The progress of Marxism and the fact that its ideas are spreading and taking firm hold among the working class inevitably tend to increase the frequency and intensity of these bourgeois attacks on Marxism, which only becomes stronger, more hardened, and more tenacious every time it is "annihilated" by official science.

But Marxism by no means consolidated its position immediately even among doctrines which are connected with the struggle of the working class and which are current mainly among the proletariat. In the first half-century of its existence (from the 'forties on) Marxism was engaged in combating theories fundamentally hostile to it. In the first half of the 'forties Marx and Engels demolished the radical Young Hegelians, who professed philosophical idealism. At the end of the 'forties the struggle invaded the domain of economic doctrine, in opposition to Proudhonism. The 'fifties saw the

completion of this struggle: the criticism of the parties and doctrines which manifested themselves in the stormy year of 1848. In the 'sixties the struggle was transferred from the domain of general theory to a domain closer to the direct labour movement: the ejection of Bakunism from the International. In the early 'seventies the stage in Germany was occupied for a short while by the Proudhonist Mühlberger, and in the latter 'seventies by the positivist Dühring. But the influence of both on the proletariat was already absolutely insignificant. Marxism was already gaining an unquestionable victory over all other ideologies in the labour movement.

By the 'nineties this victory was in the main completed. Even in the Latin countries, where the traditions of Proudhonism held their ground longest of all, the labour parties actually based their programmes and tactics on a Marxist foundation. The revived international organisation of the labour movement—in the shape of periodical international congresses—from the outset, and almost without a struggle, adopted the Marxist standpoint in all essentials. But after Marxism had ousted all the more or less consistent doctrines hostile to it, the tendencies expressed in those doctrines began to seek other channels. The forms and motives of the struggle changed, but the struggle continued. And the second half-century in the existence of Marxism began (in the 'nineties) with the struggle of a trend hostile to Marxism within Marxism.

Bernstein, a one-time orthodox Marxist, gave his name to this current by making the most noise and advancing the most consistent expression of the amendments to Marx, the revision of Marx, revisionism. Even in Russia, where, owing to the economic backwardness of the country and the preponderance of a peasant population oppressed by the relics of serfdom, non-Marxian Socialism has naturally held its ground longest of all, it is plainly passing into revisionism before our very eyes. Both in the agrarian question (the programme of the municipalisation of all land) and in general questions of programme and tactics, our social-Narodniks are more and more substituting "amendments" to Marx for the moribund and obsolescent remnants of the old system, which in its own way was consistent and fundamentally hostile to Marxism.

Pre-Marxian Socialism has been smashed. It is now continuing

the struggle not on its own independent soil but on the general soil of Marxism—as revisionism. Let us, then, examine the ideological content of revisionism.

In the domain of philosophy, revisionism clung to the skirts of bourgeois professorial “science.” The professors went “back to Kant”—and revisionism followed in the wake of the Neo-Kantians. The professors repeated the threadbare banalities of the priests against philosophical materialism—and the revisionists, smiling condescendingly, mumbled (word for word after the latest *Handbuch*) that materialism had been “refuted” long ago. The professors treated Hegel as a “dead dog,” and while they themselves preached idealism, only an idealism a thousand times more petty and banal than Hegel’s, they contemptuously shrugged their shoulders at dialectics—and the revisionists floundered after them into the swamp of philosophical vulgarisation of science, replacing “artful” (and revolutionary) dialectics by “simple” (and tranquil) “evolution.” The professors earned their official salaries by adjusting both their idealist and “critical” systems to the dominant mediæval “philosophy” (i.e., to theology)—and the revisionists drew close to them and endeavoured to make religion a “private affair,” not in relation to the modern state, but in relation to the party of the advanced class.

What the real class significance of such “amendments” to Marx was need not be said—it is clear enough. We shall simply note that the only Marxist in the international Social-Democratic movement who criticised from the standpoint of consistent dialectical materialism the incredible banalities uttered by the revisionists was Plekhanov. This must be stressed all the more emphatically since thoroughly mistaken attempts are being made in our day to smuggle in the old and reactionary philosophical rubbish under the guise of criticising Plekhanov’s tactical opportunism.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *Studies in the Philosophy of Marxism* by Bogdanov, Bazarov and others. This is not the place to discuss this book, and I must at present confine myself to stating that in the very near future I shall show in a series of articles or in a separate pamphlet that *everything* I have said in the text about the Neo-Kantian revisionists essentially applies also to these “new” Neo-Humist and Neo-Berkeleian revisionists. (Cf. *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, in this volume.—Ed.)

Passing to political economy, it must be noted first of all that the "amendments" of the revisionists in this domain were much more comprehensive and circumstantial; attempts were made to influence the public by adducing "new data of economic development." It was said that concentration and the ousting of small-scale production by large-scale production do not occur in agriculture at all, while concentration proceeds extremely slowly in commerce and industry. It was said that crises had now become rarer and of less force, and that the cartels and trusts would probably enable capital to do away with crises altogether. It was said that the "theory of the collapse" to which capitalism is heading, was unsound, owing to the tendency of class contradictions to become less acute and milder. It was said, finally, that it would not be amiss to correct Marx's theory of value in accordance with Böhm-Bawerk.

The fight against the revisionists on these questions resulted in as fruitful a revival of the theoretical thought of international Socialism as followed from Engels' controversy with Dühring twenty years earlier. The arguments of the revisionists were analysed with the help of facts and figures. It was proved that the revisionists were systematically presenting modern small-scale production in a favourable light. The technical and commercial superiority of large-scale *production* over small-scale production both in industry and in agriculture are proved by irrefutable facts. But commodity production is far less developed in agriculture, and modern statisticians and economists are usually not very skilful in picking out the special branches (sometimes even operations) in agriculture which indicate that agriculture is being progressively drawn into the *exchange* of world economy. Small-scale production maintains itself on the ruins of natural economy by a steady deterioration in nourishment, by chronic starvation, by the lengthening of the working day, by the deterioration in the quality of cattle and in the care given to cattle, in a word, by the very methods whereby handicraft production maintained itself against capitalist manufacture. Every advance in science and technology inevitably and relentlessly undermines the foundations of small-scale production in capitalist society, and it is the task of Socialist economics to in-

investigate this process in all its—often complicated and intricate—forms and to demonstrate to the small producer the impossibility of holding his own under capitalism, the hopelessness of peasant farming under capitalism, and the necessity of the peasant adopting the standpoint of the proletarian. On this question the revisionists sinned from the scientific standpoint by superficially generalising from facts selected one-sidedly and without reference to the system of capitalism as a whole; they sinned from the political standpoint by the fact that they inevitably, whether they wanted to or not, invited or urged the peasant to adopt the standpoint of the master (*i.e.*, the standpoint of the bourgeoisie), instead of urging him to adopt the standpoint of the revolutionary proletarian.

The position of revisionism was even worse as far as the theory of crises and the theory of collapse were concerned. Only for the shortest space of time could people, and then only the most short-sighted, think of remodelling the foundations of the Marxian doctrine under the influence of a few years of industrial boom and prosperity. Facts very soon made it clear to the revisionists that crises were not a thing of the past: prosperity was followed by a crisis. The forms, the sequence, the picture of the particular crises changed, but crises remained an inevitable component of the capitalist system. While uniting production, the cartels and trusts at the same time, and in a way that was obvious to all, aggravated the anarchy of production, the insecurity of existence of the proletariat and the oppression of capital, thus intensifying class contradictions to an unprecedented degree. That capitalism is moving towards collapse—in the sense both of individual political and economic crises and of the complete wreck of the entire capitalist system—has been made very clear, and on a very broad scale, precisely by the latest giant trusts. The recent financial crisis in America and the frightful increase of unemployment all over Europe, to say nothing of the impending industrial crisis to which many symptoms are pointing—all this is resulting in the fact that the recent “theories” of the revisionists are being forgotten by everybody, even, it seems, by many of the revisionists themselves. But the lessons which this instability of the intellectuals has given the working class must not be forgotten.

As to the theory of value, it should only be said that apart from hints and sighs, exceedingly vague, for Böhm-Bawerk, the revisionists have here contributed absolutely nothing, and have therefore left no traces whatever on the development of scientific thought.

In the domain of politics, revisionism tried to revise the very foundation of Marxism, namely, the doctrine of the class struggle. Political freedom, democracy and universal suffrage remove the ground for the class struggle—we were told—and render untrue the old proposition of the *Communist Manifesto* that the workers have no country. For, they said, since the “will of the majority” prevails under democracy, one must neither regard the state as an organ of class rule, nor reject alliances with the progressive, social-reformist bourgeoisie against the reactionaries.

It cannot be disputed that these objections of the revisionists constituted a fairly harmonious system of views, namely, the old and well-known liberal bourgeois views. The liberals have always said that bourgeois parliamentarism destroys classes and class divisions, since the right to vote and the right to participate in state affairs are shared by all citizens without distinction. The whole history of Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century, and the whole history of the Russian revolution at the beginning of the twentieth, clearly show how absurd such views are. Economic distinctions are aggravated and accentuated rather than mitigated under the freedom of “democratic” capitalism. Parliamentarism does not remove, but rather lays bare the innate character even of the most democratic bourgeois republics as organs of class oppression. By helping to enlighten and to organise immeasurably wider masses of the population than those which previously took an active part in political events, parliamentarism does not make for the elimination of crises and political revolutions, but for the maximum accentuation of civil war during such revolutions. The events in Paris in the spring of 1871 and the events in Russia in the winter of 1905 showed as clear as clear could be how inevitably this accentuation comes about. The French bourgeoisie without a moment's hesitation made a deal with the common national enemy, the foreign army which had ruined its fatherland, in order to crush the proletarian movement. Whoever does not understand

the inevitable inner dialectics of parliamentarism and bourgeois democracy—which tends to an even more acute decision of a dispute by mass violence than formerly—will never be able through parliamentarism to conduct propaganda and agitation that are consistent in principle and really prepare the working-class masses to take a victorious part in such “disputes.” The experience of alliances, agreements and blocs with the social-reformist liberals in the West and with the liberal reformists (Constitutional-Democrats) in the Russian revolution convincingly showed that these agreements only blunt the consciousness of the masses, that they weaken rather than enhance the actual significance of their struggle by linking the fighters with the elements who are least capable of fighting and who are most vacillating and treacherous. French Millerandism—the biggest experiment in applying revisionist political tactics on a wide, a really national scale—has provided a practical judgment of revisionism which will never be forgotten by the proletariat all over the world.

A natural complement to the economic and political tendencies of revisionism was its attitude to the final aim of the Socialist movement. “The final aim is nothing, the movement is everything”—this catch-phrase of Bernstein’s expresses the substance of revisionism better than many long arguments. The policy of revisionism consists in determining its conduct from case to case, in adapting itself to the events of the day and to the chops and changes of petty politics; it consists in forgetting the basic interests of the proletariat, the main features of the capitalist system as a whole and of capitalist evolution as a whole, and in sacrificing these basic interests for the real or assumed advantages of the moment. And it patently follows from the very nature of this policy that it may assume an infinite variety of forms, and that every more or less “new” question, every more or less unexpected and unforeseen turn of events, even though it may change the basic line of development only to an insignificant degree and only for the shortest period of time, will always inevitably give rise to one or another variety of revisionism.

The inevitability of revisionism is determined by its class roots

in modern society. Revisionism is an international phenomenon. No more or less informed and thinking Socialist can have the slightest doubt that the relation between the orthodox and the Bernsteinites in Germany, the Guesdites and the Jaurèsites (and now particularly the Broussites) in France, the Social-Democratic Federation and the Independent Labour Party in Great Britain, de Brouckère and Vandervelde in Belgium, the integralists and the reformists in Italy, and the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks in Russia is everywhere essentially similar, notwithstanding the gigantic variety of national and historically-derived conditions in the present state of all these countries. In reality, the "division" within the present international Socialist movement is now proceeding along *one* line in all the various countries of the world, which testifies to a tremendous advance compared with thirty or forty years ago, when it was not like tendencies within a united international Socialist movement that were combating one another within the various countries. And the "revisionism from the Left" which has begun to take shape in the Latin countries, such as "revolutionary syndicalism," is also adapting itself to Marxism while "amending" it; Labriola in Italy and Lagardelle in France frequently appeal from Marx wrongly understood to Marx rightly understood.

We cannot stop here to analyse the ideological substance of *this* revisionism; it has not yet by far developed to the extent that opportunist revisionism has, it has not yet become international, and it has not yet stood the test of one big practical battle with a Socialist Party even in one country. We shall therefore confine ourselves to the "revisionism from the Right" described above.

