

# Dialectical and Historical Materialism

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*Quotations from the works of Marx  
Engels, Plekhanov, Lenin and Stalin*

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*Edited by*  
L. L. SHARKEY and S. MOSTON

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March, 1945

Colonel M. M. Mendenhall

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## PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION.

In assembling and arranging this material for the study of Marxist Philosophy, I had in mind the fact that many of the sources—the works of Marx, Engels and Lenin—are now, owing to war conditions, inaccessible to many, especially the newcomers to Marxism.

The material has been selected from a considerable number of books and from different chapters and sections of some of the books, and arranged in what seemed to me their proper order and place. Owing to space considerations, time and other factors, some of the quotations have been abbreviated by me without, I hope, changing their content.

The division of the material into three sections makes it convenient for the arrangement of curricula.

There are a number of useful popular expositions of Dialectical Materialism, but when all is said and done, the best method to study Marxism-Leninism is from the originals, the works of these great scientists and thinkers themselves.

Again, I had in mind that this material should be studied in conjunction with the section on Dialectical and Historical Materialism (page 105, ch. 4) contained in the "Short History of the C.P.S.U."

This summary is the simplest, and yet most comprehensive, statement of our philosophy. It disposes, once and for all, of the "mysteries" with which pseudo-intellectuals endeavoured to obscure this revolutionary philosophy. This section was drafted by Stalin, which makes the great company complete; we can now study the relevant statements of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, and also Plekhanov on Dialectics.

While the Party does not demand that every Party member must become a "super-dialectician," it is at the same time necessary to acquire a working knowledge of the subject. The "Short History of the C.P.S.U." puts the matter in a nutshell: "In order to appreciate the tremendous part played by Lenin's book ('Materialism and Empirio-Criticism') in the history of the Party and to realise what theoretical treasures Lenin safeguarded from the motley crowd of revisionists and renegades of the period of the Stolypin reaction, we must acquaint ourselves, if only briefly, with the fundamentals of dialectical and historical materialism.

"This is all the more necessary because dialectical and historical materialism constitute the theoretical basis of Communism, the theoretical foundations of the Marxist Party, and it is the duty of every active member of the Party to know these principles and hence to study them."

This is true also for the Australian Marxist-Leninists.

L. SHARKEY, March, 1942.

**PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.**

The first edition of L. Sharkey's pamphlet "Dialectical Materialism" has not been available for some time, and there have been many requests for a reprint. At the same time the demand for more reading material on the subject has steadily increased. To meet this situation the present volume contains considerably more extracts than the first.

In consultation with L. Sharkey, I have rearranged the previous extracts and selected additional material. An index has been added to facilitate reference.

The exigencies of this Peoples' War prevent the publication of the works used in a more complete form. But this small volume will assist students who are sincerely interested, to understand society and nature. And Dialectics enables us, not only "to understand the world, but to change it." The aim of this work, therefore, is to improve the struggle of all progressive people against the Axis for Victory and Socialism.

S. MOSTON.

March, 1944.

**PART 1.****DIALECTICAL AND HISTORICAL MATERIALISM.**

By Joseph Stalin.

**Section 1.**

Dialectical materialism is the world outlook of the Marxist-Leninist Party. It is called dialectical materialism because its approach to the phenomena of nature, its method of studying and apprehending them, is dialectical, while its interpretation of the phenomena of nature, its conception of these phenomena, its theory, is materialistic.

Historical materialism is the extension of the principles of dialectical materialism to the study of social life, an application of the principles of dialectical materialism to the phenomena of the life of society, to the study of society and of its history.

When describing their dialectical method, Marx and Engels usually refer to Hegel as the philosopher who formulated the main features of dialectics. This, however, does not mean that the dialectics of Marx and Engels is identical with the dialectics of Hegel. As a matter of fact, Marx and Engels took from the Hegelian dialectics only its "rational kernel," casting aside its idealistic shell, and developed it further so as to lend it a modern scientific form.

"My dialectic method," says Marx, "is fundamentally not only different from the Hegelian, but is its direct opposite. To Hegel, the process of thinking, which, under the name of 'The Idea,' he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurge (creator) of the real world, and the real world is only the external, phenomenal form of 'the Idea.' With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought." (Karl Marx, "Capital," Vol. I, p. xxx, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1938.)

When describing their materialism, Marx and Engels usually refer to Feuerbach as the philosopher who restored materialism to its rights. This, however, does not mean that the materialism of Marx and Engels is identical with Feuerbach's materialism. As a matter of fact, Marx and Engels took from Feuerbach's materialism its "inner kernel," developed it into a scientific-philosophical theory of materialism and cast aside its idealistic and religious-ethical encumbrances. We know that Feuerbach, although he was fundamentally a materialist, objected to the name materialism. Engels more than once declared that "in spite of the materialist foundation, Feuerbach remained bound by the traditional idealist fetters," and that "the real idealism of Feuerbach becomes evident as soon as we come to his philosophy of religion and ethics." (Karl Marx, "Selected Works," Eng. ed., Vol. I, pp. 349, 442.)

Dialectics comes from the Greek word "dialego," to discourse, to debate. In ancient times dialectics was the art of arriving at the truth by disclosing the contradictions in the argument of an opponent and overcoming these contradictions. There were philosophers in ancient times who believed that the disclosure of contradictions in thought and the clash of opposite opinions was the best method of arriving at the truth. This dialectical method of thought, later extended to the phenomena of nature, developed into the dialectical method of apprehending nature, which regards the phenomena of nature as being in constant movement and undergoing constant change, and the development of nature as the result of the development of the contradictions in nature, as a result of the interaction of opposed forces in nature.

In its essence, dialectics is the direct opposite of metaphysics.

(1) The principal features of the Marxist dialectical method are as follows:

### **"CONNECTED AND INTEGRAL WHOLE."**

(a) Contrary to metaphysics, dialectics does not regard nature as an accidental agglomeration of things, of phenomena, unconnected with, isolated from, and independent of, each other, but as a connected and integral whole, in which things, phenomena, are organically connected with, dependent on, and determined by, each other.

The dialectical method therefore holds that no phenomenon in nature can be understood if taken by itself, isolated from surrounding phenomena, inasmuch as any phenomenon in any realm of nature may become meaningless to us if it is not considered in connection with the surrounding conditions, but divorced from them; and that, vice versa, any phenomenon can be understood and explained if considered in its inseparable connection with surrounding phenomena, as one conditioned by surrounding phenomena.

### **"CONTINUOUS MOVEMENT AND CHANGE."**

(b) Contrary to metaphysics, dialectics holds that nature is not a state of rest and immobility, stagnation and immutability, but a state of continuous movement and change, of continuous renewal and development, where something is always arising and developing, and something always disintegrating and dying away.

The dialectical method therefore requires that phenomena should be considered not only from the standpoint of their interconnection and interdependence, but also from the standpoint of their movement, their change, their development, their coming into being and going out of being.

The dialectical method regards as important primarily not that which at the given moment seems to be durable and yet is already beginning to die away, but that which is arising and developing, even though at the given moment it may appear to be not durable, for the dialectical method considers invincible only that which is arising and developing.

"All nature," says Engels, "from the smallest thing to the biggest, from a grain of sand to the sun, from the protista (the primary living cell—Ed.) to man, is in a constant state of coming into being and going out of being, in a constant flux, in a ceaseless state of movement and change." (F. Engels, "Dialectics of Nature.")

Therefore, dialectics, Engels says, "takes things and their perceptual images essentially in their interconnection, in their concatenation, in their movement, in their rise and disappearance." (Ibid).

### **"QUALITATIVE CHANGES."**

(c) Contrary to metaphysics, dialectics does not regard the process of development as a simple process of growth, where quantitative changes do not lead to qualitative changes, but as a development which passes from insignificant and imperceptible quantitative changes to open, fundamental changes, to qualitative changes; a development in which the qualitative changes occur not gradually, but rapidly and abruptly, taking the form of a leap from one state to another; they occur not accidentally, but as the natural result of an accumulation of imperceptible and gradual quantitative changes.

The dialectical method therefore holds that the process of development should be understood, not as movement in a circle, not as a simple repetition of what has already occurred, but as an onward and upward movement, as a transition from an old qualitative state to a new qualitative state, as a development from the simple to the complex, from the lower to the higher.

"Nature," says Engels, "is the test of dialectics, and it must be said for modern natural science that it has furnished extremely rich and daily increasing materials for this test, and has thus proved that in the last analysis nature's process is dialectical and not metaphysical, that it does not move in an eternally uniform and constantly repeated circle, but passes through a real history. Here prime mention should be made of Darwin, who dealt a severe blow to the metaphysical conception of nature by proving that the organic world of to-day, plants and animals, and consequently man, too, is all a product of a process of development that has been in progress for millions of years." (F. Engels, "Anti-Duhring.")

Describing dialectical development as a transition from quantitative changes to qualitative changes, Engels says: "In physics . . . every change is a passing of quantity into quality, as a result of a quantitative change of some form of movement either inherent in a body or imparted to it. For example, the temperature of water has at first no effect on its liquid state; but as the temperature of liquid water rises or falls, a moment arrives when this state of cohesion changes and the water is converted in one case into steam and in the other into ice . . . A definite minimum current is required to make a platinum wire glow; every metal has its melting temperature; every liquid has a definite freezing point and boiling point at a given pressure, as far as we are able with the means at our disposal

to attain the required temperatures; finally, every gas has its critical point at which, by proper pressure and cooling, it can be converted into a liquid state . . . . What are known as the constants of physics (the point at which one state passes into another—Ed.) are in most cases nothing but designations for the nodal points at which a quantitative increase or decrease of movement causes a qualitative change in the state of the given body, and at which, consequently, quantity is transformed into quality.” (“Dialectics of Nature.”)

Passing to chemistry, Engels continues: “Chemistry may be called the science of the qualitative changes which take place in bodies as the effect of changes of quantitative composition. This was already known to Hegel . . . . Take oxygen: if the molecule contains three atoms instead of the customary two, we get ozone, a body definitely distinct in odour and reaction from ordinary oxygen. And what shall we say of the different proportions in which oxygen combines with nitrogen or sulphur, and each of which produces a body qualitatively different from all other bodies!” (Ibid.)

Finally, criticising Duhring, who scolded Hegel for all he was worth, but surreptitiously borrowed from him the well known thesis that the transition from the insentient world to the sentient world, from the kingdom of inorganic matter to the kingdom of organic life, is a leap to a new state. Engels says:

“This is precisely the Hegelian nodal line of measure relations, in which, at certain definite nodal points, the purely quantitative increase or decrease gives rise to a qualitative leap, for example, in the case of water which is heated or cooled, where boiling-point or freezing-point are the nodes at which—under normal pressure—the leap to a new aggregate state takes place, and where consequently quantity is transformed into quality.” (F. Engels, “Anti-Duhring.”)

### “INTERNAL CONTRADICTIONS.”

(d) Contrary to metaphysics, dialectics holds that internal contradictions are inherent in all things and phenomena in nature, for they all have their negative and positive sides, a past and a future, something dying away and something developing; and that the struggle between these opposites, the struggle between the old and the new, between that which is dying away and that which is being born, between that which is disappearing and that which is developing, constitutes the internal content of the process of development, the internal content of the transformation of quantitative changes into qualitative changes.

The dialectical method therefore holds that the process of development from the lower to the higher takes place, not as a harmonious unfolding of phenomena, but as a disclosure of the contradictions inherent in things and phenomena, as a “struggle” of opposite tendencies which operate on the basis of these contradictions.

“In its proper meaning,” Lenin says, “dialectics is the study of the contradiction within the very essence of things.” (Lenin, “Philosophical Notebooks,” Russ. ed., p. 263.) And further: “Development is the ‘struggle’ of opposites.” (Lenin, “Sel. Works,” Eng. ed., Vol. XI, pp. 81-2.)

Such, in brief, are the principal features of the Marxist dialectical method.

It is easy to understand how immensely important is the extension of the principles of the dialectical method to the study of social life and the history of society, and how immensely important is the application of these principles to the history of society and to the practical activities of the party of the proletariat.

If there are no isolated phenomena in the world, if all phenomena are interconnected and interdependent, then it is clear that every social system and every social movement in history must be evaluated, not from the standpoint of “eternal justice” or some other preconceived idea, as is not infrequently done by historians, but from the standpoint of the conditions which gave rise to that system or that social movement and with which they are connected.

The slave system would be senseless, stupid and unnatural under modern conditions. But under the conditions of a disintegrating primitive communal system, the slave system is a quite understandable and natural phenomenon, since it represents an advance on the primitive communal system.

The demand for a bourgeois-democratic republic when Tsardom and bourgeois society existed, as, let us say, in Russia in 1905, was a quite understandable, proper and revolutionary demand, for at that time a bourgeois republic would have meant a step forward. But now, under the conditions of the U.S.S.R., the demand for a bourgeois-democratic republic would be a meaningless and counter-revolutionary demand, for a bourgeois republic would be a retrograde step compared with the Soviet republic.

### “HISTORICAL APPROACH.”

Everything depends on the conditions, time and place. It is clear that without such a historical approach to social phenomena, the existence and development of the science of history is impossible, for only such an approach saves the science of history from becoming a jumble of accidents and an agglomeration of most absurd mistakes.

Further, if the world is in a state of constant movement and development, if the dying away of the old and the upgrowth of the new is a law of development, then it is clear that there can be no “immutable” social systems, no “eternal principles” of private property and exploitation, no “eternal ideas” of the subjugation of the peasant to the landlord, of the worker to the capitalist.

Hence the capitalist system can be replaced by the Socialist system, just as at one time the feudal system was replaced by the capitalist system.

Hence we must not base our orientation on the strata of society which are no longer developing, even though they at present constitute the predominant force, but on those strata which are developing and have a future before them, even though they at present do not constitute the predominant force.

In the eighties of the past century, in the period of the struggle between the Marxists and the Narodniks, the proletariat in Russia constituted an insignificant minority of the population, whereas the individual peasants constituted the vast majority of the population. But the proletariat was developing as a class, whereas the peasantry as a class was disintegrating. And just because the proletariat was developing as a class the Marxists based their orientation on the proletariat. And they were not mistaken, for as we know the proletariat subsequently grew from an insignificant force into a first-rate historical and political force.

Hence, in order not to err in policy, one must look forward, not backward.

Further, if the passing of slow quantitative changes into rapid and abrupt qualitative changes is a law of development, then it is clear that revolutions made by oppressed classes are a quite natural and inevitable phenomenon.

Hence the transition from capitalism to Socialism and the liberation of the working-class from the yoke of capitalism cannot be effected by slow changes, by reforms, but only by a qualitative change of the capitalist system, by revolution.

Hence, in order not to err in policy, one must be a revolutionary, not a reformist.

Further, if development proceeds by way of the disclosure of internal contradictions, by way of collisions between opposite forces on the basis of these contradictions and so as to overcome these contradictions, then it is clear that the class struggle of the proletariat is a quite natural and inevitable phenomenon.

Hence we must not cover up the contradictions of the capitalist system, but disclose and unravel them; we must not try to check the class struggle, but carry it to its conclusion.

Hence, in order not to err in policy, one must pursue an uncompromising proletarian class policy, not a reformist policy of harmony of the interests of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, not a compromisers' policy of "the growing of capitalism into Socialism."

Such is the Marxist dialectical method when applied to social life, to the history of society.

As to Marxist philosophical materialism, it is fundamentally the direct opposite of philosophical idealism.

## Section 2.

(2) The principal features of Marxist philosophical materialism are as follows:

(a) Contrary to idealism, which regards the world as the embodiment of an "absolute idea," a "universal spirit," "consciousness," Marx's philosophical materialism holds that the world is by

its very nature material, that the multifold phenomena of the world constitute different forms of matter in motion, that interconnection and interdependence of phenomena, as established by the dialectical method, are a law of the development of moving matter, and that the world develops in accordance with the laws of movement of matter and stands in no need of a "universal spirit."

"The materialist world-outlook," says Engels, "is simply the conception of nature as it is, without any reservations." (MS. of Ludwig Feuerbach.)

## "A LIVING FLAME."

Speaking of the materialist views of the ancient philosopher Heraclitus, who held that "the world, the all-in-one, was not created by any god or any man, but was, is and ever will be a living flame, systematically flaring up and systematically dying down," Lenin comments: "A very good exposition of the rudiments of dialectical materialism." (Lenin, *Philosophical Notebooks*, Russ. ed., p. 318.)

(b) Contrary to idealism, which asserts that only our mind really exists, and that the material world, being, nature, exists only in our mind, in our sensations, ideas and perceptions, the Marxist materialist philosophy holds that matter, nature, being, is an objective reality existing outside and independent of our mind; that matter is primary, since it is the source of sensation, ideas, mind, and that mind is secondary, derivative, since it is a reflection of matter, a reflection of being; that thought is a product of matter which in its development has reached a high degree of perfection, namely, of the brain, and the brain is the organ of thought; and that therefore one cannot separate thought from matter without committing a grave error. Engels says: "The question of the relation of thinking to being, the relation of spirit to nature is the paramount question of the whole of philosophy . . . The answers which the philosophers gave to this question split them into two great camps. Those who asserted the primacy of spirit to nature . . . comprised the camp of idealism. The others, who regarded nature as primary, belong to the various schools of materialism." (Karl Marx, *Sel. Works*, Eng. ed., Vol. I, pp. 430-31.) And further:

"The material, 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 of a material, bodily organ, the brain. Matter is not a product of the mind, but mind itself is merely the highest product of matter." (Ibid, p. 435.)

Concerning the question of matter and thought, Marx says:

"It is impossible to separate thought from matter that thinks. Matter is the substratum of all changes." (Ibid, p. 397.)

Describing the Marxist philosophy of materialism, Lenin says:

"Materialism in general recognises objectively real being (matter) as independent of consciousness, sensation, experience . . . Consciousness is only the reflection of being, at best, an approxi-



mately true (adequate, ideally exact) reflection of it." (Lenin, *Sel. Works*, Eng. ed., Vol. XI, p. 337.)

And further:

(a) "Matter is that which, acting upon our sense-organs, produces sensation; matter is the objective reality given to us in sensation . . . Matter, nature, being, the physical—is primary, and spirit, consciousness, sensation, the psychological—is secondary." (*Ibid.*, pp. 207, 208.)

(b) "The world picture is a picture of how matter moves and how matter thinks. (*Ibid.*, p. 402.)

(c) "The brain is the organ of thought." (*Ibid.*, p. 214.)

Contrary to idealism, which denies the possibility of knowing the world and its laws, which does not believe in the authenticity of our knowledge, does not recognise objective truth, and holds that the world is full of "things-in-themselves" that can never be known to science, Marxist philosophical materialism holds that the world and its laws are fully knowable, that our knowledge of the laws of nature, tested by experiment and practice, is authentic knowledge having the validity of objective truth, and that there are no things in the world which are unknowable, but only things which are still not known, but which will be disclosed and made known by the efforts of science and practice.

Criticising the thesis of Kant and other idealists that the world is unknowable and that there are "things-in-themselves" which are unknowable, and defending the well-known materialist thesis that our knowledge is authentic knowledge, Engels writes:

"The most telling refutation of this as of all other philosophical fancies 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 "thing-in-itself." The chemical substances produced in the bodies of plants and animals remained 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 much more cheaply and simply from coal tar. For three hundred years the Copernican solar system was a hypothesis, with a hundred, a thousand or ten thousand chances to one in its favour, but still always a hypothesis. But when Leverrier, by means of the data provided by this system, not only deduced the necessity of the existence of an unknown planet, but also calculated the position in the heavens which this planet must necessarily occupy, and when Galle really found this planet, the Copernican system was proved." (Karl Marx, *Sel. Works*, Eng. ed., Vol. I, pp. 432-33.)

Accusing Bogdanov, Bazarov, Yushkevitch and the other followers of Mach of fideism, and defending the well-known mater-

ialist thesis that our scientific knowledge of the laws of nature is authentic knowledge, and that the laws of science represent objective truth, Lenin says:

"Contemporary fideism does not at all 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." (Lenin, *Sel. Works*, Eng. ed., Vol. XI, p. 188.)

Such, in brief, are the characteristic features of the Marxist philosophical materialism.

It is easy to understand how immensely important is the extension of the principle of philosophical materialism to the study of social life, of the history of society, and how immensely important is the application of these principles to the history of society and to the practical activities of the party of the proletariat.