Wherein lies its inevitability in capitalist society? Why is it more profound than the differences of national peculiarities and degrees of capitalist development? Because in every capitalist country, side by side with the proletariat, there are broad strata of the petty bourgeoisie, small masters. Capitalism arose and is constantly arising out of small production. A number of "middle strata" are inevitably created anew by capitalism (appendages to the factory, home work, and small workshops scattered all over the country in view of the requirements of big industries, such as the bicycle and automobile industries, etc.). These new small producers are just as



inevitably cast back into the ranks of the proletariat. It is quite natural that the petty-bourgeois world conception should again and again crop up in the ranks of the broad labour parties. It is quite natural that this should be so, and it always will be so right up to the commencement of the proletarian revolution, for it would be a grave mistake to think that the "complete" proletarianisation of the majority of the population is essential before such a revolution can be achieved. What we now frequently experience only in the domain of ideology—disputes over theoretical amendments to Marx—what now crops up in practice only over individual partial issues of the labour movement as tactical differences with the revisionists and splits on these grounds, will all unfailingly have to be experienced by the working class on an incomparably larger scale when the proletarian revolution accentuates all issues and concentrates all differences on points of the most immediate importance in determining the conduct of the masses, and makes it necessary in the heat of the fight to distinguish enemies from friends and to cast out bad allies, so as to be able to deal decisive blows at the enemy.

The ideological struggle waged by revolutionary Marxism against revisionism at the end of the nineteenth century is but the prelude to the great revolutionary battles of the proletariat, which is marching forward to the complete victory of its cause despite all the waverings and weaknesses of the petty bourgeoisie.

April 1908

## PREFACE TO THE RUSSIAN TRANSLATION OF THE LETTERS OF K. MARX TO L. KUGELMANN

OUR aim in issuing as a separate pamphlet the full collection of Marx's letters to Kugelmann published in the German Social-Democratic weekly, *Neue Zeit*, is to acquaint the Russian public more closely with Marx and Marxism. As was to be expected, a good deal of space in Marx's correspondence is devoted to personal matters. For the biographer, this is exceedingly valuable material. But for the broad public in general, and for the Russian working class in particular, those passages in the letters which contain theoretical and political material are infinitely more important. It is particularly instructive for us, in the revolutionary period we are now passing through, carefully to study this material, which reveals Marx as a man who directly responded to all questions of the labour movement and world politics. The editors of the *Neue Zeit* were quite right when they remarked that "we are elevated by an acquaintance with the personality of men whose thoughts and wills took shape under conditions of great upheavals." Such an acquaintance is doubly necessary to the Russian Socialist in 1907, for it provides a wealth of very valuable indications concerning the direct tasks confronting the Socialists in every revolution passed through by his country. Russia is passing through a "great upheaval" at this very moment. Marx's policy in the comparatively stormy 'sixties should very often serve as a direct model for the policy of the Social-Democrat in the present Russian revolution.

We shall therefore only very briefly note the passages in Marx's correspondence which are of particular importance from the theoretical standpoint, and shall deal in greater detail with his revolutionary policy as a representative of the proletariat.

Of outstanding interest for a fuller and profounder under-

standing of Marxism is the letter of July 11, 1868.<sup>1</sup> In the form of polemical remarks against the vulgar economists, Marx in this letter very clearly expounds *his* conception of what is called the "labour" theory of value. Those very objections to Marx's theory of value which naturally arise in the minds of the least trained readers of *Capital* and which for this reason are most eagerly seized upon by the common or garden representatives of "professorial" bourgeois "science," are here analysed by Marx briefly, simply and with remarkable lucidity. Marx here shows the road he took and the road that should be taken to elucidate the law of value. He teaches us his *method*, using the most common objections as illustrations. He makes clear the connection between such a purely (it would seem) theoretical and abstract question as the theory of value and "the interests of the ruling classes," which are "*to perpetuate confusion*." It is only to be hoped that everyone who begins to study Marx and to read *Capital* will read and re-read this letter when studying the first and most difficult chapters of *Capital*.

Other very interesting passages in the letters from the theoretical standpoint are those in which Marx passes judgment on diverse writers. When you read these opinions of Marx—vividly written, full of passion and revealing a profound interest in all the great ideological trends and their analysis—you feel that you are listening to the words of a great thinker. Apart from the remarks on Dietzgen made in passing, the comments on the Proudhonists deserve the particular attention of the reader.<sup>2</sup> The "brilliant" young bourgeois intellectuals who throw themselves "among the proletariat" at times of social upheaval and who are incapable of acquiring the standpoint of the working class or of carrying on persistent and serious work among the "rank and file" of the proletarian organisations are depicted by a few strokes with remarkable vividness.

Take the comment on Dühring,<sup>3</sup> which, as it were, anticipates the contents of the famous *Anti-Dühring* written by Engels (in conjunction with Marx) nine years later. There is a Russian trans-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Karl Marx, *Letters to Dr. Kugelmann*, Eng. ed., 1934, pp. 73 *et seq.*—*Trans.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.—*Trans.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.—*Trans.*

lation of this book by Zederbaum which is unfortunately guilty both of omissions and of mistakes and is simply a bad translation. Here, too, we have the comment on Thünen, which likewise touches on Ricardo's theory of rent. Marx had already, in 1868, emphatically rejected "Ricardo's mistakes," which he finally refuted in Volume III of *Capital*, published in 1894, but which to this very day are repeated by the revisionists—from our ultra-bourgeois and even "Black Hundred" Mr. Bulgakov to the "almost orthodox" Maslov.

Interesting also is the comment on Büchner, with the judgment of vulgar materialism and the "superficial nonsense" copied from Lange (the usual source of "professorial" bourgeois philosophy!).<sup>1</sup>

Let us pass to Marx's revolutionary policy. A certain petty-bourgeois conception of Marxism is surprisingly current among Social-Democrats in Russia according to which a revolutionary period, with its specific forms of struggle and its special proletarian tasks, is almost an anomaly, while a "constitution" and an "extreme opposition" are the rule. In no other country in the world at this moment is there such a profound revolutionary crisis as in Russia—and in no other country are there "Marxists" (belittling and vulgarising Marxism) who take up such a sceptical and philistine attitude towards the revolution. From the fact that the content of the revolution is bourgeois the shallow conclusion is drawn in our country that the bourgeoisie is the *driving force* of the revolution, that the tasks of the proletariat in this revolution are of an auxiliary and not independent character and that proletarian leadership of the revolution is impossible!

How excellently Marx, in his letters to Kugelmann, exposes this shallow interpretation of Marxism! Here is a letter dated April 6, 1866. At that time Marx had finished his principal work. He had already given his final judgment on the German Revolution of 1848 fourteen years before this letter was written. He had himself, in 1850, renounced his socialistic illusions that a Socialist revolution was impending in 1848. And in 1866, when only just beginning to observe the growth of new political crises, he writes;

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.—*Trans.*

"Will our philistines [he is referring to the German bourgeois liberals] at last realise that without a revolution which removes the Habsburgs and Hohenzollerns . . . there must finally come another Thirty Years' War. . . !"<sup>1</sup>

Not a shadow of illusion here that the impending revolution (it took place from above and not from below as Marx had expected) would remove the bourgeoisie and capitalism, but a most clear and precise statement that it would remove only the Prussian and Austrian monarchies. And what faith in this bourgeois revolution! What revolutionary passion of a proletarian fighter who realises the vast significance of a bourgeois revolution for the advance of the Socialist movement!

Three years later, on the eve of the downfall of the Napoleonic Empire in France, drawing attention to "a very interesting" social movement, Marx says in *a positive outburst of enthusiasm* that

"the Parisians are making a regular study of their recent revolutionary past, in order to prepare themselves for the business of the impending new revolution."<sup>2</sup>

And describing the struggle of classes revealed in this study of the past, Marx concludes:

"And so the whole historic witches' cauldron is bubbling. When shall we [in Germany] be so far!"<sup>3</sup>

Such is the lesson that should be learned from Marx by the Russian intellectual Marxists, who are debilitated by scepticism, dulled by pedantry, have a penchant for penitent speeches, rapidly tire of revolution, and who yearn, as for a holiday, for the interment of the revolution and its replacement by constitutional prose. They should learn from the theoretician and leader of the proletarians faith in the revolution, the ability to call on the working class to uphold its immediate revolutionary aims to the last, and the firmness of spirit which admits of no faint-hearted whimpering after temporary setbacks of the revolution.

The pedants of Marxism think that this is all ethical twaddle, romanticism and lack of a sense of reality! No, gentlemen, this is the combination of revolutionary theory and revolutionary policy without which Marxism becomes Brentanoism, Struvism and

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.—*Trans.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.—*Trans.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.—*Trans.*

Sombartism. The Marxian doctrine has bound the theory and practice of the class struggle into one inseparable whole. And whoever distorts a theory which soberly presents the objective situation into a justification of the existing order and goes to the length of striving to adapt himself as quickly as possible to every temporary decline in the revolution, to discard "revolutionary illusions" as quickly as possible and to turn to "realistic" tinkering, is no Marxist.

During the most peaceful, seemingly "idyllic," as Marx expressed it, and "wretchedly stagnant" (as the *Neue Zeit* put it) times, Marx was able to sense the approach of revolution and to rouse the proletariat to the consciousness of its advanced revolutionary tasks. Our Russian intellectuals, who, like philistines, vulgarise Marx, teach the proletariat in most revolutionary times a policy of passivity, of submissively "drifting with the stream," of timidly supporting the most unstable elements of the fashionable liberal party!

Marx's appreciation of the Commune crowns the letters to Kugelmann. And this appreciation is particularly valuable when compared with the methods of Russian Social-Democrats of the Right wing. Plekhanov, who after December 1905 faint-heartedly exclaimed: "They should not have resorted to arms," had the modesty to compare himself to Marx. Marx, he implied, also put the brakes on the revolution in 1870.

Yes, Marx *also* put the brakes on the revolution. But see what a gulf yawns between Plekhanov and Marx in this comparison made by Plekhanov himself!

In November 1905, a month before the first revolutionary wave had reached its apex, Plekhanov, far from emphatically warning the proletariat, definitely said that it was necessary "*to learn to use arms and to arm.*" Yet, when the struggle flared up a month later, Plekhanov, without making the slightest attempt to analyse its significance, its role in the general course of events and its connection with previous forms of struggle, hastened to play the part of a penitent intellectual and exclaimed: "They should not have resorted to arms."

*In September 1870, six months before the Commune. Marx*

definitely warned the French workers. Insurrection would be a *desperate folly*, he said in the well-known Address of the International. He revealed *in advance* the nationalistic illusions concerning the possibility of a movement in the spirit of 1792. He was able to say, *not after the event*, but many months before: "Don't resort to arms."

And how did he behave when this *hopeless* cause, as he himself had declared it to be in September, began to take practical shape in March 1871? Did he use it (as Plekhanov did the December events) to "take a dig" at his enemies, the Proudhonists and Blanquists who led the Commune? Did he begin to scold like a schoolmistress, and say: "I told you so, I warned you; this is what comes of your romanticism, your revolutionary ravings"? Did he preach to the Communards, as Plekhanov did to the December fighters, the sermon of the smug philistine: "You should not have resorted to arms"?

No. On April 12, 1871, Marx writes an *enthusiastic* letter to Kugelman—a letter which we would like to see hung in the home of every Russian Social-Democrat and of every literate Russian worker.

In September 1870 Marx called the insurrection a desperate folly; but in April 1871, when he saw the mass movement of the people, he observed it with the keen attention of a participant in great events that mark a step forward in the historic revolutionary movement.

This is an *attempt*, he says, to smash the bureaucratic military machine and not simply to transfer it from one hand to another. And he sings a veritable hosanna to the "*heroic*" Paris workers led by the Proudhonists and Blanquists.

"What elasticity," he writes, "what historical initiative, what a capacity for sacrifice in these Parisians!... History has no like example of a like greatness."<sup>1</sup>

The *historical initiative* of the masses is what Marx prizes above everything else. Oh, if only our Russian Social-Democrats would learn from Marx how to appreciate the *historical initiative* of the Russian workers and peasants in October and December 1905!

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123.—*Trans.*

The homage paid to the *historical initiative* of the masses by a profound thinker, who foresaw failure six months before—and the lifeless, soulless, pedantic: “They should not have resorted to arms”! Are these not as far apart as heaven and earth?

And like a *participant* in the mass struggle, to which he reacted with all his characteristic ardour and passion, Marx, living in exile in London, sets to work to criticise the *immediate steps* of the “foolishly brave” Parisians who were *ready to “storm heaven.”*

Oh, how our present “realist” wiseacres among the Marxists who are deriding revolutionary romanticism in Russia in 1906-07 would have sneered at Marx at the time! How people would have scoffed at a *materialist*, an *economist*, an enemy of utopias, who pays homage to an “attempt” to storm *heaven*! What tears, condescending smiles or commiseration these “men in mufflers” would have bestowed upon him for his rebel tendencies, utopianism, etc., etc., and for his appreciation of a heaven-storming movement!

But Marx was not inspired with the wisdom of gudgeons who are afraid to discuss the *technique* of the higher forms of revolutionary struggle. He discusses precisely the *technical* problems of the insurrection. Defence or attack?—he asks, as if the military operations were taking place just outside London. And he decides that it must certainly be attack: “*They should have marched at once on Versailles. . . .*”

This was written in April 1871, a few weeks before the great and bloody May. . . .

“They should have marched at once on Versailles”—should the insurgents who had begun the “desperate folly” (September 1870) of storming heaven.

“They should not have resorted to arms” in December 1905 in order to oppose by force the first attempts to withdraw the liberties that had been won. . . .

Yes, Plekhanov had good reason to compare himself to Marx!

“Second mistake,” Marx says, continuing his *technical* criticism: “The Central Committee [the *military command*—note this—the reference is to the Central Committee of the National Guard] surrendered its power *too soon. . . .*”



Marx knew how to warn the *leaders* against a premature rising. But his attitude towards the *proletariat* which was storming heaven was that of a practical adviser, of a participant in the *struggle* of the masses, who were raising the *whole* movement to a *higher level* in spite of the false theories and mistakes of Blanqui and Proudhon.

"However that may be," he writes, "the present rising in Paris—even if it be crushed by the wolves, swine and vile curs of the old society—is the most glorious deed of our Party since the June insurrection."

And Marx, without concealing from the proletariat a *single* mistake of the Commune, dedicated to this *deed* a work which to *this very day* serves as the best guide in the fight for "heaven" and as a frightful bugbear to the liberal and radical "*swine*."

Plekhanov dedicated to the December events a "work" which has almost become the bible of the Constitutional-Democrats.

Yes, Plekhanov had good reason to compare himself to Marx.

Kugelman apparently replied to Marx expressing certain doubts, referring to the hopelessness of the matter and preferring realism to romanticism—at any rate, he compared the Commune, an *insurrection*, to the peaceful demonstration in Paris on June 13, 1849.

Marx immediately (April 17, 1871) reads Kugelman a severe lecture.

"World history," he writes, "would indeed be very easy to make, if the struggle were taken up only on condition of infallibly favourable chances."<sup>1</sup>

In September 1870 Marx called the insurrection a desperate folly. But when the *masses* rose Marx wanted to march with them, to learn with them in the process of the struggle, and not to read them bureaucratic admonitions. He realises that to attempt in advance to calculate the chances *with complete accuracy* would be quackery or hopeless pedantry. What he values *above everything else* is that the working class heroically and self-sacrificingly takes the initiative in *making* world history. Marx regarded world history from the standpoint of those who *make* it without being in a position to calculate the chances *infallibly* beforehand, and not from the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 125.—*Trans.*

standpoint of an intellectual philistine who moralises: "It was easy to foresee . . . they should not have resorted to. . . ."

Marx was also able to appreciate that there are moments in history when the desperate struggle of the *masses* even for a hopeless cause is *essential* for the further schooling of these masses and their training for the *next* struggle.

Such a *statement* of the question is quite incomprehensible and even alien in principle to our present-day quasi-Marxists, who love to take the name of Marx in vain, to borrow only his estimate of the past, and not his ability to make the future. Plekhanov did not even think of it when he set out after December 1905 "*to put the brakes on.*"

But it is precisely this question that Marx raises, without in the least forgetting that he himself in September 1870 regarded insurrection as a desperate folly.

"... The bourgeois *canaille* of Versailles," he writes, "... presented the Parisians with the alternative of taking up the fight or succumbing without a struggle. In the latter case, the *demoralisation of the working class* would have been a *far greater* misfortune than the fall of any number of 'leaders.'"

And with this we shall conclude our brief review of the lessons in a policy worthy of the proletariat which Marx teaches in his letters to Kugelman.

The working class of Russia has already proved once and will prove again more than once that it is capable of "storming heaven."

February 18, 1907

PREFACE TO THE RUSSIAN TRANSLATION OF *LETTERS BY*  
*J. F. BECKER, J. DIETZGEN, F. ENGELS, K. MARX AND*  
*OTHERS TO F. A. SORGE AND OTHERS*

THE collection of letters by Marx, Engels, Dietzgen, Becker and other leaders of the international labour movement of the past century here presented to the Russian public is a needed addition to our advanced Marxist literature.

We will not dwell in detail here on the importance of these letters for the history of Socialism and for a comprehensive treatment of the activities of Marx and Engels. This aspect of the matter requires no explanation. We shall only note that an understanding of the published letters necessitates an acquaintance with the principal works on the history of the International (see Jaekkh, *The International*, Russian translation in the *Znaniye* edition), on the history of the German and American labour movements (see Fr. Mehring, *History of German Social-Democracy*, and Morris Hillquit, *History of Socialism in America*), etc.

Neither do we intend here to attempt a general outline of the contents of this correspondence or to express an opinion about the importance of the various historical periods to which it relates. Mehring has done this extremely well in his article, *Der Sorgesche Briefwechsel* (*Neue Zeit*, 25. Jahrg., No. 1 und 2),<sup>1</sup> which will probably be appended by the publisher to the present translation or will be issued as a separate Russian publication.

The lessons which the militant proletariat must draw from an acquaintance with the intimate sides of Marx's and Engels' activities over the course of nearly thirty years (1867-1895) are of particular interest to Russian Socialists in the present revolutionary period. It is, therefore, not surprising that the first attempts

<sup>1</sup> "The Sorge Correspondence," *Neue Zeit*, 25th year, Nos. 1 and 2.—*Trans.*

made in our Social-Democratic literature to acquaint the readers with Marx's and Engels' letters to Sorge were also linked up with the "burning" issues of Social-Democratic tactics in the Russian revolution (Plekhanov's *Sovremennaya Zhizn* and the Menshevik *Otkliki*). And it is to an appreciation of those passages in the published correspondence which are specially important from the point of view of the present tasks of the workers' party in Russia that we intend to draw the attention of our readers.

Marx and Engels deal most frequently in their letters with the burning questions of the British, American and German labour movements. This is natural, because they were Germans who at that time lived in England and corresponded with their American comrade. Marx expressed himself much more frequently and in much greater detail on the French labour movement, and particularly on the Paris Commune, in the letters he wrote to the German Social-Democrat, Kugelmann.<sup>1</sup>

It is highly instructive to compare what Marx and Engels said of the British, American and German labour movements. The comparison acquires all the greater importance when we remember that Germany on the one hand, and England and America on the other, represent different stages of capitalist development and different forms of domination of the bourgeoisie as a class over the entire political life of these countries. From the scientific standpoint, what we observe here is a sample of materialist dialectics, of the ability to bring out and stress the various points and various sides of the question in accordance with the specific peculiarities of varying political and economic conditions. From the standpoint of the practical policy and tactics of the workers' party, what we see here is a sample of the way in which the creators of the *Communist Manifesto* defined the tasks of the fighting proletariat in accordance with the varying stages of the national labour movement in various countries.

What Marx and Engels most of all criticise in British and American Socialism is its isolation from the labour movement. The

<sup>1</sup> See *Letters of Karl Marx to Dr. Kugelmann*, translation edited by N. Lenin, with a foreword by the editor, St. Petersburg, 1907. (Cf. pp. 712-20 in this volume.—Ed.)

burden of all their numerous comments on the Social-Democratic Federation in England and on the American Socialists is the accusation that they have reduced Marxism to a dogma, to a "rigid (*starre*) orthodoxy," that they consider it "a *credo* and not a *guide to action*,"<sup>1</sup> that they are incapable of adapting themselves to the labour movement marching side by side with them, which, although helpless theoretically, is a living and powerful mass movement.

"Had we from 1864 to 1873 insisted on working together only with those who openly adopted our platform," Engels exclaims in his letter of January 27, 1887, "where should we be to-day?"<sup>2</sup>

And in an earlier letter (December 28, 1886), in reference to the influence of the ideas of Henry George on the American working class, he writes:

"A million or two of workingmen's votes next November for a *bone fide* workingmen's party is worth infinitely more at present than a hundred thousand votes for a doctrinally perfect platform."<sup>3</sup>

These are very interesting passages. There are Social-Democrats in our country who hastened to make use of them in defence of the idea of a "labour congress" or something in the nature of Larin's "broad labour party." Why not in defence of a "Left bloc"? we would ask these precipitate "utilisiers" of Engels. The letters from which the quotations are taken relate to a time when the American workers voted at the elections for Henry George. Mrs. Wischnetzky—an American woman who married a Russian and who translated Engels' works—asked him, as may be seen from Engels' reply, to make a thorough criticism of Henry George. Engels writes (December 28, 1886) that *the time has not yet come* for that, for it is necessary that the workers' party begin to organise itself, even if on a not entirely pure programme. Later on the workers would themselves come to understand what is amiss, "would learn from their own mistakes," but "anything that might delay or prevent that national consolidation of the workingmen's party—no matter what platform—I should consider a great mistake. . . ."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Marx-Engels Selected Correspondence*, p. 450.—*Trans.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 455.—*Trans.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 454.—*Trans.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 453-54.—*Trans.*

Engels, of course, perfectly understood and frequently pointed out the utter absurdity and *reactionary character* of the ideas of Henry George from the *Socialist* standpoint. In the Sorge correspondence there is a most interesting letter from Karl Marx dated June 30, 1881, in which he characterises Henry George as an ideologist of the *radical bourgeoisie*. "Theoretically, the man [Henry George] is utterly backward (*total arrièrè*)," wrote Marx. Yet Engels was not afraid to join with this *Socialist reactionary* in the elections, provided there were people who could warn the masses of "the consequences of their own mistakes" (Engels, in the letter dated November 29, 1886).

Regarding the Knights of Labour, an organisation of American workers existing at that time, Engels wrote in the same letter:

"The weakest [literally: rottenest, *faulste*] side of the K. of L. was their *political neutrality*. . . . The first great step of importance for every country newly entering into the movement is always the organisation of the workers as an independent political party, no matter how, so long as it is a distinct workers' party."<sup>1</sup>

It is obvious that absolutely nothing in defence of a leap *from* Social-Democracy to a non-party labour congress, etc., can be deduced from this. But whoever wants to escape Engels' accusation of degrading Marxism to a "dogma," "orthodoxy," "sectarianism," etc., must conclude from this that a joint election campaign with radical "social-reactionaries" is sometimes permissible.

But what is more interesting, of course, is to dwell not so much on these American-Russian parallels (we had to refer to them so as to answer our opponents), as on the *fundamental* features of the British and American labour movement. These features are: the absence of any at all big, nation-wide, *democratic* problems facing the proletariat; the complete subjection of the proletariat to bourgeois politics; the sectarian isolation of groups, handfuls of Socialists from the proletariat; not the slightest success of the Socialists at the elections among the working masses, etc. Whoever forgets these fundamental conditions and sets out to draw broad conclusions from "American-Russian parallels," displays extreme superficiality.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid*, p. 450.—*Trans.*

Engels lays so much stress on the economic organisations of the workers in such conditions because he is dealing with the most firmly established democratic systems, which confront the proletariat with purely Socialist tasks.

Engels stresses the importance of an independent workers' party, even though with a bad programme, because he is dealing with countries where hitherto there had not been even a hint of political independence of the workers, where, in politics, the workers most of all dragged, and still drag, after the bourgeoisie.

It would be ridiculing Marx's historical method to attempt to apply the conclusions drawn from such arguments to countries or historical situations where the proletariat had formed its party before the bourgeois liberals had formed theirs, where the tradition of voting for bourgeois politicians is absolutely unknown to the proletariat, and where the next immediate tasks are not Socialist but bourgeois-democratic.

Our idea will become even clearer to the reader if we compare the opinions of Engels on the British and American movements with his opinions on the German movement.

Such opinions, and extremely interesting ones at that, also abound in the published correspondence. And what runs like a red thread through all these opinions is something quite different, namely, a warning against the "Right wing" of the workers' party, a merciless (sometimes—as with Marx in 1877-79—a *furious*) war upon *opportunism* in Social-Democracy.

Let us first corroborate this by quotations from the letters, and then proceed to a judgment of this phenomenon.

First of all, we must here note the opinions expressed by Marx on Höchberg and Co. Fr. Mehring, in his article *Der Sorgesche Briefwechsel*, attempts to tone down Marx's attacks, as well as Engels' later attacks on the opportunists—and, in our opinion, rather overdoes the attempt. As regards Höchberg and Co. in particular, Mehring insists on his view that Marx's judgment of Lassalle and the Lassalleans was incorrect. But, we repeat, what interests us here is not an historical judgment of whether Marx's attacks on particular Socialists were correct or exaggerated, but Marx's judgment *in principle* on definite *currents* in Socialism in general.

While complaining about the compromises of the German Social-Democrats with the Lassalleans and with Dühring (letter of October 19, 1877), Marx also condemns the compromise "with the whole gang of half-mature students and super-wise doctors" ("doctor" in German is a scientific degree corresponding to our "candidate" or "university graduate, class I"), who want to give Socialism a "higher idealistic" orientation, that is to say, to replace its materialistic basis (which demands serious objective study from anyone who tries to use it) by modern mythology, with its goddesses of Justice, Freedom, Equality and Fraternity. One of the representatives of this tendency is the publisher of the journal *Zukunft*, Dr. Höchberg, who "bought himself in" to the Party—"with 'the noblest' intentions, I assume, but I do not give a damn for 'intentions.' Anything more miserable [than the programme of his *Zukunft*] has seldom seen the light of day with more 'modest' 'presumption.'"<sup>1</sup>

In another letter, written almost two years later (September 19, 1879), Marx rebuts the gossip that Engels and he were behind *J. Most*, and he gives Sorge a detailed account of his attitude towards the opportunists in the German Social-Democratic Party. The *Zukunft* was run by Höchberg, Schramm and Ed. Bernstein. Marx and Engels *refused* to have anything to do with such a publication, and when the question was raised of establishing a new Party organ with the participation of this same Höchberg and with his financial assistance, Marx and Engels first demanded the acceptance of their nominee, Hirsch, as responsible editor to exercise control over this "mixture of doctors, students and professorial Socialists" and then directly addressed a circular letter to Bebel, Liebknecht and other leaders of the Social-Democratic Party, warning them that they would openly combat "such a vulgarisation (*Verluderung*—an even stronger word in German) of theory and Party," unless the tendency of Höchberg, Schramm and Bernstein changed.