If the connection between the phenomena of nature and their interdependence are laws of the development of nature, it follows, too, that the connection and interdependence of the phenomena of social life are laws of the development of society, and not something accidental.

Hence, social life, the history of society, ceases to be an agglomeration of "accidents," and becomes the history of the development of society according to regular laws, and the study of the history of society becomes a science.

Hence the practical activity of the party of the proletariat must not be based on the good wishes of "outstanding individuals," not on the dictates of "reason," "universal morals," etc., but on the laws of development of society and on the study of these laws.

Further, if the world is knowable and our knowledge of the laws of development of nature is authentic knowledge, having the validity of objective truth, it follows that social life, the development of society, is also knowable, and that the data of science regarding the laws of development of society are authentic data having the validity of objective truths.

Hence the science of the history of society, despite all the complexity of the phenomena of social life, can become as precise a science as, let us say, biology, and capable of making use of the laws of development of society for practical purposes.

Hence the party of the proletariat should not guide itself in its practical activity by casual motives, but by the laws of development of society, and by practical deductions from these laws.

Hence Socialism is converted from a dream of a better future for humanity into a science.

### **"INDEPENDENTLY OF THE WILL OF MEN."**

Hence the bond between science and practical activity, between theory and practice, their unity, should be the guiding star of the party of the proletariat.

Further, if nature, being, the material world, is primary, and mind, thought, is secondary, derivative; if the material world represents objective reality existing independently of the mind of men, while the mind is a reflection of this objective reality, it follows that the material life of society, its being, is also primary, and its spiritual life secondary, derivative, and that the material life of society is an objective reality existing independently of the will of men, while the spiritual life of society is a reflection of this objective reality, a reflection of being.

Hence the source of formation of the spiritual life of society, the origin of social ideas, social theories, political views and political institutions, should not be sought for in the ideas, theories, views and political institutions themselves, but in the conditions of the material life of society, in social being, of which these ideas, theories, views, etc., are the reflection.

Hence, if in different periods of the history of society different social ideas, theories, views, and political institutions are to be observed; if under the slave system we encounter certain social ideas, theories, views and political institutions, under feudalism others, and under capitalism others still, this is not to be explained by the "nature," the "properties" of the ideas, theories, views and political institutions themselves but by the different conditions of the material life of society at different periods of social development.

Whatever is the being of a society, whatever are the conditions of the material life of a society, such are the ideas, theories, political views and political institutions of that society.

In this connection Marx says:

"It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness." (Karl Marx, "Sel. Works," Eng. ed., Vol. I, p. 356.)

Hence, in order not to err in policy, in order not to find itself in the position of idle dreamers, the party of the proletariat must not base its activities on abstract "principles of human reason," but on the concrete conditions of the material life of society, as the determining force of social development; not on the good wishes of "great men," but on the real needs of development of the material life of society.

The fall of the utopians, including the Narodniks, Anarchists and Socialist-Revolutionaries, was due, among other things, to the fact that they did not recognise the primary role which the conditions of the material life of society play in the development of society, and, sinking to idealism, did not base their practical activities on the needs of the development of the material life of society, but, independently of and in spite of these needs, on "ideal plans" and "all-embracing projects" divorced from the real life of society.

The strength and vitality of Marxism-Leninism lies in the fact that it does base its practical activity on the needs of the development of the material life of society and never divorces itself from the real life of society.

It does not follow from Marx's words, however, that social ideas, theories, political views and political institutions are of no significance in the life of society, that they do not reciprocally affect social being, the development of the material conditions of the life of society. We have been speaking so far of the origin of social ideas, theories, views and political institutions, of the way they arise, of the fact that the spiritual life of society is a reflection of the conditions of its material life. As regards the significance of social ideas, theories, views and political institutions, as regards their role in history, historical materialism, far from denying them, stresses the role and importance of these factors in the life of society, in its history.

There are different kinds of social ideas and theories. There are old ideas and theories which have outlived their day and which serve the interests of the moribund forces of society. Their significance lies in the fact that they hamper the development, the progress of society. Then there are new and advanced ideas and theories which serve the interests of the advanced forces of society. Their significance lies in the fact that they facilitate the development, the progress of society; and their significance is the greater the more accurately they reflect the needs of development of the material life of society.

#### "HOW SOCIAL IDEAS . . . ARISE."

New social ideas and theories arise only after the development of the material life of society has set new tasks before society. But once they have arisen they become a most potent force which facilitates the carrying out of the new tasks set by the development of the material life of society, a force which facilitates the progress of society. It is precisely here that the tremendous organising, mobilising and transforming value of new ideas, new theories, new political views and new political institutions manifests itself. New social ideas and theories arise precisely because they are necessary to society, because it is impossible to carry out the urgent tasks of development of the material life of society without their organising, mobilising and transforming action. Arising out of the new tasks set by the development of the material life of society, the new social ideas and theories force their way through, become the possession of the masses, mobilise and organise them against the moribund forces of society, and thus facilitate the overthrow of these forces which hamper the development of the material life of society.

Thus social ideas, theories and political institutions, having arisen on the basis of the urgent tasks of the development of the material life of society, the development of social being, themselves then react upon social being, upon the material life of society, creating the conditions necessary for completely carrying out the urgent tasks of the material life of society, and for rendering its further development possible.

In this connection Marx says:

"Theory becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses." (Zur Kritik de Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie.)

Hence, in order to be able to influence the conditions of material life of society and to accelerate their development and their improvement, the party of the proletariat must rely upon such a social theory, such a social idea as correctly reflects the needs of development of the material life of society, and which is therefore capable of setting into motion broad masses of the people and of mobilising them and organising them into a great army of the proletarian party, prepared to smash the reactionary forces and to clear the way for the advanced forces of society.

The fall of the "Economists" and Mensheviks was due among other things to the fact that they did not recognise the mobilising and transforming role of advanced theory, and of advanced ideas and, sinking to vulgar materialism, reduced the role of these factors almost to nothing, thus condemning the Party to passivity and inanition.

The strength and vitality of Marxism-Leninism is derived from the fact that it relies upon an advanced theory which correctly reflects the needs of development of the material life of society, that it elevates theory to a proper level, and that it deems it its duty to utilise every ounce of the mobilising, organising and transforming power of this theory.

That is the answer historical materialism gives to the question of the relation between social being and social consciousness, between the conditions of development of material life and development of the spiritual life of society.

### Section 3.

It now remains to elucidate the following question: what, from the viewpoint of historical materialism, is meant by the "conditions of material life of society" which in the final analysis determine the physiognomy of society, its ideas, views, political institutions, etc.? What, after all, are these "conditions of material life of society," what are their distinguishing features?

There can be no doubt that the concept "conditions of material life of society" includes, first of all, nature which surrounds society, geographical environment, which is one of the indispensable and constant conditions of material life of society and which, of course, influences the development of society. What role does geographical environment play in the development of society? Is geographical environment the chief force determining the physiognomy of society, the character of the social system of men, the transition from one system to another? Historical materialism answers this question in the negative.

### "GEOGRAPHICAL ENVIRONMENT."

Geographical environment is unquestionably one of the constant and indispensable conditions of development of society and, of course, influences the development of society, accelerates or retards its development. But its influence is not the determining influence, inasmuch as the changes and development of society proceed at an incomparably faster rate than the changes and development of

geographical environment. In the space of three thousand years three different social systems have been successively superseded in Europe: the primitive communal system, the slave system and the feudal system. In the eastern part of Europe, in the U.S.S.R., even four social systems have been superseded. Yet during this period geographical conditions in Europe have either not changed at all, or have changed so slightly that geography takes no note of them. And that is quite natural. Changes in geographical environment of any importance requires millions of years, whereas a few hundred or a couple of thousand years are enough for even very important changes in the system of human society.

It follows from this that geographical environment cannot be the chief cause, the determining cause of social development, for that which remains almost unchanged in the course of tens of thousands of years cannot be the chief cause of development of that which undergoes fundamental changes in the course of a few hundred years.

Further, there can be no doubt that the concept "conditions of material life of society" also includes growth of population, density of population, of one degree or another, for people are an essential element of the conditions of material life of society, and without a definite minimum number of people there can be no material life of society. Is not growth of population the chief force that determines the character of the social system of men?

Historical materialism answers this question, too, in the negative.

Of course, growth of population does influence the development of society, does facilitate or retard the development of society, but it cannot be the chief force of development of society, and its influence on the development of society cannot be the determining influence because, by itself, growth of population does not furnish the clue to the question why a given social system is replaced precisely by such and such a new system and not by another, why the slave system by the feudal system, and the feudal system by the bourgeois system, and not by some other.

If growth of population were the determining force of social development, then a higher density of population would be bound to give rise to a correspondingly higher type of social system. But we do not find this to be the case. The density of population in China is four times as great as the U.S.A., yet the U.S.A. stands higher than China in the scale of social development, for in China a semi-feudal system still prevails, whereas the U.S.A. has long ago reached the highest stage of development of capitalism. The density of population in Belgium is nineteen times as great as in the U.S.A., and twenty-six times as great as in the U.S.S.R., yet the U.S.A. stands higher than Belgium in the scale of social development; and as for the U.S.S.R., Belgium lags a whole historical epoch behind this country, for in Belgium the capitalist system prevails, whereas the U.S.S.R. has already done away with capitalism and has set up a Socialist system.

It follows from this that growth of population is not, and cannot be, the chief force of development of society, the force which determines the character of the social system, the physiognomy of society.

What, then, is the chief force in the complex of conditions of material life of society which determines the physiognomy of society, the character of the social system, the development of society from one system to another?

This force, historical materialism holds, is the method of procuring the means of life necessary for human existence, the mode of production of material values—food, clothing, footwear, houses, fuel, instruments of production, etc.—which are indispensable for the life and development of society.

In order to live, people must have food, clothing, footwear, shelter, fuel, etc.; in order to have these material values, people must produce them; in order to produce them, people must have the instruments of production with which food, clothing, footwear, shelter, fuel, etc., are produced; they must be able to produce these instruments and to use them.

The instruments of production wherewith material values are produced, the people who operate the instruments of production and carry on the production of material values, thanks to a certain production experience and labor skill—all these elements jointly constitute the productive forces of society.