This was the period in the German Social-Democratic Party which Mehring described in his *History* as "a year of confusion"

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 350.—*Trans.*



(*Ein Jahr der Verwirrung*). After the Anti-Socialist Law, the Party did not at once find the right path, first succumbing to the anarchism of Most and the opportunism of Höchberg and Co.

"These people," Marx writes of the latter, "nonentities in theory and useless in practice, want to draw the teeth of Socialism (which they have corrected in accordance with the university recipes) and particularly of the Social-Democratic Party, to enlighten the workers, or, as they put it, to imbue them with 'elements of education' from their confused half-knowledge, and above all to make the Party respectable in the eyes of the petty bourgeoisie. They are just wretched counter-revolutionary windbags."

The result of Marx's "furious" attack was that the opportunists retreated and—effaced themselves. In a letter of November 19, 1879, Marx announces that Höchberg has been removed from the editorial committee and that all the influential leaders of the Party—Bebel, Liebknecht, Bracke, etc.—have *repudiated* his ideas. The Social-Democratic Party organ, the *Social-Democrat*, began to appear under the editorship of Vollmar, who at that time belonged to the revolutionary wing of the Party. A year later (November 5, 1880), Marx relates that he and Engels constantly fought the "miserable" way in which the *Social-Democrat* was conducted and often expressed their opinion *sharply* (*wobei's oft scharf hergeht*). Liebknecht visited Marx in 1880 and promised that there would be an "improvement" *in all respects*.

Peace was restored, and the war never came out into the open. Höchberg retired, and Bernstein became a revolutionary Social-Democrat—at least until the death of Engels in 1895.

On June 20, 1882, Engels writes to Sorge and speaks of this struggle as already a thing of the past:

"In general, things in Germany are going splendidly. It is true that the literary gentlemen in the Party tried to cause a reactionary swing, but they failed ignominiously. The abuse to which the Social-Democratic workers are being everywhere subjected has made them everywhere more revolutionary than they were three years ago. . . . These gentlemen [the Party literary people] wanted at all costs to beg for the repeal of the Anti-Socialist Law by mildness and meekness, fawning and humility, because it had summarily deprived them of their literary earnings. As soon as the law is repealed . . . the split will apparently become an open one, and the Vierecks and Höchbergs will form a separate Right wing, where they can be treated with from time to time until they definitely come a cropper. We announced this immediately after the passage of the Anti-Socialist Law, when Höchberg and

Schramm published in the *Jahrbuch* what was under the circumstances a most infamous judgment of the work of the Party and demanded more cultivated [*jebildetes* instead of *gebildetes*. Engels is alluding to the Berlin accent of the German literary people], refined and elegant behaviour of the Party."

This forecast of a Bernsteinian made in 1882 was strikingly confirmed in 1898 and subsequent years.

And since then, and particularly after Marx's death, Engels, it may be said without exaggeration, was untiring in his efforts to straighten out what the German opportunists had distorted.

The end of 1884. The "petty-bourgeois prejudices" of the German Social-Democratic Reichstag deputies, who voted for the steamship subsidy (*Dampfersubvention*, see Mehring's *History*) are condemned. Engels informs Sorge that he has to correspond a great deal on this subject (letter of December 31, 1884).

1885. Giving his opinion of the whole business of the *Dampfersubvention*, Engels writes (June 3) that "it almost came to a split." The "philistinism" of the Social-Democratic deputies was "*colossal*." "A petty-bourgeois Socialist fraction is inevitable in a country like Germany," Engels says.

1887. Engels replies to Sorge, who had written that the Party was disgracing itself by electing such deputies as Viereck (a Social-Democrat of the Höchberg type). There is nothing to be done—Engels excuses himself—the workers' party cannot find good deputies for the Reichstag.

"The gentlemen of the Right wing know that they are being tolerated only because of the Anti-Socialist Law, and that they will be thrown out of the Party the very day the Party secures freedom of action again."

And, in general, it is preferable that "the Party be better than its parliamentary heroes, than the other way round" (March 3, 1887). Liebknecht is a conciliator—Engels complains—he always glosses over differences by phrases. But when it comes to a split, he will be with us at the decisive moment.

1889. Two International Social-Democratic Congresses in Paris. The opportunists (headed by the French possibilists) split away from the revolutionary Social-Democrats. Engels (he was then sixty-eight years old) flings himself into the fight like a young

man. A number of letters (from January 12 to July 20, 1889) are devoted to the fight against the opportunists. Not only they, but also the Germans—Liebknecht, Bebel and others—are flagellated for their conciliationism.

The possibilists have sold themselves to the government, writes Engels on January 12, 1889. And he accuses the members of the British Social-Democratic Federation of having allied themselves with the possibilists.

"The writing and running about in connection with this damned congress leave me no time for anything else." (May 11, 1889.)

The possibilists are busy, but our people are asleep, Engels writes angrily. Now even Auer and Schippel are demanding that we attend the possibilist congress. But this "at last" opened Liebknecht's eyes. Engels, together with Bernstein, writes pamphlets (signed by Bernstein—Engels calls them "our pamphlets") against the opportunists.

"With the exception of the S.D.F., the possibilists have not a single Socialist organisation on their side in the whole of Europe. [June 8, 1889.] They are, consequently, falling back on the non-Socialist trade unions [let the advocates of a broad labour party, of a labour congress, etc., in our country take note!]. From America they will get one *Knight of Labour*."

The opponent is the same as in the fight against the Bakunists:

"Only with this difference that the banner of the anarchists has been replaced by the banner of the possibilists. There is the same selling of principles to the bourgeoisie for concessions in retail, namely, for well-paid jobs for the leaders (on the town councils, labour exchanges, etc.)."

Brousse (the leader of the possibilists) and Hyndman (the leader of the S.D.F., which had united with the possibilists) attack "authoritarian Marxism" and want to form the "nucleus of a new International."

"You can have no idea of the naïveté of the Germans. It has cost me tremendous effort to explain even to Bebel what it really all means." (June 8, 1889.)

And when the two congresses met, when the revolutionary Social-Democrats numerically exceeded the possibilists (*united with the trade unionists*, the S.D.F., a section of the Austrians, etc.), Engels

was jubilant (July 17, 1889). He was glad that the conciliatory plans and proposals of Liebknecht and others had failed (July 20, 1889).

"It serves our sentimental conciliatory brethren right, that for all their amicableness, they received a good kick in their tenderest spot. This will cure them for some time."

. . . Mehring was right when he said (*Der Sorgesche Briefwechsel*) that Marx and Engels had not much of an idea of "good manners":

"If they did not think long over every blow they dealt, neither did they whimper over every blow they received. 'If you think that your pinpricks can pierce my old, well-tanned and thick hide, you are mistaken,' Engels once wrote."

And the imperviousness they had themselves acquired they attributed to others as well, says Mehring of Marx and Engels.

1893. The flagellation of the "Fabians," which suggests itself—when passing judgment on the Bernsteinists (for was it not with the "Fabians" in England that Bernstein "reared" his opportunism?).

"The Fabians are an ambitious group here in London who have understanding enough to realise the inevitability of the social revolution, but who could not possibly entrust this gigantic task to the rough proletariat alone and are therefore kind enough to set themselves at the head. Fear of the revolution is their fundamental principle. They are the 'educated' *par excellence*. Their Socialism is municipal Socialism; not the nation but the *municipality* is to become the owner of the means of production, at any rate for the time being. This Socialism of theirs is then represented as an extreme but inevitable consequence of bourgeois Liberalism, and hence follow their tactics of not decisively opposing the Liberals as adversaries but of pushing them on towards Socialist conclusions and therefore of intriguing with them, of permeating *Liberalism with Socialism*, of not putting up Socialist candidates against the Liberals, but of fastening them on to the Liberals, forcing them upon them, or deceiving them into taking them. That in the course of this process they are either lied to and deceived themselves or else betray Socialism, they do not of course realise.

"With great industry they have produced amid all sorts of rubbish some good propagandist writings as well, in fact the best of the kind which the English have produced. But as soon as they get on to their specific tactics of hushing up the class struggle it all turns putrid. Hence too their fanatical hatred of Marx and all of us—because of the class struggle.

"These people have of course many bourgeois followers and therefore money. . . ."

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 505-06.—*Trans.*

# A CLASSICAL JUDGMENT OF THE OPPORTUNISM OF THE INTELLECTUALS IN SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY

## 1894. The Peasant Question.

"On the Continent," Engels writes on November 10, 1894, "success is developing the appetite for more success, and catching the peasant, in the literal sense of the word, is becoming the fashion. First the French in Nantes declare through Lafargue not only . . . that it is not our business to hasten . . . the ruin of the small peasant which capitalism is seeing to for us, but they also add that we must directly *protect* the small peasant against taxation, usurers and landlords. But we cannot co-operate in this, first because it is stupid and second because it is impossible. Next, however, Vollmar comes along in Frankfort, and wants to bribe the *peasantry as a whole*, though the peasant he has to do with in Upper Bavaria is not the debt-laden poor peasant of the Rhineland but the middle and even the big peasant, who exploits his men and women farm servants and sells cattle and grain in masses. And that cannot be done without giving up the whole principle."<sup>1</sup>

## 1894, December 4.

" . . . The Bavarians, who have become very, very opportunistic and have almost turned into an ordinary people's party (that is to say, the majority of leaders and many of those who have recently joined the Party), voted in the Bavarian Diet for the budget as a whole; and Vollmar in particular has started an agitation among the peasants with the object of winning the Upper Bavarian big peasants—people who own 25 to 80 acres of land (10 to 30 hectares) and who therefore cannot manage without wage-labourers—instead of winning their farm hands."

We thus see that for more than ten years Marx and Engels systematically and unswervingly fought opportunism in the German Social-Democratic Party and attacked intellectual philistinism and petty-bourgeoisdom in Socialism. This is an extremely important fact. The general public knows that German Social-Democracy is regarded as a model of Marxist proletarian policy and tactics, but it does not know what a constant war the founders of Marxism had to wage against the "Right wing" (Engels' expression) of that party. And it is no accident that soon after Engels' death this war turned from a concealed war into an open war. This was an inevitable result of the decades of historical development of German Social-Democracy.

And now we very clearly perceive the two lines of Engels' (and Marx's) recommendations, directions, corrections, threats and ex-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 525.—*Trans.*

hortations. They most insistently called upon the British and American Socialists to merge with the labour movement and to eradicate the narrow and hidebound sectarian spirit from their organisations. They most insistently taught the German Social-Democrats to beware of succumbing to philistinism, to "parliamentary idiotism" (Marx's expression in the letter of September 19, 1879), to petty-bourgeois intellectual opportunism.

Is it not characteristic that our Social-Democratic gossips have noisily proclaimed the recommendations of the first kind and have kept their mouths shut, have remained silent over the recommendations of the second kind? Is not *such* one-sidedness in appraising Marx's and Engels' letters the best indication, in a sense, of our, Russian Social-Democratic . . . "one-sidedness"?

At the present moment, when the international labour movement is displaying symptoms of profound ferment and wavering, when extremes of opportunism, "parliamentary idiotism" and philistine reformism have evoked opposite extremes of revolutionary syndicalism, the general line of Marx's and Engels' "amendments" to British and American Socialism and German Socialism acquires exceptional importance.

In countries where there are *no* Social-Democratic workers' parties, *no* Social-Democratic members of parliament, *no* systematic and consistent Social-Democratic policy either at elections or in the press, etc., Marx and Engels taught that the Socialists must *at all costs* rid themselves of narrow sectarianism and *join* with the labour movement so as to *shake up* the proletariat *politically*, for in the last third of the nineteenth century the proletariat displayed *almost no* political independence either in England or America. In these countries—where bourgeois-democratic historical tasks were almost entirely absent—the political arena was *wholly* filled by the triumphant and self-complacent bourgeoisie, which in the art of deceiving, corrupting and bribing the workers has no equal anywhere in the world.

To think that these recommendations of Marx and Engels to the British and American labour movement can be simply and directly applied to Russian conditions is to use Marxism not in order to comprehend its *method*, not in order to *study* the concrete his-

torical peculiarities of the labour movement in definite countries, but in order to settle petty factional, intellectual accounts.

On the other hand, in a country where the bourgeois-democratic revolution was still incomplete, where "military despotism, embellished with parliamentary forms" (Marx's expression in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme*) prevailed, and still prevails, where the proletariat had long ago been drawn into politics and was pursuing a Social-Democratic policy, what Marx and Engels feared most of all in such a country was parliamentary vulgarisation and philistine compromising of the tasks and scope of the labour movement.

It is all the more our duty to emphasise and advance *this* side of Marxism in the period of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia because in our country a large, "brilliant" and rich bourgeois-liberal press is vociferously trumpeting to the proletariat the "exemplary" loyalty, the parliamentary legalism, the modesty and moderation of the neighbouring German labour movement.

This mercenary lie of the bourgeois betrayers of the Russian revolution is not due to accident or to the personal depravity of certain past or future ministers in the Cadet<sup>1</sup> camp. It is due to the profound economic interests of the Russian liberal landlords and liberal bourgeois. And in combating this lie, this "making the masses stupid" (*Massenverdummung*—Engels' expression in his letter of November 29, 1886), the letters of Marx and Engels should serve as an indispensable weapon for all Russian Socialists.

The mercenary lie of the bourgeois liberals holds up to the people the exemplary "modesty" of the German Social-Democrats. The leaders of these Social-Democrats, the founders of the theory of Marxism, tell us:

"The revolutionary language and action of the French has made the whining of the Vierecks and Co. [the opportunist Social-Democrats in the German Reichstag Social-Democratic fraction] sound quite feeble [the reference is to the formation of a labour party in the French Chamber and to the Decazeville strike, which split the French Radicals from the French proletariat], and only Liebknecht and Bebel spoke in the last debate... and both of them spoke well. We can with this debate once more show ourselves in decent society, which was by no means the case with all of them.

<sup>1</sup> Constitutional Democrats.—*Ed.*

In general it is a good thing that the leadership of the Germans [of the international social movement], particularly after they sent so many philistines to the Reichstag (which, it is true, was unavoidable), has become rather disputable. *In Germany everything becomes philistine in peaceful times; and therefore the sting of French competition is absolutely necessary. . . .*" (Letter of April 29, 1886.)

Such are the lessons which must be drawn most firmly of all by the R. S. D. L. P.,<sup>1</sup> which is ideologically dominated by the influence of German Social-Democracy.

These lessons are taught us not by any particular passage in the correspondence of the greatest men of the nineteenth century, but by the whole spirit and substance of their comradely and frank criticism of the international experience of the proletariat, a criticism which shunned diplomacy and petty considerations.

How far all the letters of Marx and Engels were indeed imbued with this spirit may also be seen from the following passages which it is true are, relatively speaking, of a particular nature, but which on the other hand are highly characteristic.

In 1889 a young, fresh movement of untrained and unskilled labourers (gasworkers, dockers, etc.) began in England, a movement marked by a new and revolutionary spirit. Engels was delighted with it. He refers exultingly to the part played by Tussy, Marx's daughter, who agitated among these workers.

" . . . The most repulsive thing here," he says, writing from London on December 7, 1889, "is the bourgeois 'respectability' which has grown deep into the bones of the workers. The division of society into a scale of innumerable degrees, each recognised without question, each with its own pride but also with its native respect for its 'betters' and 'superiors,' is so old and firmly established that the bourgeois still find it pretty easy to get their bait accepted. I am not at all sure, for instance, that John Burns is not secretly prouder of his popularity with Cardinal Manning, the Lord Mayor and the bourgeoisie in general than of his popularity with his own class. And Champion—an ex-Lieutenant—has intrigued for years with bourgeois and especially with conservative elements, preached Socialism at the parsons' Church Congress, etc. Even Tom Mann, whom I regard as the finest of them all, is fond of mentioning that he will be lunching with the Lord Mayor. If one compares this with the French, one can see what a revolution is good for after all."<sup>2</sup>

Comment is superfluous.

Another example. In 1891 there was danger of a European war. Engels corresponded on the subject with Bebel, and they agreed

<sup>1</sup> Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party.—*Trans.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 461.—*Trans.*



that in the event of Russia attacking Germany, the German Socialists must desperately fight the Russians and any allies of the Russians.

"If Germany is crushed, then we shall be too, while in the most favourable case the struggle will be such a violent one that Germany will only be able to hold on by revolutionary means, so that very possibly we shall be forced to come into power and play the part of 1793." (Letter of October 24, 1891.)<sup>1</sup>

Let this be noted by those opportunists who cried from the housetops that "Jacobin" prospects for the Russian workers' party in 1905 were un-Social-Democratic! Engels squarely suggests to Bebel the possibility of the Social-Democrats having to participate in a provisional government.

Holding such views on the tasks of Social-Democratic workers' parties it is quite natural that Marx and Engels should have the most fervent faith in the Russian revolution and its great world significance. We see this ardent expectation of a revolution in Russia in this correspondence over a period of nearly twenty years.

Here is Marx's letter of September 27, 1877. He is quite enthusiastic over the Eastern crisis:

"Russia has long been standing on the threshold of an upheaval, all the elements of it are prepared. . . . The gallant Turks have hastened the explosion by years with the thrashing they have inflicted. . . . The upheaval will begin *secundum artem* [according to the rules of the art] with some *playing at constitutionalism* and then there will be a fine row (*et il y aura un beau tapage*). If Mother Nature is not particularly unfavourable towards us we shall still live to see the fun!"<sup>2</sup> (Marx was then sixty-one years old.)

Mother Nature did not—and could not very well—permit Marx to live "to see the fun." But he *foretold* the "playing at constitutionalism," and it is as though his words were written yesterday in relation to the First and Second Russian Dumas. And we know that the warning to the people against "playing at constitutionalism" was the "living soul" of the tactics of boycott so detested by the liberals and opportunists. . . .

Here is Marx's letter of November 5, 1880. He is delighted with the success of *Capital* in Russia, and takes the part of the *Narodo-*

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 494.—*Trans.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 348.—*Trans.*

*volsi* against the newly-arisen group of *Chernopereeltsi*. Marx correctly perceives the anarchistic elements in the latter's views. Not knowing and having then no opportunity of knowing the future evolution of the *Chernopereeltsi-Narodniki* into Social-Democrats, Marx attacks the *Chernopereeltsi* with all his trenchant sarcasm:

"These gentlemen are against all political-revolutionary action. Russia is to make a somersault into the anarchist-communist-atheist millenium! Meanwhile, they are preparing for this leap with the most tedious doctrinairism, whose so-called principles are being hawked about the street ever since the late Bakunin."

We can gather from this how Marx would have judged the significance for Russia of 1905 and the following years of the "political-revolutionary action" of *Social-Democracy*.<sup>1</sup>

Here is a letter by Engels dated April 6, 1887:

"On the other hand, it seems as if a crisis is impending in Russia. The recent *attentats* rather upset the apple-cart. . . ."

A letter of April 9, 1887, says the same thing. . . .

"The army is full of discontented, conspiring officers. [Engels at that time was influenced by the revolutionary struggle of the *Narodnaya Volya* party; he set his hopes on the officers, and did not yet see the revolutionary Russian soldiers and sailors, who manifested themselves so magnificently eighteen years later. . . .] I do not think things will last another year; and once it breaks out (*losgeht*) in Russia, then hurrah!"

A letter of April 23, 1887:

"In Germany there is persecution [of Socialists] after persecution. It looks as if Bismarck wants to have everything ready, so that the moment the revolution breaks out in Russia, which is now only a question of months, Germany could immediately follow her example (*losgeschlagen werden*)."

The months proved to be very, very long ones. Doubtless, philistines will be found who, knitting their brows and wrinkling their foreheads, will sternly condemn Engels' "revolutionism," or will indulgently laugh at the old utopias of the old revolutionary exile.

Yes, Marx and Engels erred much and often in determining

<sup>1</sup> By the way, if my memory does not deceive me, Plekhanov or V. I. Zasluch told me in 1900-03 about the existence of a letter of Engels' to Plekhanov on *Our Differences* and on the character of the impending revolution in Russia. It would be interesting to know precisely—is there such a letter, does it still exist, and is it not time to publish it?

the proximity of revolution, in their hopes in the victory of revolution (e.g., in 1848 in Germany), in their faith in the imminence of a German "republic" ("to die for the republic," wrote Engels of that period, recalling his sentiments as a participant in the military campaign for an imperial constitution in 1848-49). They erred in 1871 when they were engaged in "raising revolt in Southern France, for which" they (Becker writes "we," referring to himself and his nearest friends: letter No. 14, of July 21, 1871) "did, sacrificed and risked all that was humanly possible. . . ." The same letter says:

"If we had had more means in March and April we would have roused the whole of Southern France and would have saved the Commune in Paris."

But *such* errors—the errors of the giants of revolutionary thought who tried to raise and did raise the proletariat of the whole world above the level of petty, commonplace and trifling tasks—are a thousand times more noble and magnificent and *historically more valuable and true* than the puerile wisdom of official liberalism, which sings, shouts, appeals and exhorts about the vanity of revolutionary vanities, the futility of the revolutionary struggle and the charms of counter-revolutionary "constitutional" fantasies. . . .

The Russian working class will win its freedom and give a fillip to Europe by its revolutionary action, full though it may be of mistakes—and let the philistines pride themselves on the infallibility of their revolutionary inaction.

April 6, 1907

## DIFFERENCES IN THE EUROPEAN LABOUR MOVEMENT

### I

THE principal tactical differences in the present labour movement of Europe and America reduce themselves to a struggle against two big trends that are departing from Marxism, which has in fact become the dominant theory in this movement. These two trends are revisionism (opportunism, reformism) and anarchism (anarcho-syndicalism, anarcho-socialism). Both these departures from the Marxist theory that is dominant in the labour movement, and from Marxist tactics, were to be observed in various forms and in various shades in all civilised countries during the course of the more than half-century of history of the mass labour movement.

This fact alone shows that these departures cannot be attributed to accident, or to the mistakes of individuals or groups, or even to the influence of national characteristics and traditions, and so forth. There must be radical causes in the economic system and in the character of the development of all capitalist countries which constantly give rise to these departures. A small book published last year by a Dutch Marxist, Anton Pannekoek, *The Tactical Differences in the Labour Movement* (*Die taktischen Differenzen in der Arbeiterbewegung*, Hamburg, Erdmann Dubber, 1909), represents an interesting attempt at a scientific investigation of these causes. In the course of our exposition we shall acquaint the reader with Pannekoek's conclusions, which it cannot be denied are quite correct.

One of the most profound causes that periodically give rise to differences over tactics is the very growth of the labour movement itself. If this movement is not measured by the criterion of some fantastic ideal, but is regarded as the practical movement of ordi-

nary people, it will be clear that the enlistment of larger and larger numbers of new "recruits," the enrolment of new strata of the toiling masses, must inevitably be accompanied by waverings in the sphere of theory and tactics, by repetitions of old mistakes, by temporary reversions to antiquated ideas and antiquated methods, and so forth. The labour movement of every country periodically spends a varying amount of energy, attention and time on the "training" of recruits.

Furthermore, the speed of development of capitalism differs in different countries and in different spheres of national economy. Marxism is most easily, rapidly, completely and durably assimilated by the working class and its ideologists where large-scale industry is most developed. Economic relations which are backward, or which lag in their development, constantly lead to the appearance of supporters of the labour movement who master only certain aspects of Marxism, only certain parts of the new world conception, or individual slogans and demands, and are unable to make a determined break with all the traditions of the bourgeois world conception in general and the bourgeois-democratic world conception in particular.

Again, a constant source of differences is the dialectical nature of social development, which proceeds in contradictions and through contradictions. Capitalism is progressive because it destroys the old methods of production and develops productive forces, yet at the same time, at a certain stage of development, it retards the growth of productive forces. It develops, organises, and disciplines the workers—and it crushes, oppresses, leads to degeneration, poverty and so on. Capitalism creates its own gravedigger, it creates itself the elements of a new system, yet at the same time without a "leap" these individual elements change nothing in the general state of affairs and do not affect the rule of capital. Marxism, the theory of dialectical materialism, is able to embrace these contradictions of practical life, of the practical history of capitalism and the labour movement. But needless to say, the masses learn from practical life and not from books, and therefore certain individuals or groups constantly exaggerate, elevate to a one-sided theory, to a one-sided system of tactics, now one and now another feature of

capitalist development, now one and now another "lesson" from this development.

Bourgeois ideologists, liberals and democrats, not understanding Marxism, and not understanding the modern labour movement, are constantly leaping from one futile extreme to another. At one time they explain the whole matter by asserting that evil-minded persons are "inciting" class against class—at another they console themselves with the assertion that the workers' party is "a peaceful party of reform." Both anarcho-syndicalism and reformism—which seize upon *one* aspect of the labour movement, which elevate one-sidedness to a theory, and which declare such tendencies or features of this movement as constitute a specific peculiarity of a given period, of given conditions of working class activity, to be mutually exclusive—must be regarded as a direct product of this bourgeois world conception and its influence. But real life, real history, *includes* these different tendencies, just as life and development in nature include both slow evolution and rapid leaps, breaks in continuity.

The revisionists regard as mere phrasemongering all reflections on "leaps" and on the fundamental antithesis between the labour movement and the whole of the old society. They regard reforms as a partial realisation of Socialism. The anarcho-syndicalist rejects "petty work," especially the utilisation of the parliamentary platform. As a matter of fact, these latter tactics amount to waiting for the "great days" and to an inability to muster the forces which create great events. Both hinder the most important and most essential thing, namely, the concentration of the workers into big, powerful and properly functioning organisations, capable of functioning properly under *all* circumstances, permeated with the spirit of the class struggle, clearly realising their aims and trained in the true Marxist world conception

We shall here permit ourselves a slight digression and note in parenthesis, so as to avoid possible misunderstanding, that Pannekoek illustrates his analysis *exclusively* by examples taken from West European history, especially the history of Germany and France, and *entirely* leaves Russia out of account. If it appears at times that he is hinting at Russia, it is only because the basic tend-

encies which give rise to definite departures from Marxist tactics are also to be observed in our country, despite the vast difference between Russia and the West in culture, customs, history and economy.