#### **“RELATIONS OF PRODUCTION.”**

But the productive forces are only one aspect of production, only one aspect of the mode of production, an aspect that expresses the relation of men to the objects and forces of nature which they make use of for the production of material values. Another aspect of production, another aspect of the mode of production, is the relation of men to each other in the process of production, men's relations of production. Men carry on a struggle against nature and utilise nature for the production of material values not in isolation from each other, not as separate individuals, but in common, in groups, in societies. Production, therefore, is at all times and under all conditions social production. In the production of material values men enter into mutual relations of one kind or another within production, into relations of production of one kind or another. These may be relations of co-operation and mutual help between people who are free from exploitation; they may be relations of domination and subordination; and, lastly, they may be transitional from one form of relations of production to another. But whatever the character of the relations of production may be, always and in every system, they constitute just as essential an element of production as the productive forces of society.

“In production,” Marx says, “men not only act on nature, but also on one another. They produce only by co-operating in a certain way and mutually exchanging their activities. In order to produce, they enter into definite connections and relations with one another and only within these social connections and relations does their

action on nature, does production, take place.” (Karl Marx, *Sel. Works*, Eng. ed., Vol. I, p. 264.)

Consequently, production, the mode of production, embraces both the productive forces of society and men's relations of production, and is thus the embodiment of their unity in the process of production of material values.

One of the features of production is that it never stays at one point for a long time and is always in a state of change and development, and that, furthermore, changes in the mode of production inevitably call forth changes in the whole social system, social ideas, political views and political institutions—they call forth a reconstruction of the whole social and political order. At different stages of development people make use of different modes of production, or, to put it more crudely, lead different manners of life. In the primitive commune there is one mode of production, under slavery there is another mode of production, under feudalism a third mode of production, and so on. And correspondingly, men's social system, the spiritual life of men, their views and political institutions also vary.

Whatever is the mode of production of society, such in the main is the society itself, its ideas and theories, its political views and institutions.

Or, to put it more crudely, whatever is man's manner of life, such is his manner of thought.

This means that the history of the development of society is above all the history of the development of production, the history of the modes of production which succeed each other in the course of centuries, the history of the development of productive forces and of people's relations of production.

Hence the history of social development is at the same time the history of the producers of material values themselves, the history of the labouring masses who are the chief force in the process of production and who carry on the production of material values necessary for the existence of society.

Hence, if historical science is to be a real science, it can no longer reduce the history of social development to the actions of kings and generals, to the actions of “conquerors” and “subjugators” of states, but must above all devote itself to the history of the producers of material values, the history of the labouring masses, the history of peoples.

Hence the clue to the study of the laws of history of society must not be sought in men's minds, in the views and ideas of society, but in the mode of production practised by society in any given historical period; it must be sought in the economic life of society.

**"DISCLOSE THE LAWS OF PRODUCTION."**

Hence the prime task of historical science is to study and disclose the laws of production, the laws of development of the productive forces and of the relations of production, the laws of economic development of society.

Hence, if the party of the proletariat is to be a real party, it must above all acquire a knowledge of the laws of development of production, the laws of economic development of society.

Hence, if it is not to err in policy, the party of the proletariat must both in drafting its programme and in its practical activities proceed primarily from the laws of development of production, from the laws of economic development of society.

A second feature of production is that its changes and developments always begin with changes and development of the productive forces, and in the first place, with changes and development of the instruments of production. Productive forces are therefore the most mobile and revolutionary element of production. First the productive forces of society change and develop, and then, depending on these changes and in conformity with them, men's relations of production, their economic relations, change. This, however, does not mean that the relations of production do not influence the development of the productive forces and that the latter are not dependent on the former. While their development is dependent on the development of the productive forces, the relations of production in their turn react upon the development of the productive forces, accelerating or retarding it. In this connection it should be noted that the relations of production cannot for too long a time lag behind and be in a state of contradiction to the growth of the productive forces, inasmuch as the productive forces can develop in full measure only when the relations of production correspond to the character, the state of the productive forces, and allow full scope for their development. Therefore, however much the relations of production may lag behind the development of the productive forces, they must sooner or later come into correspondence with—and actually do come into correspondence with—the level of development of the productive forces, the character of the productive forces. Otherwise we would have a fundamental violation of the unity of the productive forces and the relations of production within the system of production, a disruption of production as a whole, a crisis of production, a destruction of productive forces.

An instance in which the relations of production do not correspond to the character of the productive forces, conflict with them, is the economic crises in capitalist countries, where private capitalist ownership of the means of production is in glaring incongruity with the social character of the process of production, with the character of the productive forces. This results in economic crises, which lead to the destruction of productive forces. Further-

more, this incongruity itself constitutes the economic basis of social revolution, the purpose of which is to destroy the existing relations of production and to create new relations of production corresponding to the character of the productive forces.

In contrast, an instance in which the relations of production completely correspond to the character of the productive forces is the Socialist national economy of the U.S.S.R., where the social ownership of the means of production fully corresponds to the social character of the process of production, and where, because of this, economic crises and the destruction of productive forces are unknown.

Consequently, the productive forces are not only the most mobile and revolutionary element in production, but are also the determining element in the development of production.

Whatever are the productive forces such must be the relations of production.

While the state of the productive forces furnishes an answer to the question—with what instruments of production do men produce the material values they need?—the state of the relations of production furnishes the answer to another question—who owns the means of production (the land, forests, water, mineral resources, raw materials, instruments of production, production premises, means of transportation, and communication, etc.), who commands the means of production, whether the whole of society, or individual persons, groups, or classes which utilise them for the exploitation of other persons, groups, or classes?

**"NOT INDEPENDENTLY OF MEN."**

Here is a rough picture of the development of productive forces from ancient times to our day. The transition from crude stone tools to the bow and arrow, and the accompanying transition from life of hunters to the domestication of animals and primitive pasturage; the transition from stone tools to metal tools (the iron axe, the wooden plough fitted with an iron coulter, etc.), with a corresponding transition to tillage and agriculture; a further improvement in metal tools for the working up of materials, the introduction of the blacksmith's bellows, the introduction of pottery, with a corresponding development of handicrafts, the separation of handicrafts from agriculture, the development of an independent handicraft industry and, subsequently, of manufacture; the transition from handicraft tools to machines and the transformation of handicraft and manufacture into machine industry; the transition to the machine system and the rise of modern large-scale machine industry—such is a general and far from complete picture of the development of the productive forces of society in the course of man's history. It will be clear that the development and improvement of the instruments of production was effected by men who were related to production, and not



independently of men; and, consequently, the change and development of the instruments of production was accompanied by a change and development of men, as the most important element of the productive forces, by a change and development of their production experience, their labour skill, their ability to handle the instruments of production.

In conformity with the change and development of the productive forces of society in the course of history, men's relations of production, their economic relations are also changed and developed.

Five main types of relations of production are known to history: primitive communal, slave, feudal, capitalist and Socialist.

The basis of the relations of production under the primitive communal system is that the means of production are socially owned. This in the main corresponds to the character of the productive forces of that period. Stone tools, and, later, the bow and arrow, precluded the possibility of men individually combating the forces of nature and beasts of prey. In order to gather the fruits of the forest, to catch fish, to build some sort of habitation, men were obliged to work in common if they did not want to die of starvation, or fall victim to beasts of prey or neighbouring societies. Labour in common led to the common ownership of the means of production, as well as of the fruits of production. Here the conception of the private ownership of the means of production did not yet exist, except for the personal ownership of certain implements of production which were at the same time means of defence against beasts of prey. Here there was no exploitation, no classes.

### **"SELL, PURCHASE OR KILL."**

The basis of the relations of production under the slave system is that the slave owner owns the means of production; he also owns the worker in production—the slave, whom he can sell, purchase or kill as though he were an animal. Such relations of production in the main correspond to the state of the productive forces of that period. Instead of stone tools, men now have metal tools at their command; instead of the wretched and primitive husbandry of the hunter, who knew neither pasturage nor tillage, there now appears pasturage, tillage, handicrafts and a division of labour between these branches of production.

There appears the possibility of the exchange of products between individuals and between societies, of the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few, the actual accumulation of the means of production in the hands of a minority, and the possibility of subjugation of the majority by a minority and their conversion into slaves. Here we no longer find the common and free labour of all members of society in the production process—here there prevails the forced labour of slaves, who are exploited by the non-labouring slave owners. Here, therefore, there is no common

ownership of the means of production or of the fruits of production. It is replaced by private ownership. Here the slave owner appears as the prime and principal property owner in the full sense of the term.

Rich and poor, exploiters and exploited, people with full rights and people with no rights, and a fierce class struggle between them—such is the picture of the slave system.

The basis of the relations of production under the feudal system is that the feudal lord owns the means of production and does not fully own the worker in production—the serf, whom the feudal lord can no longer kill, but whom he can buy and sell. Alongside of feudal ownership there exists individual ownership by the peasant and the handicraftsman of his implements of production and his private enterprise based on his personal labour. Such relations of production in the main correspond to the state of the productive forces of that period. Further improvements in the smelting and working of iron; the spread of the iron plough and the loom; the further development of agriculture, horticulture, viniculture and dairying; the appearance of manufactories alongside of the handicraft workshops—such are the characteristic features of the state of the productive forces.

### **"AN INTEREST IN WORK."**

The new productive forces demand that the labourer shall display some kind of initiative in production and an inclination for work, an interest in work. The feudal lord therefore discards the slave, as a labourer who has no interest in work and is entirely without initiative, and prefers to deal with the serf, who has his own husbandry, implements of production, and a certain interest in work essential for the cultivation of the land and for the payment in kind of a part of his harvest to the feudal lord.

Here private ownership is further developed. Exploitation is nearly as severe as it was under slavery—it is only slightly mitigated. A class struggle between exploiters and exploited is the principal feature of the feudal system.

The basis of the relations of production under the capitalist system is that the capitalist owns the means of production, but not the workers in production—the wage labourers, whom the capitalists can neither kill nor sell because they are personally free, but who are deprived of the means of production and, in order not to die of hunger, are obliged to sell their labour power to the capitalist and to bear the yoke of exploitation. Alongside of capitalist property in the means of production we find, at first on a wide scale, private property of the peasants and handicraftsmen in the means of production, these peasants and handicraftsmen no longer being serfs, and their private property being based on personal labour. In place of the handicraft workshops and manufactories there appear huge mills and factories equipped with

machinery. In place of the manorial estates tilled by the primitive implements of production of the peasant, there now appear large capitalist farms run on scientific lines and supplied with agricultural machinery.