Finally, an extremely important cause producing differences among the participants in the labour movement lies in the changes in tactics of the ruling classes in general, and of the bourgeoisie in particular. If the tactics of the bourgeoisie were always uniform, or at least homogeneous, the working class would rapidly learn to reply to them by tactics also uniform or homogeneous. But as a matter of fact, in every country the bourgeoisie inevitably works out two systems of rule, two methods of fighting for its interests and of retaining its rule, and these methods at times succeed each other and at times are interwoven with each other in various combinations. They are, firstly, the method of force, the method which rejects all concessions to the labour movement, the method of supporting all the old and obsolete institutions, the method of irreconcilably rejecting reforms. Such is the nature of the conservative policy which in Western Europe is becoming less and less a policy of the agrarian classes and more and more one of the varieties of bourgeois policy in general. The second method is the method of "liberalism," which takes steps towards the development of political rights, towards reforms, concessions and so forth.

The bourgeoisie passes from one method to the other not in accordance with the malicious design of individuals, and not fortuitously, but owing to the fundamental contradictions of its own position. Normal capitalist society cannot develop successfully without a consolidated representative system and without the enjoyment of certain political rights by the population, which is bound to be distinguished by its relatively high "cultural" demands. This demand for a certain minimum of culture is created by the conditions of the capitalist mode of production itself, with its high technique, complexity, flexibility, mobility, rapidity of development of world competition, and so forth. The oscillations in the tactics of the bourgeoisie, the passage from the system of force to the system of apparent concessions, are, consequently, peculiar to the history of all European countries during the last half-century,

while, at the same time, various countries chiefly develop the application of one method or the other at definite periods. For instance, England in the 'sixties and 'seventies was a classical country of "liberal" bourgeois policy, Germany in the 'seventies and 'eighties adhered to the method of force, and so on.

When this method prevailed in Germany, a one-sided echo of this system, one of the systems of bourgeois government, was the growth of anarcho-syndicalism, or anarchism, as it was then called, in the labour movement (the "Young" at the beginning of the 'nineties, Johann Most at the beginning of the 'eighties). When in 1890 the change towards "concessions" took place, this change, as is always the case, proved to be even more dangerous to the labour movement, and gave rise to an equally one-sided echo of bourgeois "reformism": opportunism in the labour movement.

"The positive and real aim of the liberal policy of the bourgeoisie," Pannekoek says, "is to mislead the workers, to cause a split in their ranks, to transform their policy into an impotent adjunct of an impotent, always impotent and ephemeral, sham reformism."

Not infrequently, the bourgeoisie for a certain time achieves its object by a "liberal" policy, which, as Pannekoek justly remarks, is a "more crafty" policy. A part of the workers and a part of their representatives at times allow themselves to be deceived by sham concessions. The revisionists declare the doctrine of the class struggle to be "antiquated," or begin to conduct a policy which in fact amounts to a renunciation of the class struggle. The zigzags of bourgeois tactics intensify revisionism within the labour movement and not infrequently exacerbate the differences within the labour movement to the pitch of a direct split.

All causes of the kind indicated give rise to differences on questions of tactics within the labour movement and within the proletarian ranks. But there is not and cannot be a Chinese wall between the proletariat and the strata of the petty bourgeoisie contiguous to it, including the peasantry. It is clear that the passing of certain individuals, groups and strata of the petty bourgeoisie into the ranks of the proletariat is bound, in its turn, to give rise to vacillations in the tactics of the latter.



The experience of the labour movement of various countries helps us to understand from the example of concrete practical questions the nature of Marxist tactics; it helps the younger countries to distinguish more clearly the true class significance of the departures from Marxism and to combat these departures more successfully.

December 1910

## THE IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE IN THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

AN extremely important distinguishing feature of post-revolutionary Russia is the profound ideological change that has taken place among the *oppositional* or progressive strata. Whoever forgets this feature deprives himself of the possibility of understanding either the Russian revolution and its character or the tasks of the working class in the present era.

The ideological change among the liberal bourgeoisie consists in the formation of an anti-democratic trend (Struve, Izgoyev and V. Maklakov openly, the remaining Cadets secretly, "shamefacedly").

Among the democrats the change consists in a tremendous ideological collapse and in vacillations both among the Social-Democrats (proletarian democrats) and among the Socialist-Revolutionaries (bourgeois democrats). Even the best representatives of democracy confine themselves to *bewailing* the collapse, vacillations and renegacy. Marxists, however, seek for the *class* roots of this *social* phenomenon.

The principal manifestation of this collapse is Liquidationism, which as early as 1908 received the official definition, confirmed by the "Marxist whole," of being "the attempts of a certain part of the intelligentsia to liquidate" the illegal organisation and to "replace" it by an open labour party. At the last official meeting of leading Marxists, held in January 1910, at which representatives of *all* "currents" and groups were present, not a *single* person was found who could object to the condemnation of Liquidationism as a *manifestation of bourgeois influence on the proletariat*. This condemnation, and at the same time explanation, of the *class* roots of Liquidationism was adopted *unanimously*.

Over four years have since elapsed, and the tremendous expe-

rience of the mass labour movement has provided thousands of confirmations of this estimate of Liquidationism.

The facts have shown that both the theory of Marxism and the practice of the mass labour movement have irrevocably broken with Liquidationism, as a bourgeois, anti-labour current. One has only to recall, for instance, how in one month, March 1914, the *Severnaya Rabochaya Gazeta* abused the "illegal press" (in its issue of March 13) or demonstrations (Mr. Gorsky in the issue of April 11), how Bulkin abused the "underground" organisations in an absolutely liberal fashion (in *Nasha Zarya*, No. 3), how the notorious *L. Martov*, on behalf of the editorial board of *Nasha Zarya*, completely associated himself with Bulkin on this point and advocated "the formation of an open labour party"—one has only to recall this to understand why the attitude of the enlightened workers to Liquidationism cannot be any other than one of ruthless condemnation and a complete boycott of the Liquidators.

But here a very important question arises: how did this trend spring up historically?

It sprang up during the *twenty-year* history of the connection of Marxism with the mass labour movement in Russia. There was no such connection prior to 1894-95. The "Emancipation of Labour" Group founded Social-Democracy only theoretically and made the first step towards a labour movement.

It was only the agitation of 1894-95 and the strikes of 1895-96 that established a firm and inseparable connection between Social-Democracy and the mass labour movement. And there *immediately* began an ideological struggle between two trends in Marxism: the struggle of the "Economists" against the consistent Marxists or (later) the *Iskra*-ists (1895-1902), the struggle of the "Mensheviks" against the "Bolsheviks" (1903-08), the struggle of the Liquidators against the Marxists (1908-14).

Economism and Liquidationism are two forms of one and the same petty-bourgeois, intellectual opportunism, which has existed for twenty years. Not only the ideological but also the personal connection between these two forms of opportunism is an undoubted fact. It is sufficient to mention the leader of the Economists, *A. Martynov*, later a Menshevik and now a Liquidator. It is sufficient to

cite such a witness as G. V. Plekhanov, who was himself on very many points<sup>1</sup> close to the Mensheviks, but who nevertheless frankly admitted that the Mensheviks had absorbed all the intellectual opportunist elements and that the Liquidators were the successors to the mistakes of "Economism" and the destroyers of the workers' party.

The greatest harm is done to the workers by people who (like the Liquidators and Trotsky) ignore or distort this twenty-year history of the ideological struggle within the labour movement.

A worker who is indifferent to the history of his movement cannot be a class-conscious worker. Of all capitalist countries, Russia is one of the most backward, the most petty-bourgeois. It was therefore not fortuitous but inevitable that the mass movement of the workers should have engendered a petty-bourgeois, opportunist wing within this movement.

The progress made in purifying the labour movement of the influence of the bourgeoisie, of the influence of Economism-Liquidationism during these twenty years has been *tremendous*. Now for the first time a real proletarian foundation for a real Marxist party is being securely laid. Everybody admits, even the opponents of the *Pravda*-ists are obliged to admit—the facts compel them to admit!—that the *Pravda*-ists constitute the vast majority of the class-conscious workers. What the Marxist "Plenum" in January 1910 recognised *theoretically* (that Liquidationism is "a bourgeois influence on the proletariat"), the class-conscious workers have for four years been putting into effect, compelling its practical recognition by rendering the Liquidators impotent, removing them from their posts and trans-

<sup>1</sup> Why do we say on "very many points"? Because Plekhanov occupied a *special* position, having many times departed from Menshevism, viz: (1) At the 1903 Congress Plekhanov fought the opportunism of the Mensheviks; (2) After the Congress Plekhanov edited Nos. 46-51 of the *Iskra*, also against the Mensheviks; (3) In 1904 Plekhanov defended Axelrod's plan for the Zemstvo campaign in such a way as to pass over his chief mistakes in silence; (4) In the spring of 1905 Plekhanov left the Mensheviks; (5) In 1906, after the dissolution of the First Duma, Plekhanov adopted an entirely non-Menshevik position (see *Proletary*, August 1906); (6) At the London Congress in 1907, as Cherevanin relates, Plekhanov fought the "organisational anarchism" of the Mensheviks. One must know these facts if one is to understand why the Menshevik Plekhanov fought and exposed Liquidationism so long and so determinedly.

forming the Liquidators into a group of legal opportunist writers standing apart from the mass labour movement.

In the course of these two decades of conflict of ideas, the labour movement in Russia has been growing, gaining strength and steadily reaching maturity. It has defeated "Economism"; the flower of the class-conscious proletariat has come over to the *Iskra*-ists. It has left the "Mensheviks" in the minority at every decisive moment of the revolution. *Even* Levitsky *himself* has been obliged to admit that the working class masses have followed the Bolsheviki.

Finally, it has now defeated Liquidationism, and as a result has adopted the right road of struggle, a broad struggle, illuminated by Marxist theory and generalised by uncurtailed slogans, the struggle of the advanced class for the advanced historical aims of mankind.

May 17 (4), 1914

## IMPERIALISM AND THE SPLIT IN SOCIALISM

Is there any connection between imperialism and that monstrous and disgusting victory which opportunism (in the form of social-chauvinism) has gained over the labour movement in Europe?

This is the fundamental question of modern Socialism. And having in our Party literature fully established, first, the imperialist character of our epoch and of the present war, and, second, the inseparable historical connection between social-chauvinism and opportunism, as well as the intrinsic similarity of their political ideology, we can and must proceed to analyse this fundamental question.

We must begin with as precise and full a definition of imperialism as possible. Imperialism is a specific historical stage of capitalism. Its specific character is threefold: imperialism is 1) monopoly capitalism; 2) parasitic, or decaying capitalism; 3) moribund capitalism. The substitution of monopoly for free competition is the fundamental economic feature, the *quintessence* of imperialism. Monopoly manifests itself in five principal forms: 1) cartels, syndicates and trusts—the concentration of production has reached a stage which gives rise to these monopolistic combinations of capitalists; 2) the monopolistic position of the big banks—three, four or five gigantic banks manipulate the whole economic life of America, France, Germany; 3) seizure of the sources of *raw material* by the trusts and the financial oligarchy (finance capital is monopolistic industrial capital merged with bank capital); 4) the (economic) partition of the world by the international cartels *has begun*. Such international cartels, which command the *entire* world market and divide it “amicably” among themselves—until war *re-divides* it—already number over *one hundred*! The export of capital, a highly characteristic phenomenon distinct from the export of commodities under non-monopoly capitalism, is

closely connected with the economic and territorial-political partition of the world; 5) the territorial partition of the world (colonies) is *completed*.

Imperialism, as the highest stage of capitalism in America and Europe, and later in Asia, fully developed in the period 1898-1914: the Spanish-American War (1898), the Anglo-Boer War (1900-02), the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05) and the economic crisis in Europe in 1900 are the chief historical landmarks in the new era of world history.

The fact that imperialism is parasitic or decaying capitalism is manifested first of all in the tendency to decay characteristic of every monopoly under the system of private ownership of the means of production. The difference between the democratic republican and the reactionary monarchist imperialist bourgeoisie is obliterated precisely because they are both rotting alive (which by no means precludes an extraordinarily rapid development of capitalism in individual branches of industry, in individual countries, and in individual periods). Secondly, the decay of capitalism is manifested in the creation of a huge stratum of *rentiers*, capitalists who live by "clipping coupons." In each of the four leading imperialist countries—England, U.S.A., France and Germany—capital in securities amounts to one hundred or one hundred fifty *billion* francs, from which each country derives an annual income of no less than five to eight billions. Thirdly, capital export is parasitism raised to the second power. Fourthly, "finance capital tends towards domination, not towards freedom." Political reaction *all along the line* is a concomitant of imperialism. Corruption, bribery on a huge scale, and gigantic frauds of all kinds. Fifthly, the exploitation of oppressed nations that is inseparably connected with annexations, and especially the exploitation of colonies by a handful of "Great" Powers, transforms the "civilised" world more and more into a parasite on the body of hundreds of millions of uncivilised people. The Roman proletarian lived at the expense of society. Modern society lives at the expense of the modern proletarian. Marx specially stressed this profound observation of Sismondi. Imperialism somewhat changes the situation. A privileged upper stratum of the proletariat in the imperialist countries lives

partly at the expense of hundreds of millions of members of uncivilised nations.

It is clear why imperialism is *moribund* capitalism, capitalism in *transition* to Socialism: monopoly, which grows out of capitalism, is *already* capitalism dying out, the beginning of its transition to Socialism. The tremendous *socialisation* of labour by imperialism (what the apologists—the bourgeois economists—call “interlocking”) means the same thing.

Advancing this definition of imperialism brings us into complete contradiction to K. Kautsky, who refuses to regard imperialism as a “phase of capitalism,” and who defines imperialism as the *policy* “preferred” by finance capital, as a tendency on the part of “industrial” countries to annex “agrarian” countries.<sup>1</sup> Kautsky’s definition is thoroughly false from the theoretical standpoint. What distinguishes imperialism is the rule *not* of industrial capital but of finance capital, the striving to annex *not* agrarian countries particularly, but *every kind* of country. Kautsky *divorces* imperialist politics from imperialist economics, he divorces monopoly in politics from monopoly in economics in order to pave the way for his vulgar bourgeois reformism, such as “disarmament,” “ultra-imperialism” and similar nonsense. The aim and object of this theoretical falsity is to gloss over the *most profound* contradictions of imperialism and thus to justify the theory of “unity” with the apologists of imperialism, the frank social-chauvinists and opportunists.

We have dealt at sufficient length with Kautsky’s rupture with Marxism on this point in the *Sotsial-Demokrat* and the *Kommunist*. Our Russian Kautskians, the supporters of the Organisation Committee, headed by Axelrod and Spectator, including even Martov, and to a large degree Trotsky, preferred tacitly to ignore the question of Kautskyism as a trend. They did not dare defend what Kautsky had written during the war and confined themselves either to simply praising Kautsky (Axelrod in his German pamphlet, which the Organisation Committee has *promised* to publish in

<sup>1</sup> “Imperialism is the product of highly developed industrial capitalism. It consists in the tendency of every industrial capitalist nation to subjugate and annex ever larger *agrarian* territories, irrespective of the nations that populate them” (Kautsky in *Neue Zeit*, September 11, 1914).



Russian) or to quoting private letters of Kautsky (Spectator), in which he asserts that he belongs to the opposition and jesuitically tries to nullify his chauvinist declarations.

It should be noted that Kautsky's "conception" of imperialism—which is tantamount to embellishing imperialism—is a retrogression not only compared with Hilferding's *Finance Capital* (no matter how assiduously Hilferding now defends Kautsky and "unity" with the social-chauvinists!) but also compared with the *social-liberal* J. A. Hobson. This English economist, who in no way claims to be a Marxist, much more profoundly defines imperialism and reveals its contradictions in his work of 1902.<sup>1</sup> This is what this writer (in whose book nearly all Kautsky's pacifist and "conciliatory" banalities may be found) wrote on the highly important question of the parasitic nature of imperialism:

In Hobson's opinion, two sets of circumstances weakened the power of the old empires: 1) "economic parasitism," and 2) formation of armies from dependent peoples.

"The first mentioned circumstance is: the habit of economic parasitism, by which the ruling state has used its provinces, colonies, and dependencies in order to enrich its ruling class and to bribe its lower classes into acquiescence."

Concerning the second circumstance, Hobson writes:

"One of the strangest symptoms of the blindness of imperialism [this song about the "blindness" of imperialists comes more appropriately from the social-liberal Hobson than from the "Marxist" Kautsky] is the reckless indifference with which Great Britain, France and other imperial nations are embarking on this perilous dependence. Great Britain has gone farthest. Most of the fighting by which we have won our Indian Empire has been done by natives; in India, as more recently in Egypt, great standing armies are placed under British commanders; almost all the fighting associated with our African dominions, except in the southern part, has been done for us by natives."

The prospect of the partition of China elicited from Hobson the following economic appraisal:

"The greater part of Western Europe might then assume the appearance and character already exhibited by tracts of country in the South of England, in the Riviera, and in the tourist-ridden or residential parts of Italy and Switzerland, little clusters of wealthy aristocrats drawing dividends and

<sup>1</sup> J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism*, London, 1902.

pensions from the Far East, with a somewhat larger group of professional retainers and tradesmen and a large body of personal servants and workers in the transport trade and in the final stages of production of more perishable goods: all the main arterial industries would have disappeared, the staple foods and manufactures flowing in as a tribute from Asia and Africa. . . . We have foreshadowed the possibility of even a larger alliance of Western States, a European federation of Great Powers which, so far from forwarding the cause of world civilisation, might introduce the gigantic peril of a Western parasitism, a group of advanced industrial nations, whose upper classes drew vast tribute from Asia and Africa, with which they supported great tame masses of retainers, no longer engaged in the staple industries of agriculture and manufacture, but kept in the performance of personal or minor industrial services under the control of a new financial aristocracy. Let those who would scout such a theory [he should have said: prospect] as undeserving of consideration, examine the economic and social conditions of districts in Southern England today which are already reduced to this condition, and reflect upon the vast extension of such a system which might be rendered feasible by the subjection of China to the economic control of similar groups of financiers, investors, and political and business officials, draining the greatest potential reservoir of profit the world has ever known, in order to consume it in Europe. The situation is far too complex, the play of world-forces far too incalculable to render this or any other single interpretation of the future very probable: but the influences which govern the imperialism of Western Europe today are moving in this direction, and, unless counteracted or diverted, make towards some such consummation."

Hobson, the social-liberal, fails to see that this "counteraction" can be offered *only* by the revolutionary proletariat and *only* in the form of a social revolution. But then he is a social-liberal! Nevertheless, as early as 1902 he had an excellent insight into the meaning and significance of a "United States of Europe" (be it said for the benefit of Trotsky the Kautskian!) and of all that is now being glossed over by the *hypocritical Kautskians* of various countries, namely, that the *opportunists* (social-chauvinists) are working hand in hand with the imperialist bourgeoisie *precisely* towards creating an imperialist Europe on the backs of Asia and Africa, and that objectively the *opportunists* are a section of the petty bourgeoisie and of certain strata of the working class who have been *bribed* out of imperialist super-profits and converted into *watchdogs* of capitalism and *corrupters* of the labour movement.

We have repeatedly pointed, both in articles and in the resolutions of our Party, to this most profound connection, the economic connection, between the imperialist bourgeoisie and the opportunism which is now victorious (will it be for long?) in the labour

movement. It is from this, incidentally, that we drew the conclusion that a split with the social-chauvinists was inevitable. Our Kautskians preferred to evade the question! Martov, for instance, uttered in his lectures a sophistry which in the *Bulletin* of the Foreign Secretariat of the Organisation Committee (No. 4, April 10, 1916) is expressed in the following way:

"... The cause of revolutionary Social-Democracy would be in a sad, even a hopeless plight if those groups of workers who in mental development approach most closely to the 'intelligentsia' and the more highly skilled groups of workers fatally drifted away from it towards opportunism."

By means of the silly "fatally" and a certain sleight-of-hand, the *fact* that *certain* groups of workers *have already drifted away* to opportunism and to the imperialist bourgeoisie is *evaded*! And all that the sophists of the O.C. want is to *evade* this fact! They confine themselves to that "official optimism" which the Kautskian Hilferding and many others flaunt at the present time: objective conditions guarantee the unity of the proletariat and the victory of the revolutionary tendency! We are "optimists" with regard to the proletariat!

But as a matter of fact all these Kautskians—Hilferding, the O.C.-ists, Martov and Co.—are *optimists* . . . with regard to *opportunism*. That is the whole point!

The proletariat is the child of capitalism—of world capitalism, and not only of European capitalism, not only of imperialist capitalism. On a world scale, fifty years sooner or fifty years later—from the standpoint of the *world* scale the question is a minor one—the "proletariat" of course "will be" united, and revolutionary Social-Democracy will "inevitably" be victorious within it. But this is not the point, Messrs. the Kautskians. The point is that at the present time, in the imperialist countries of Europe, *you are fawning* on the opportunists, who are *alien* to the proletariat as a class, who are the servants, the agents and the vehicles of the influence of the bourgeoisie, and unless the labour movement *rids* itself of them, it will remain a *bourgeois labour movement*. Your advocacy of "unity" with the opportunists, with the Legiens and Davids, the Plekhanovs, the Chkhenkelis and Potresovs, etc., is, objectively, a defence of the *enslavement* of the workers by the im-

perialist bourgeoisie with the aid of its best agents in the labour movement. The victory of revolutionary Social-Democracy on a world scale is absolutely inevitable, only it is moving and will move, is proceeding and will proceed, *against* you, it will be a victory *over* you.

These two tendencies, one might even say *two* parties, in the present-day labour movement, which in 1914-16 so obviously parted ways all over the world, *were traced by Engels and Marx in England* throughout the course of many *decades*, roughly from 1858 to 1892.

Neither Marx nor Engels lived to see the imperialist epoch of world capitalism, which began not earlier than 1898-1900. But it has been a peculiar feature of England that even in the middle of the nineteenth century she already revealed at least *two* outstanding characteristics of imperialism: 1) vast colonies, and 2) monopoly profit (due to her monopolistic position in the world market). In both respects England at that time was an exception among capitalist countries, and Marx and Engels, analysing this exception, quite clearly and definitely indicated its *connection* with the (temporary) victory of opportunism in the English labour movement.

In a letter to Marx dated October 7, 1858, Engels wrote:

"... The English proletariat is becoming more and more bourgeois, so that this most bourgeois of all nations is apparently aiming ultimately at the possession of a bourgeois aristocracy and a bourgeois proletariat *as well as* a bourgeoisie. For a nation which exploits the whole world this is of course to a certain extent justifiable."<sup>1</sup>

In a letter to Sorge dated September 21, 1872, Engels informs him that Hales kicked up a big row in the Federal Council of the International and secured a vote of censure on Marx for saying that "the English labour leaders had sold themselves." Marx wrote to Sorge on April 4, 1874:

"As to the urban workers here (in England), it is a pity that the whole pack of leaders did not get into Parliament. This would be the surest way of getting rid of the whole lot."

<sup>1</sup> *Marx-Engels Selected Correspondence*, pp. 115-16.—*Trans.*

In a letter to Marx dated August 11, 1881, Engels speaks about "those very worst English ones [trade unions] which allow themselves to be led by men sold to, or at least paid by the middle class." In a letter to Kautsky, dated September 12, 1882, Engels wrote:

"You ask me what the English workers think about colonial policy. Well, exactly the same as they think about politics in general. There is no workers' party here, there are only Conservatives and Liberal-Radicals, and the workers gaily share the feast of England's monopoly of the world market and the colonies."<sup>1</sup>

On December 7, 1889, Engels wrote to Sorge:

"The most repulsive thing here [in England] is the bourgeois 'respectability' which has grown deep into the bones of the workers. . . . Even Tom Mann, whom I regard as the finest of them all, is fond of mentioning that he will be lunching with the Lord Mayor. If one compares this with the French, one can see what a revolution is good for after all."<sup>2</sup>

In a letter dated April 19, 1890:

"But *under* the surface the movement [of the working class in England] is going on, it is seizing ever wider sections of the workers and mostly just among the hitherto stagnant *lowest* [Engels' italics] masses, and the day is no longer far off when this mass will suddenly *find itself*, when the fact that it is this colossal self-impelled mass will dawn upon it. . . ."<sup>3</sup>

On March 4, 1891:

"The failure of the collapsed Dockers' Union; the old conservative trade unions, *rich* and therefore cowardly, remain alone on the field. . . ."

September 14, 1891: at the Newcastle Trade Union Congress the old unionists, opponents of the eight-hour day, were defeated and "the bourgeois papers recognise the defeat of the *bourgeois labour party*<sup>4</sup> [Engels' italics throughout]. . . ."

That these ideas, which were repeated by Engels over the course of decades, were also expressed by him publicly, in the press, is

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 399. Lenin quotes this letter from Kautsky's *Socialism and Colonial Policy*, where Kautsky makes a deliberate omission. In the original letter Engels wrote: "the same as they think about politics in general: *the same as what the bourgeois think*." The words here italicised were omitted by Kautsky.—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 461.—Trans.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 468.—Trans.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 488.—Trans.

proven by his preface to the second edition of *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, 1892. Here he speaks of an "aristocracy in the working class," of a "privileged minority of the workers," in contradistinction to the "broad masses of the workers." "A small, privileged, protected minority" of the working class alone was "permanently benefited" by the privileged position of England in 1848-68, whereas "the great bulk of them experienced at best but a temporary improvement." "With the breakdown of that [England's industrial] monopoly, the English working class will lose that privileged position. . . ." The members of the "New Unionism," the unions of the unskilled workers, "had this immense advantage, that their minds were virgin soil, entirely free from the inherited 'respectable' bourgeois prejudices which hampered the brains of the better situated 'old' Unionists. . . ." "The so-called labour representatives [in England] are those who are forgiven for belonging to the working class because they are themselves ready to drown this quality in the ocean of their liberalism. . . ."