The new productive forces require that the workers in production shall be better educated and more intelligent than the down-trodden and ignorant serfs, that they be able to understand machinery and operate it properly. Therefore, the capitalists prefer to deal with wage-workers who are free from the bonds of serfdom and who are educated enough to be able properly to operate machinery.

### "CONTRADICTION."

But having developed productive forces to a tremendous extent, capitalism has become enmeshed in contradictions which it is unable to solve. By producing larger and larger quantities of commodities, and reducing their prices, capitalism intensifies competition, ruins the mass of small and medium private owners, converts them into proletarians and reduces their purchasing power, with the result that it becomes impossible to dispose of the commodities produced. On the other hand, by expanding production and concentrating millions of workers in huge mills and factories, capitalism lends the process of production a social character and thus undermines its own foundation, inasmuch as the social character of the process of production demands the social ownership of the means of production; yet the means of production remain private capitalist property, which is incompatible with the social character of the process of production.

These irreconcilable contradictions between the character of the productive forces and the relations of production make themselves felt in periodical crises of overproduction, when the capitalists, finding no effective demand for their goods owing to the ruin of the mass of the population which they themselves have brought about, are compelled to burn products, destroy manufactured goods, suspend production and destroy productive forces at a time when millions of people are forced to suffer unemployment and starvation, not because there are not enough goods, but because there is an overproduction of goods.

This means that the capitalist relations of production have ceased to correspond to the state of productive forces of society and have come into irreconcilable contradiction with them.

This means that capitalism is pregnant with revolution, whose mission it is to replace the existing capitalist ownership of the means of production by Socialist ownership.

This means that the main feature of the capitalist system is a most acute class struggle between exploiters and the exploited.

The basis of the relations of production under the Socialist system, which so far has been established only in the U.S.S.R., is

the social ownership of the means of production. Here there are no longer exploiters and exploited. The goods produced are distributed according to labour performed, on the principle: "He who does not work, neither shall he eat." Here the mutual relations of people in the process of production are marked by comradesly co-operation and the Socialist mutual assistance of workers who are free from exploitation. Here the relations of production fully correspond to the state of productive forces, for the social character of the process of production is reinforced by the social ownership of the means of production.

### "NO PERIODICAL CRISES."

For this reason Socialist production in the U.S.S.R. knows no periodical crises of overproduction and their accompanying absurdities.

For this reason the productive forces here develop at an accelerated pace, for the relations of production that correspond to them offer full scope for such development.

Such is the picture of the development of men's relations of production in the course of human history.

Such is the dependence of the development of the relations of production on the development of the productive forces of society, and primarily on the development of the instruments of production, the dependence by virtue of which the changes and development of the productive forces sooner or later lead to corresponding changes and development of the relations of production.

"The use and fabrication of instruments of labour," says Marx, "although existing in the germ among certain species of animals, is specifically characteristic of the human labour-process, and Franklin therefore defines man as a tool-making animal. Relics of bygone instruments of labour possess the same importance for the investigation of extinct economic forms of society, as do fossil bones for the determination of extinct species of animals. It is not the articles made, but how they are made, and by what instruments that enables us to distinguish different economic epochs. . . . Instruments of labour not only supply a standard of the degree of development to which human labour has attained, but they are also indicators of the social conditions under which that labour is carried on." (Karl Marx, "Capital," Vol. I, p. 159.) And further:

(a) "Social relations are closely bound up with productive forces. In acquiring new productive forces men change their mode of production; and in changing their mode of production, in changing the way of earning their living, they change all their social relations. The handmill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill, society with the industrial capitalist." (Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Eng. ed., p. 92.)

(b) "There is a continual movement of growth in productive forces, of destruction in social relations, of formation in ideas; the

only immutable thing is the abstraction of movement." (Ibid., p. 93.)

Speaking of historical materialism as formulated in the "Communist Manifesto," Engels says:

"Economic production and the structure of society of every historical epoch necessarily arising therefrom constitute the foundation for the political and intellectual history of that epoch . . . consequently ever since the dissolution of the primeval communal ownership of land all history has been a history of class struggles, of struggles between exploited and exploiting, between dominated and dominating classes at various stages of social evolution; . . . this struggle, however, has now reached a stage where the exploited and oppressed class (the proletariat) can no longer emancipate itself from the class which exploits and oppresses it (the bourgeoisie), without at the same time forever freeing the whole of society from exploitation, oppression and class struggles." (Preface to the German edition of the Communist Manifesto—Karl Marx, Selected Works, Eng. ed., Vol. I, pp. 192-93.)

### "NEW PRODUCTIVE FORCES."

A third feature of production is that the rise of new productive forces and of the relations of production corresponding to them does not take place separately from the old system, after the disappearance of the old system, but within the old system; it takes place not as a result of the deliberate and conscious activity of man, but spontaneously, unconsciously, independently of the will of man. It takes place spontaneously and independently of the will of man for two reasons.

Firstly, because men are not free to choose one mode of production or another, because as every new generation enters life it finds productive forces and relations of production already existing as the result of the work of former generations, owing to which it is obliged at first to accept and adapt itself to everything it finds ready made in the sphere of production in order to be able to produce material values.

Secondly, because, when improving one instrument of production or another, one element of the productive forces or another, men do not realise, do not understand or stop to reflect what social results these improvements will lead to, but only think of their everyday interests, of lightening their labour and of securing some direct and tangible advantage for themselves.

When, gradually and gropingly, certain members of primitive communal society passed from the use of stone tools to the use of iron tools, they, of course, did not know and did not stop to reflect what social results this innovation would lead to; they did not understand or realise that the change to metal tools means a revolution in production, that it would in the long run lead to the slave system. They simply wanted to lighten their labour and secure an

immediate and tangible advantage; their conscious activity was confined within the narrow bounds of this every-day personal interest.

When, in the period of the feudal system, the young bourgeoisie of Europe began to erect, alongside of the small guild workshops, large manufactories, and thus advance the productive forces of society, it, of course, did not know and did not stop to reflect what social consequences this innovation would lead to; it did not realise or understand that this "small" innovation would lead to a regrouping of social forces which was to end in a revolution both against the power of kings, whose favours it so highly valued, and against the nobility, to whose ranks its foremost representatives not infrequently aspired. It simply wanted to lower the cost of producing goods, to throw large quantities of goods on the markets of Asia and of recently discovered America, and to make bigger profits. Its conscious activity was confined within the narrow bounds of this commonplace practical aim.

When the Russian capitalists, in conjunction with foreign capitalists, energetically implanted modern large-scale machine industry in Russia, while leaving Tsardom intact and turning the peasants over to the tender mercies of the landlords, they, of course, did not know and did not stop to reflect what social consequences this extensive growth of the productive forces would lead to, they did not realise or understand that this big leap in the realm of the productive forces of society would lead to a regrouping of social forces that would enable the proletariat to effect a union with the peasantry and to bring about a victorious Socialist revolution. They simply wanted to expand industrial production to the limit, to gain control of the huge home market, to become monopolists, and to squeeze as much profit as possible out of the national economy. Their conscious activity did not extend beyond the commonplace, strictly practical interests. Accordingly, Marx says:

"In the social production which men carry on (that is, in the production of the material values necessary to the life of men—Ed.) 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." (Karl Marx, Selected Works, Eng. ed., Vol. I, p. 356.)

This, however, does not mean that changes in the relations of production, and the transition from old relations of production to new relations of production, proceed smoothly, without conflicts, without upheavals. On the contrary, such a transition usually takes place by means of the revolutionary overthrow of the old relations of production and the establishment of new relations of production. Up to a certain period the development of the productive forces and the changes in the realm of the relations of production proceeds spontaneously, independently of the will of men. But

that is so only up to a certain moment, until the new and developing productive forces have reached a proper state of maturity. After the new productive forces have matured, the existing relations of production and their upholders—the ruling classes—become that “insuperable” obstacle which can only be removed by the conscious action of the new classes, by the forcible acts of these classes, by revolution.

### “TREMENDOUS ROLE OF NEW SOCIAL IDEAS.”

Here there stands out in bold relief the tremendous role of new social ideas, of new political institutions, of a new political power, whose mission it is to abolish by force the old relations of production. Out of the conflict between the new productive forces and the old relations of production, out of the new economic demands of society there arise new social ideas; the new ideas organise and mobilise the masses; the masses become welded into a new political army, create a new revolutionary power, and make use of it to abolish by force the old system of relations of production, and to firmly establish the new system. The spontaneous process of development yields place to the conscious action of men, peaceful development to violent upheavals, evolution to revolution.

“The proletariat,” says Marx, “during its contest with the bourgeoisie is compelled, by the force of circumstances, to organise itself as a class . . . by means of a revolution, it makes itself the ruling class, and, as such, sweeps away by force the old conditions of production.” (“The Communist Manifesto”—Karl Marx, “Sel. Works,” Eng. ed., Vol. I, p. 228.)

And further:

(a) “The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all means of production in the hands of the State, i.e., of the proletariat organised as the ruling class; and to increase the total productive forces as rapidly as possible.” (Ibid., p. 227.)

(b) “Force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one.” (Karl Marx, “Capital,” Vol. I, p. 776.)

### “BRILLIANT FORMULATION.”

Here is the brilliant formulation of the essence of historical materialism given by Marx in 1859 in his historic preface to his famous book, “Critique of Political Economy”:

“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 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, aesthetic 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. No social order ever disappears before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have been developed; the new higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society itself. Therefore, mankind always sets itself only such tasks as it can solve; since, looking at the matter more closely, we will always find that the task itself arises only when the material conditions necessary for its solution already exist or are at least in the process of formation.” (Karl Marx, Sel. Works, Eng. ed., Vol. I, pp. 356-57.)

Such is the Marxist materialism as applied to social life, to the history of society.

Such are the principal features of dialectical and historical materialism.

It will be seen from this what a theoretical treasure was safeguarded by Lenin for the party and protected from the attacks of the revisionists and renegades, and how important was the appearance of Lenin's book, “Materialism and Empirio-Criticism,” for the development of our Party.