We have deliberately quoted the direct statements of Marx and Engels at rather great length in order that the reader may study them *as a whole*. And they must be studied, they are worth pondering over. For they are the *pivot* of the tactics in the labour movement that are dictated by the objective conditions of the imperialist epoch.

Here, too, Kautsky has already attempted to "fog the issue" and to substitute for Marxism a sentimental spirit of conciliation with the opportunists. Arguing against the avowed and naïve social-imperialists (like Lensch) who justify Germany's participation in the war as a means of destroying England's monopoly, Kautsky "*corrects*" this obvious falsehood by another equally obvious falsehood. Instead of a cynical falsehood he employs a suave falsehood! The *industrial* monopoly of England, he says, has long ago been broken, has long ago been destroyed, and there is nothing left to destroy.

Why is this argument false?

Because, firstly, it overlooks England's *colonial monopoly*. Yet Engels, as we have seen, pointed to this very clearly as early as

1882, thirty-four years ago! Although England's industrial monopoly may have been destroyed, her colonial monopoly not only remains, but has become extremely accentuated, for the whole world is already divided up! By means of this suave lie Kautsky smuggles in the bourgeois-pacifist and opportunist-philistine idea that "there is nothing to fight about." On the contrary, not only have the *capitalists* something to fight about now, but they *cannot help* fighting if they want to preserve capitalism, for without a forcible redivision of colonies the *new* imperialist countries cannot obtain the privileges enjoyed by the older (*and less powerful*) imperialist powers.

Secondly, why does England's monopoly explain the (temporary) victory of opportunism in England? Because monopoly yields *super-profits*, i.e., a surplus of profits over and above the capitalist profits that are normal and customary all over the world. The capitalists *can* devote a part (and not a small one, at that!) of these super-profits to bribe *their own* workers, to create something like an alliance (remember the famous "alliances" of the English trade unions with their employers described by the Webbs) between the workers of a given nation and their capitalists *against* the other countries. England's industrial monopoly was already destroyed by the end of the nineteenth century. This is beyond dispute. But *how* did this destruction take place? Was it in such a way that *all* monopoly disappeared?

If this were so, Kautsky's "theory" of conciliation (with the opportunists) would to a certain extent be justified. But as a matter of fact it is *not* so. Imperialism is monopoly capitalism. Every cartel, trust, syndicate, every giant bank is a monopoly. Super-profits have not disappeared; they still remain. The exploitation of *all* other countries by one privileged, financially wealthy country remains and has become more intense. A handful of wealthy countries—there are only four of them, if we mean independent, really gigantic, "modern" wealth: England, France, the United States and Germany—have developed monopoly to vast proportions, they obtain *super-profits* amounting to hundreds of millions, if not billions. they "ride on the backs" of hundreds and hundreds of millions of people in other countries and fight among them.

selves for the division of the particularly rich, particularly fat and particularly easy spoils.

This in fact is the economic and political essence of imperialism, the profound contradictions of which Kautsky covers up instead of exposing.

The bourgeoisie of an imperialist "Great" Power *can economically* bribe the upper strata of "its" workers by devoting a hundred million francs a year or so to this purpose, for its *super*-profits most likely amount to about a billion. And how this little sop is distributed among the labour ministers, "labour representatives" (remember Engels' splendid analysis of this term), labour members of War Industry Committees, labour officials, workers belonging to the narrow craft unions, office employees, etc., etc., is a secondary question.

Between 1848 and 1868, and to a certain extent even later, England alone enjoyed a monopoly: *that is why* opportunism could prevail in England for decades. There were *no* other countries possessing either very rich colonies or an industrial monopoly.

The last third of the nineteenth century was marked by the transition to the new imperialist epoch. Monopoly is enjoyed by the finance capital *not* of one, but of several, though very few, Great Powers. (In Japan and Russia the monopoly of military power, vast territories, or special facilities for robbing minority nationalities, China, etc., partly supplements, partly takes the place of the monopoly of modern up-to-date finance capital.) This difference explains why England's monopolistic position *could remain unchallenged* for decades. The monopoly of modern finance capital is being frantically challenged; the epoch of imperialist wars has begun. Formerly the working class of *one* country could be bribed and corrupted for decades. Now this is improbable, if not impossible. But on the other hand, *every* imperialist "Great" Power can and does bribe *smaller* (compared with 1848-68 in England) strata of the "labour aristocracy." Formerly a "*bourgeois labour party*," to use Engels' remarkably profound expression, could be formed only in one country, because it alone enjoyed a monopoly, but could be formed for a long time. Now a "*bourgeois labour party*" is *inevitable* and typical in *all* imperialist countries;



but in view of the desperate struggle they are waging for the division of spoils, it is improbable that such a party can prevail for long in a number of countries. For the trusts, the financial oligarchy, high prices, etc., *while permitting* the bribery of a handful of people in the upper layers, are increasingly oppressing, crushing, ruining and torturing the *mass* of the proletariat and the semi-proletariat.

On the one hand, there is the tendency of the bourgeoisie and the opportunists to convert a handful of very rich and privileged nations into "eternal" parasites on the body of the rest of mankind, to "rest on the laurels" of the exploitation of Negroes, Hindus, etc., keeping them in subjection with the aid of the excellent technique of extermination provided by modern militarism. On the other hand, there is the tendency of the *masses*, who are more oppressed than ever and who bear the whole brunt of imperialist wars, to cast off this yoke and to overthrow the bourgeoisie. It is in the struggle between these two tendencies that the history of the labour movement will inevitably develop from now on. For the first tendency is not accidental, but "based" on economics. The bourgeoisie has already begotten, fostered and secured for itself "bourgeois labour parties" of social-chauvinists in *all* countries. The difference between a definitely formed party, like that of Bissolati in Italy, for example, a party that is fully social-imperialist, and let us say, the semi-formed party of the Potresovs, Gvozdevs, Bulkins, Chkheidzes, Skobelevs, and Co. which is nearly a party, is an immaterial difference. The important thing is that the economic desertion of a stratum of the labour aristocracy to the bourgeoisie has matured and become an accomplished fact; and this economic fact, this shifting of the relations between classes, will find political form, in one shape or another, without any particular "labour."

On the economic basis referred to, the political institutions of modern capitalism—press, parliament, trade unions, congresses, etc.—have created *political* privileges and sops for the respectful, meek, reformist and patriotic office employees and workers corresponding to the economic privileges and sops. Lucrative and soft jobs in the Cabinet or on the War Industry Committee, in

Parliament and on diverse committees, on the editorial staffs of "respectable," legally published newspapers or on the management councils of no less respectable and "bourgeois law-abiding" trade unions—these are the baits by which the imperialist bourgeoisie attracts and rewards the representatives and adherents of the "bourgeois labour parties."

The mechanics of political democracy work in the same direction. Nothing in our times can be done without elections; nothing can be done without the masses. And in this era of printing and parliamentarism it is *impossible* to gain the following of the masses without a widely-ramified, systematically-managed, well-equipped system of flattery, lies, fraud, juggling with popular catchwords and promising reforms and blessings to the workers right and left—as long as they renounce the revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. I would call this system Lloyd-Georgeism, after the name of one of the foremost and most dexterous representatives of this system in the classic land of the "bourgeois labour party," the English Minister, Llyod George. A first-class bourgeois man-of-affairs, an astute politician, a popular orator who will deliver any speeches you like, even r-r-revolutionary ones, to a labour audience, and a man who is capable of obtaining fairly large-sized sops for the obedient workers in the shape of social reforms (insurance, etc.), Lloyd George serves the bourgeoisie splendidly,<sup>1</sup> and serves it precisely *among* the workers, brings its influence *precisely* to the proletariat, to the place where it is most needed and where it is most difficult to capture the masses morally.

And is there such a great difference between Lloyd George and the Scheidemanns, Legiens, Hendersons and Hyndmans, Plekhanovs, Renaudels and Co.? Of the latter, it may be objected, some will return to the revolutionary Socialism of Marx. This is possible, but it is an insignificant difference in degree, if the question

<sup>1</sup> I recently read in an English magazine an article by a Tory, a political opponent of Lloyd George, entitled "Lloyd George from the Standpoint of a Tory." The war opened the eyes of this opponent and made him realise what an excellent servant of the bourgeoisie this Lloyd George is! The Tories have made peace with him!

is regarded from its political, *i.e.*, its mass aspect. Certain individuals among the present-day social-chauvinist leaders may return to the proletariat. But the social-chauvinist or (what is the same thing) opportunist *tendency* can neither disappear nor "return" to the revolutionary proletariat. Wherever Marxism is popular among the workers, this political tendency, this "bourgeois labour party," will swear by the name of Marx. It cannot be prohibited from doing this, just as a trading firm cannot be prohibited from using any particular label, sign, or advertisement. It has always been the case in history that after the death of revolutionary leaders who were popular among the oppressed classes, their enemies have attempted to appropriate their names so as to deceive the oppressed classes.

The fact is that "bourgeois labour parties," as a political phenomenon, have already been formed in *all* the foremost capitalist countries, and that unless a determined and ruthless struggle is waged all along the line against these parties—or groups, tendencies, etc., it is all the same—there can be no question of a struggle against imperialism, or of Marxism, or of a Socialist labour movement. The Chkheidze fraction, *Nashe Dyelo* and *Golos Truda*, in Russia, and the O.C.-ists abroad are nothing but varieties of one *such* party. There is not the slightest reason for thinking that these parties will disappear *before* the social revolution. On the contrary, the nearer the revolution approaches, the more strongly it flares up and the more sudden and violent the transitions and leaps in its progress, the greater will be the part played in the labour movement by the struggle of the revolutionary mass stream against the opportunist petty-bourgeois stream. Kautskyism is not an independent current, because it has no hold either on the masses or on the privileged stratum which has deserted to the bourgeoisie. But the danger of Kautskyism lies in the fact that, utilising the ideology of the past, it endeavours to reconcile the proletariat to the "bourgeois labour party," to preserve the unity of the proletariat with that party and thereby enhance the prestige of the latter. The masses no longer follow the lead of the avowed social-chauvinists: Lloyd George has been hissed down at workers' meetings in England; Hyndman has resigned from the Party; the Renaudels

and Scheidemanns, the Potresovs and Gvozdevs are protected by the police. The masked defence of the social-chauvinists by the Kautskians is much more dangerous.

One of the most common sophistries of Kautskyism is its reference to the "masses." We do not want, they say, to break away from the masses and mass organisations! But just think how Engels put the question. In the nineteenth century the "mass organisations" of the English trade unions were on the side of the bourgeois labour party. Marx and Engels did not reconcile themselves to it on this ground, but exposed it. They did not forget, firstly, that the trade union organisations directly embraced a *minority of the proletariat*. In England then, as in Germany now, not more than one-fifth of the proletariat was organised. It cannot be seriously thought that it is possible to organise the majority of the proletariat under capitalism. Secondly—and this is the main point—it is not so much a question of the size of an organisation, as of the real, the objective meaning of its policy: does this policy represent the masses, does it serve the masses, *i.e.*, does it aim at the liberation of the masses from capitalism, or does it represent the interests of the minority, of the minority's reconciliation with capitalism? The latter was true of England in the nineteenth century, and it is true of Germany, etc., now.

Engels draws a distinction between the "bourgeois labour party" of the *old* trade unions, the privileged minority, and the "*lowest mass*," the real majority, and he appeals to the latter, who are *not* infected by "bourgeois respectability." This is the essence of Marxist tactics!

We cannot—nor can anybody else—calculate what portion of the proletariat is following and will follow the social-chauvinists and opportunists. This will be revealed only by the struggle, it will be definitely decided only by the Socialist revolution. But we know for certain that the "defenders of the fatherland" in the imperialist war *represent* only a minority. And it is therefore our duty, if we wish to remain Socialists, to go down *lower* and *deeper*, to the real masses. This is the whole meaning and the whole content of the struggle against opportunism. By exposing the fact that the opportunists and social-chauvinists are in reality betray-

ing and selling the interests of the masses, that they are defending the temporary privileges of a minority of the workers, that they are the vehicles of bourgeois ideas and influences, that they are really allies and agents of the bourgeoisie, we teach the masses to realise their true political interests, to fight for Socialism and for the revolution through all the long and painful vicissitudes of imperialist wars and imperialist armistices.

The only Marxist line in the world labour movement is to explain to the masses the inevitability and necessity of breaking with opportunism, to educate them for revolution by waging a merciless struggle against opportunism, to utilise the experiences of the war for the purpose of exposing all the vileness of national-liberal labour politics, and not of concealing it.

In the next article, we shall attempt to sum up the principal features that distinguish this line from Kautskyism.

Autumn 1916



## ERRATA

<i>Page</i>	<i>Line</i>	<i>Reads</i>	<i>Should read</i>
341	12 bottom	the play atoms,	the play of atoms,
371	19 top	the roofs of	the proofs of
371	10 bottom	the price of	the price list of

*Page 337    Line 8 top*

R e a d s

The destructibility of the atom, its inexhaustibility, the mutability

S h o u l d   r e a d

The destructibility of the atom, its inexhaustibility, the mutability of all forms of matter and of its motion, have always been the