## PART 2.

### DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM.

"My own dialectical method is not only fundamentally different from the Hegelian method, but is its direct opposite.

"For Hegel, the thought process (which he actually transforms into an independent subject, giving it the name of 'IDEA') is the demiurge (creator) of the real: and for him the real is only the outward manifestation of the idea.

"In my view, on the other hand, the idea is nothing other than the material when it has been transposed and translated inside the human head.

"Although in Hegel's hands dialectic underwent a mystification, this does not obviate the fact that he was the first to expound the general forms of its movement in a comprehensive and fully conscious way.

"In Hegel's writings dialectic stands on its head.

"You must turn it right way up again if you want to discover the rational kernel that is hidden away within the wrappings of mystification." (Marx, in preface to "Capital," 2nd edition 1871, Vol. I.)

### FROM LENIN'S "THE TEACHING OF KARL MARX"—DIALECTICS.

"Marx and Engels regarded Hegelian dialectics . . . the theory of evolution most comprehensive, rich in content and profound . . . as the greatest achievement of classical German philosophy.

"All other formulations of the principle of development, evolution, they considered to be one-sided, poor in content, distorting and mutilating the actual course of development of nature and society (a course often consummated in leaps and bounds, catastrophes, revolutions).

"Engels: 'Marx and I were almost the only persons who rescued conscious dialectics (from the swamp of idealism, including Hegelianism) and applied it to the materialist conception of nature.

. . . Nature is the test of dialectics, and we must say that science has supplied a vast and daily increasing mass of material for this test, thereby proving that, in the last analysis, nature proceeds dialectically and not metaphysically.' (This was written before the discovery of radium, electrons and the transmutation of elements.)"

Again Engels writes:

"The great basic idea that the world is not to be viewed as a complex of fully-fashioned objects but as a complex of processes, in which apparently stable objects, no less than the images of them inside our heads (our concepts), are undergoing incessant changes, arising here and disappearing there, and which with all apparent

accident and in spite of all momentary retrogression ultimately constitutes a progressive development—this great basic idea has, particularly since the time of Hegel, so deeply penetrated the general consciousness that hardly anyone will now venture to dispute it in its general form.

"But it is one thing to accept it in words, quite another thing to put it in practice on every occasion and in every field of investigation.

"In the eyes of dialectic philosophy nothing is established for all time, nothing is absolute or sacred. On everything and in everything it sees the stamp of inevitable decline; nothing can resist it save the unceasing process of formation and destruction, the unending ascent from the lower to the higher—a process of which that philosophy itself is only a simple reflection within the thinking brain."

Thus dialectics, according to Marx, is "the science of the general laws of motion, both of the external world and human thinking."

This revolutionary side of Hegel's philosophy was adopted and developed by Marx.

Dialectical materialism "does not need any philosophy towering above the other sciences."

Of former philosophies there remain "the science of thinking and its laws—formal logic and dialectics."

Dialectics, as the term used by Marx, in conformity with Hegel, includes what is now called the theory of cognition, or epistemology, or gnoseology, a science that must contemplate its subject matter in the same way—historically, studying and generalising the origin and development of cognition, the transition from non-consciousness to consciousness.

In our times, the idea of development, of evolution, has almost fully penetrated social consciousness, but it has done so in other ways, not through Hegel's philosophy. Still, the same idea, as formulated by Marx and Engels on the basis of Hegel's philosophy, is much more comprehensive, much more abundant in content, than the current theory of evolution.

A development that repeats, as it were, the stages already passed, but repeats them in a different way, on a higher plane ("negation of negation"); a development, so to speak, in spirals, not in a straight line; a development in leaps and bounds, catastrophes, revolutions; "intervals of gradualness"; transformation of quantity into quality, inner impulses for development, imparted by the contradiction, the conflict of different forces and tendencies reacting on a given body or inside a given phenomenon or within a given society; interdependence, and the closest, indissoluble connection between all sides of every phenomenon (history disclosing ever new sides), a connection that provides the one world-process of motion proceeding according to law—such are some of the features of dialectics as a doctrine of evolution more full of meaning than the current one.



## UNITY AND STRUGGLE OF OPPOSITES.

### From Lenin's "On Dialectics."

The division of the ONE and the knowledge of its contradictory parts is the essence (one of the "essential" aspects of being, its fundamental, if not the fundamental characteristic) of dialectics.

This is exactly how Hegel puts the question. Aristotle,<sup>1</sup> in his "Metaphysics," is always grappling with it and continually engages in a struggle with Heraclitus<sup>2</sup> respecting the ideas of Heraclitus).

The correctness of this aspect of the content of dialectics must be tested by the history of science.

This aspect of dialectics customarily received very little attention (e.g., by Plekhanov); the identity of opposites is taken as the sum total of **examples** (for example "the seed" and "primitive communism"<sup>3</sup>).

But this is in the interests of popularisation and not as the law of **knowledge** (and as the law of the objective world).

In mathematics:

+ (plus) and - (minus): The differential and integral.

In mechanics: Action and reaction.

In physics: Positive and negative electricity.

In chemistry: The combination and dissociation of atoms.

In the social sciences: The class struggle.

1. Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) could not agree with the dialectic point of view and waged a constant polemic against Heraclitus, whose philosophy appeared so obscure for the very reason that its dialectic character was not altogether understood.

For Aristotle opposites are possible only in successive series and as mutually exclusive of each other. A thing exists, or it does not, a man is living or dead, a thing cannot be one thing and at the same time another.

In no case can a thing be a union of opposites.

2. Heraclitus (544-475 B.C.), also called the "Obscure," was one of the most prominent dialecticians of ancient times. According to his conception, the process of becoming is a constant transition from the finite to the infinite, and vice versa; process that is indissoluble and unending, and moving between extremes; it is the unity of being and non-being, the essence of the universe.

In this inconstancy of all things, in a ceaseless transformation of all being, Heraclitus beheld the general law of the universe. All things are in flux; there is nothing permanent, with the result—"we cannot step twice into the same river."

The world he conceived as both war and peace, summer and winter, flux and time, satiation and hunger, etc.

OPPOSITION, the ruling principle of the universe, is, according to Heraclitus, inherent in all things, with the result that all of existence really constitutes a **UNION OF OPPOSITES**.

"The ALL has its origin in the ONE and the ONE in the ALL."

3. Plekhanov quotes Engels, in "Anti-Duhring," on the theory of "the seed":

Let us take a grain of barley. Millions of such kernels are ground, boiled and brewed, and then consumed. But if such a barley corn encounter the conditions normal for its development, if it falls on favorable soil, the influence of the heat and the moisture will effect a peculiar transfiguration

The identity of opposites (more accurately, perhaps, their "unity," although the difference between the expressions "unity" and "identity" is not essential here. In a certain sense both are right) is the recognition (discovery) of the mutually exclusive and opposed tendencies in all the phenomena and processes of nature (including spirit and society).

The condition of the knowledge of all processes of the world as in "self-movement," in spontaneous development, conceived in its vital and living form, is the knowledge of the unity of their opposites.

Development is "struggle" of opposites.

Two fundamental (or is it the two possible? or is it two historically observed?) 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 correlation).

The first conception is dead, poor and dry; the second is vital.

It is only this second conception which offers the key to understanding the "self-movement" of everything in existence; it alone offers the key to understanding "leaps," to the "interruption of

in this seed. It sprouts; the seed as such disappears, is negated, and in its place appears the plant, the negation of the seed.

But what is the normal life course of the plant? It grows, blossoms, is fructified; and finally produces other grains of barley, and, as soon as these have matured, the stalk withers away and is negated in its turn. But the result of this negation of the negation is again the barley grain with which we started, and not one grain merely, but an increase ten, or twenty, or thirty fold.

In the other passages, Engels cites Rousseau's ideas as an example of a dialectic mode of thought, and shows that according to Rousseau social evolution proceeds by means of antagonisms.

In the state of nature and savagery, men were equal, and since Rousseau considers even language to have been a distortion of the natural state, he is perfectly right in applying the equality between animals of one type, as far as this equality may prevail, also to this type of animal-men, recently classified by Haeckel, hypothetically, as Aladi, i.e., "speechless."

But these equal animal-men possessed a quality not characteristic of other animals: perfectibility, the capacity of continuing their evolution, and this becomes the cause of inequality. Rousseau therefore regards the beginning of inequality as a forward step.

But this progress had its antagonisms: it was at the same time retrogression. . . . Each new step in advance of civilisation is simultaneously an advance towards inequality.

All the institutions of society, which arise simultaneously with civilisation, sooner or later, serve purposes and ends opposite to their original ones. It is an unquestionable fact, and, furthermore, the basic law of our body politic, that the people created monarchs in order to preserve and protect its own freedom and not to destroy it.

And yet these princes necessarily become the oppressors of the people and even carry their tyranny so far that the resulting inequality, becoming intolerable, is again changed into its opposite, and becomes once more the basis of equality; before the despot all men are equal, i.e., equal to zero. . . .

And thus inequality again turns into equality, but not into the old primitive equality of speechless primitive man, but into the higher quality of the social contract.

gradual succession," to the "transformation into the opposite," to the destruction of the old and the appearance of the new.

The unity (the coincidence, identity, resultant force) of opposites is conditional, temporary, transitory and relative. The struggle of the mutually exclusive opposites is absolute, as movement and evolution are.

N.B.—The distinction between subjectivism (scepticism, sophistry, etc.) and dialectics, among other things, lies in this: that in ("objective") dialectics the distinction between the relative and the absolute is itself relative. For objective dialectics the absolute is also to be found in the relative. For subjectivism and sophistry the relative is only relative and excludes the absolute.

On the first conception of movement, self-movement, its impelling force, its source, and its motive still remain in the shadow (or that source is transferred outside, becomes subject, etc.) On the second conception, chief attention is directed precisely toward knowledge of the source of "self"-movement.

Dialectics **IS** the theory of knowledge of Marxism.

It was exactly this aspect of the matter (it is not a question here merely of the "aspect" but of the essence of the matter) to which Plekhanov paid no attention, not to speak of other Marxists.

Knowledge appears in the form of a series of circles in Hegel<sup>1</sup> . . . .

Is chronology necessary? No!

These are the "circles" in philosophy:

Ancient: From Democritus to Plato and Heraclitus' dialectics.

Renaissance: Descartes versus Gassendi (Spinoza?).

Modern: Holbach-Hegel (through Berkeley, Hume, Kant).

Hegel-Feuerbach—Marx.

Dialectics as a living many-sided knowledge (with a continually increasing number of aspects) with an infinite number of shadings of every sort and approximations to reality (with a philosophical system which out of these various shades and approximations to reality develops into a whole)—its content is immeasurably rich compared with "metaphysical" materialism, whose fundamental trouble lies in its inability to apply dialectics to the theories of development, to the process and development of knowledge. Philosophical idealism is nonsense only from the standpoint of a crude, simple and metaphysical materialism.

On the other hand, from the standpoint of dialectical materialism, philosophical idealism is a one-sided, exaggerated, swollen development (Dietzgen) of one of the characteristic aspects or

<sup>1</sup> Hegel's "Logic."—"It therefore results that every step in the progress of continuous definition, as it recedes from the indefinite beginning, constitutes also a reverse approach to it, and that the two apparently different elements, namely, the reverse process of affirming the beginning and the advancing continuous definition of it actually coincide and are identical. The method which thus moves in a circle . . . By virtue of the above indicated character of the method, the science constitutes a circle returning on itself, at the beginning of which, at the simple foundation, its conclusion is again met with, returning from the other direction; furthermore, this circle is a circle of circles, for each individual member, being an animated phase of the method, is the reflection-in-itself, which, in returning to the initial stage, simultaneously constitutes the beginning of a new member."

limits of knowledge into a defined absolute, into something dis-severed from matter, from nature.

Idealism means clericalism. True! But philosophical idealism is (more "correctly" expressed and in "addition") a road to clericalism through one of the nuances of the infinitely complicated knowledge (dialectical) of man.

The knowledge of man does not follow a straight line, but a curved line which infinitely approaches a system of circles, the spiral. Every fragment, every segment, every bit of this curved line can be transformed (transformed one-sidedly) into an independent, complete, straight line, which, if one does not see the wood for the trees, leads directly into the mire, into clericalism (which is strengthened by the class interest of the ruling class.)

Rectilinearity and one-sidedness, stiffness and rigidity, subjectivism and subjective blindness—these are the epistemological roots of idealism.

That clericalism (philosophic idealism) possesses epistemological roots is not unaccountable. It is not groundless; it is undoubtedly a sterile flower, yet one growing on the living tree of a prolific, true, powerful, omnipotent, objective, and absolute human knowledge.

### FROM PLEKHANOV'S "DIALECTIC AND LOGIC."

The fundamental laws of logic are three in number:

1. The law of identity.
2. The law of non-contradiction.
3. The law of the excluded middle.

The law of identity (principium identitatis) declares A is A (omne subjectum est praedictum sui) or  $A = A$ .

The law of non-contradiction, A is not not-A, is nothing more than the negative form of the first law.

According to the law of the excluded middle (principium exclusi tertii), two contradictory propositions, mutually exclusive, cannot both of them be true. In fact, A is B, or else A is not B. If one of these propositions is true, the other is necessarily false; and conversely. There is not and cannot be any middle course here. The law of non-contradiction and the law of the excluded middle can be unified in the following logical rule:

"To every definite question, understood in a definite sense, as to whether a given characteristic attaches to a given object, we must reply either yes or no; we cannot answer yes and no."

It is certainly hard to raise any objection to this. But if the statement is true, that implies that the formula, "Yes, is no, and no is yes" must be erroneous. Nothing will be left for us then, but to laugh, like Bernstein, and to raise our hands to heaven, when we see that thinkers as profound as Heraclitus, Hegel and Marx have found it more satisfying than the formula, "Yes is yes, and no is no," a formula solidly based upon the three fundamental laws of thought stated above.

This conclusion, fatal to dialectic, seems irrefutable. But before we accept it, let us examine the matter closely.

The movement of matter underlies all the phenomena of nature. But what is movement? It is an obvious contradiction. Should anyone ask you whether a body in motion is at a particular spot at a particular time, you will be unable, with the best will in the world, to answer in accordance with the above rule, the "yes is yes and no is no" formula.

A body in motion is at a given point, and at the same time it is not there. We can only consider it in accordance with the "yes is no, and no is yes" formula.

This moving body thus presents itself as an irrefutable argument in favour of the logic of contradiction and one who is unwilling to accept this logic will be forced to proclaim, with Zeno, that motion is merely an illusion of the senses.

But of all those who deny motion we shall ask: "What are we to think of this fundamental law of thought which conflicts with the fundamental fact of being?"

"Must we not treat it with some circumspection?"

We seem to be between the horns of a dilemma. Either we must accept the fundamental laws of formal logic and deny motion, or else we must admit motion and deny these laws.

The movement of matter underlies all the phenomena of nature. But motion is a contradiction. We must consider the question dialectically, that is to say, in accordance with the "yes is no, and no is yes" formula.

Hence, we are compelled to admit that as concerns this basis of all phenomena we are in the domain of the logic of contradiction.

But the molecules of matter in motion, becoming conjoined one with another, form certain combinations: Things, objects.

Such combinations are distinguished by more or less marked solidity; they exist for a longer or shorter time, and then disappear, to be replaced by others.

The only thing which is eternal is the movement of matter, matter itself, indestructible substance. But as soon as a particular temporary combination of matter has come into existence as a result of the eternal movement of matter, and as long as it has not yet disappeared owing to this same movement, the question of its existence must necessarily be solved in a positive sense.

That is why, if anyone points out to us the planet Venus and asks us, "Does this planet exist?" we shall answer unhesitatingly, "Yes." But if anyone asks us whether witches exist, we shall answer no less unhesitatingly, "No."

What does this mean?

It means that when we are concerned with distinct objects we must, in our judgments about them, follow the "yes is yes, and no is no" formula.

Even there, however, the realm of this respectable formula is not unrestricted. When we are asked a question about the reality of an object which already exists, we must give a positive answer. But when an object is as yet only in course of becoming, we may often have a good reason for hesitating as to our reply.

When we see a man who has lost most of the hair from his cranium we say that he is bald.

But how are we to determine at what precise moment the loss of hair of the head makes a man bald?

To every definite question as to whether an object has this characteristic or that, we must respond with a yes or a no. As to that there can be no doubt whatever.

But how are we to answer when an object is undergoing a change—when it is in the act of losing a given characteristic, or is only in course of acquiring it?

A definite answer should be the rule in these cases, likewise. But the answer will not be a definite one unless it is couched in accordance with the formula "yes is no, and no is yes," for it will be impossible to answer in accordance with the formula "either yes or no."

The objection can, of course, be made that the characteristic which the object is in course of losing has not yet ceased to exist and that the one which it is in course of acquiring already exists, so that an answer couched in accordance with the formula "Either yes, or no," is possible, even obligatory, even when that with which we have to do is undergoing change. But such contention is erroneous.

A youth on whose chin down is beginning to sprout is certainly growing a beard, but we cannot speak of him as bearded. Down on the chin is not a beard, although it gradually changes to a beard.

If the change is to become qualitative, it must reach a quantitative limit.

One who forgets this is unable to express a definite opinion concerning the qualities of objects.

"Everything is in a flux, everything changes," said of old the philosopher Ephesus.

The combinations which we speak of as objects are permanently in a state of more or less rapid change. In proportion as such combinations remain the same combinations, we can judge them in accordance with the "Yes is yes, and no is no" formula.

But in proportion as they change to a degree in which they cease to exist as formerly, we must appeal to the logic of contradiction, we must use the formula "Yes is no, and no is yes." They exist, and they do not exist.

Just as inertia is a special case of movement, so thought in conformity with the rules of formal logic (in conformity with the

fundamental laws of thought) is a special case of dialectical thought.

While we pay to the fundamental laws of formal logic the homage which is their due, we must remember that these laws are only valid within certain limits, within limits which leave us free to pay homage also to dialectic.

Motion is a contradiction in action, and consequently the fundamental laws of formal logic cannot be applied to it.

When we have to do with the passage from one kind of movement to another (let us say with the passage from mechanical movement to heat) we must say, "This kind of motion is either heat, or else mechanical movement, or else—," and so on.

That is obvious; but if so it signifies that the fundamental laws of formal logic are, within limits, applicable also to motion. The inference is, once more, that dialectic does not suppress formal logic, but merely deprives the laws of formal logic of the absolute value which metaphysicians have ascribed to them.

Our dialectic is based upon the materialistic conception of nature.

If the materialistic conception of nature were to crumble to ruins, our dialectic would crumble with it. Conversely, without dialectic the materialist theory of cognition is incomplete, one-sided; nay, more, it is impossible.

In Hegel's system, dialectic coincides with metaphysics. For us, dialectic is buttressed upon the doctrine of nature.

In Hegel's system, the demiurge (creator) of reality (to use Marx's phrase) is the "absolute idea." For us, the absolute idea is only an abstraction from the motion by which all the combinations and all the states of matter are produced.

According to Hegel, thought progresses thanks to the discovery and the solutions of contradictions, contained in concepts. According to our materialist doctrine, the contradictions contained in concepts are only the reflection, the translation into the language of thought, of contradictions which exist in phenomena owing to the contradictory nature of their common foundation, namely, movement.

According to Hegel, the march of things is determined by the march of ideas; according to us, the march of ideas is explained by the march of things, the march of thought by the march of life.

Materialism sets dialectic on its feet and thus strips from it the veil of mystification in which it was wrapped by Hegel. Furthermore, in doing so, it displays the revolutionary character of dialectic.

"In its mystified form, dialectic became the fashion in Germany because it seemed to elucidate the existing state of affairs. In its rational form it is a scandal and an abomination to the bourgeoisie and its doctrinaire spokesmen, because, while supplying a positive understanding of the existing state of things, it at the same time furnishes an understanding of the negation of that state of things and enables us to recognise that that state of things

will inevitably break up; it is an abomination to them because it regards every historically developed social form as in fluid movement, as transient because it lets nothing over-awe it, but is in its very nature critical and revolutionary."—Engels.

It is quite in order that the bourgeoisie, essentially reactionary, should regard materialist dialectic with horror.

But that persons who sincerely sympathise with the revolutionary movement should disapprove of the materialist doctrine is both ridiculous and sad—it is the climax of absurdity.

Dialectic has secured a recognised position in biology. Darwin and his adherents declared that the various species of one and the same family of animals and plants are only the differentiated descendants of a single primitive form.

Furthermore, according to the theory of evolution, all the genera of one order are likewise derived from a single primordial form; and the same must be said of all the orders of a single class.

On the other hand, according to Darwin's adversaries, all the species of animals and plants are completely independent one of another and only the individuals belonging to a single species can be said to derive from a common form.

This latter conception of species had already been formulated by Linnaeus, who said, "There are as many species as the Supreme Being created in the beginning of things."

That is a purely metaphysical conception, for the metaphysician regards things and concepts as "distinct, unchangeable, rigid objects, given once for all, to be examined one after another, each independently of the other."

The dialectician, on the other hand, regards things and concepts "in their connection, their interlacement, their movement, their appearance and disappearance."

This conception has made its way into biology with the spread of the Darwinian theory, and has come to stay, whatever rectifications may be made in the theory of evolution as science advances.

Regarding human nature as unchangeable, utopian socialists hoped that, among all possible systems of social organisation, there must be one which was more conformable than any other to that nature.

Marx introduced the dialectical method into socialism, thus making of socialism a science, and giving the death blow to utopianism.

Marx does not appeal to human nature; he does not know of any social institutions that do or do not conform to human nature.

Marx says "History in its entirety is nothing other than a continuous modification of human nature."

Man, by acting on nature outside himself, and changing it, changes his own nature.

This is a dialectical standpoint from which a new outlook on the problems of social life can be secured.

The forms and relations of property are determined by the evolution of the forces of production.

But this "logic of contradiction" which, as we have seen, is the reflection in the human brain of the eternal processes of movement—why should it be called dialectic? For answer I shall be content to quote Kuno Fischer:

"Human life resembles a dialogue in this sense, that, with age and experience, our views concerning persons and things undergo a gradual change, like the opinions of the interlocutors in the course of a lively and fruitful conversation. This involuntary and necessary change in our outlook on life and the world is the very tissue of experience.

"That is why Hegel, when comparing the evolution of consciousness with that of a philosophical conversation, has given it the name of dialectic, or the dialectic movement.

"Plato, Aristotle, Kant, each of them employed this term in an important sense peculiar to himself; but in no philosophical system has it been given so comprehensive a meaning as in that of Hegel."

### THE WORLD IS HOMOGENEOUS IN ESSENCE.

Extract from "Philosophical Essays," by Joseph Dietzgen.

Nageli said: "Reflex action is clearly bound up in higher animals with sensitiveness. We must also grant it in the case of lower animals, and we have no reason to deny it in case of plants and inorganic bodies. . . . In virtue of its structure out of different parts the atom possesses various properties and powers, accordingly it also exercises various influences (attraction and repulsion) upon other atoms. . . . If, therefore, the molecules experience something akin to sensitiveness it must also be a pleasure to them if they can follow their sympathies and antipathies, etc. The molecules of chemical elements are, therefore, swayed by a number of qualitatively and quantitatively different sensations. . . . We accordingly find in the lowest and simplest organisations of matter of which we know, essentially the same phenomena as in the highest. . . . The difference is merely that of degree."

To that Virchow replied: "This is the objection which I make to the statements of Herr Nageli. . . . He not only wants us to extend the domain of mind to animals and plants, but also that we finally pass with our views of the nature of mental phenomena from the organic to the inorganic world. . . . If mental phenomena are at all costs to be brought in connection with those of the rest of the world, then one necessarily arrives at transferring first the physical phenomena as they are found in man and the highest organised vertebra to the lower and ever lower animals, and then to endow even plants with a soul; then it is the cell which feels and thinks, and finally there is a gradual transition even to the chemical atoms which hate and love each other, seek or avoid each other. . . . I do not object to atoms of carbon also having a mind . . . but I do not see anything by which it could be known. It is a mere play upon words. By declaring attraction and repulsion to be mental, psychological phenomena we simply throw the psychical overboard. . . . To us, the sum total of psychical phenomena is undoubtedly only

associated with certain animals and not with the whole of organic life, not even with all animals. This I declare without hesitation."

We must acknowledge that Virchow is in one respect perfectly right: ideas with a distinct meaning in language should remain distinct. One must not play with words; but neither must one shut his eyes to the fact that the psychical sensation of pleasure and pain presents a certain analogy to the chemical attraction and repulsion. Let us only dot the i, and then the two will appear as equally legitimate forms of the same Nature, as the equally intelligible predicate of the same subject. Only those who utterly refuse to connect the mental phenomena with those of the rest of the world will fail to perceive that the animal and chemical, the physical and psychical phenomena are common varieties of the great world process. And once more, gentlemen: The world is dialectical, as much one or homogeneous in essence as varied in the manner it appears; all distinction is only that of degree. The unity which Nageli defends is lost to him as soon as he lands in "the world of presentiment" and at "divine omniscience"; but that unity is already lost to Virchow when he merely arrives at the distinction between organic and inorganic; still more intolerable is to him the link between animal and man; and as for the opposition between body and soul,—this he wants to keep outside the province of debate altogether, as the bridging over of this opposition "in the head of the Socialist" was bound to cause an awful confusion and lead to the overthrow of all professorial wisdom.

### WORLD A COMPLEXITY OF PROCESSES.

From Engel's "Feuerbach" (Section 4).

According to Hegel the dialectic is the self-movement of the "Idea."

The Absolute Idea not only exists from eternity, but it is also the actual living soul of the whole existing world.

It develops from itself to itself, through all the preliminary stages.

Then it steps outside of itself, changing with nature itself, where it, without self-consciousness, is disguised as a necessity of nature, goes through a new development and, finally, in man himself, becomes self-consciousness.

This self-consciousness now works itself out into the higher stages from the lower forms of matter, until, finally, the Absolute Idea is again realised in the Hegelian philosophy.

According to Hegel, the dialectic development apparent in nature and history, that is (a causative connected progression from the lower to the higher), in spite of all zig-zag movements and momentary set-backs, is only the stereotype of the self-progression of the "Idea" from eternity, whither, one does not know, but independent at all events of the thought of any human brain.

This topsy-turvy ideology had to be put aside.



We conceived of ideas as materialistic, as pictures of real things, instead of real things as pictures of this or that stage of the Absolute Idea.

Thereupon the dialectic became reduced to knowledge of the universal laws of motion—of the outer world, as well as of the thought of man—two sets of laws which are identical as far as matter is concerned, but which differ as regards expression, in so far as the mind of man can employ them consciously, while, in nature, and, up to now, in human history, for the most part they accomplish themselves, unconsciously, in the form of external necessity, through an endless succession of apparent accidents. Hereupon, the dialectic of the "Idea" became itself merely the conscious reflex of the dialectic evolution of the real world, and, therefore, the dialectic of Hegel was placed upon its feet instead of on its head, where it had been standing before.

And this materialistic dialectic, which since that time has been our best tool and our sharpest weapon was discovered, not by us alone, but a German workman, Joseph Dietzgen, in a remarkable manner and utterly independent of us.

The great fundamental thought, namely, that the world is not to be considered as a complexity of ready made things, but as a complexity made up of processes, in which the apparently stable things, no less than the thought pictures in the brain—the idea—cause an unbroken chain of coming into being and passing away, in which, by means of all sorts of seeming accidents, and in spite of all momentary set-backs, there is carried out in the end a progressive development—this great foundation thought has, particularly since the time of Hegel, so dominated the thoughts of the mass of men that, generally speaking, it is now hardly denied.

But to acknowledge it in phrases and apply it in reality to each particular set of conditions which come up for examination are two different matters.

But if one proceeds steadily in his investigations from this historic point, then a stop is put, once and for all, to the demand for final solutions, and for external truths; one is firmly conscious of the necessary limitations of all acquired knowledge, of its hypothetical nature, owing to the circumstances under which it has been gained.

One cannot be imposed upon any longer by the inflated, insubstantial antitheses of the older metaphysics of true and false, good and evil, identical and differentiated, necessary and accidental; one knows that these antithesis have only a relative significance, that that which is recognised as true now, has its concealed and later developing false side, just as that which is recognised as false has its true side, by virtue of which it can later on prevail as the truth; that so-called necessity is made up of the merely accidental, and that the acknowledged accidental is the form behind which necessity conceals itself, and so on.

## QUANTITY INTO QUALITY.

### From Plekhanov's "Sudden Changes in Nature and History."

According to the picture in his (Marx's) mind, the history of mankind unrolled in a harmonious fashion, not fantastically; and he was the first to conceive such a harmonious picture. He was the first to show that economic evolution leads to political revolutions. Thanks to him, the contemporary revolutionary movement has an aim that is clearly fixed and a theoretical basis that has been strictly formulated. If these things are so, how can Tikhomirov fancy himself able, by a few loosely worded phrases concerning social construction, to prove the inconsistency of the revolutionary trends existing in Russia and elsewhere? One can only suppose that he has not taken the trouble to try and understand socialist doctrine.

Nowadays Tikhomirov is inspired with repugnance for "sudden catastrophes" and "forcible revolutions." That is his own affair; he is not the first to turn his back on revolution and will not be the last. But he is wrong in thinking that "sudden catastrophes" are impossible in nature and in human society. First of all, the "suddenness" of such catastrophes is a relative notion. What is sudden for one person is not sudden for another. For the ignorant an eclipse of the sun occurs suddenly, but it is not a sudden occurrence for an astronomer. The same thing applies to revolutions. These "political catastrophes" occur "suddenly" for ignorant persons and for the great multitude of self-satisfied philistines, but they are not sudden for one who has been watching the course of phenomena in the social environment. Furthermore, if Tikhomirov were to turn his attention to nature and history, even while contemplating them from the point of view of the theory he now holds, he would expose himself to a number of overwhelming surprises. He has made a mental note to the effect that in nature there are no jumps and that, if we leave the world of revolutionary mirages and come to the firm ground of reality, "we can only speak, scientifically, of the slow transformation of any given type of phenomenon." Nonetheless, nature makes jumps, without troubling herself about all these philippics against suddenness. Tikhomirov is certain that "the outworn ideas of Cuvier" are erroneous and that "brusque geological catastrophes" are nothing but a product of the imagination. Well, let us suppose that he is in the south of France, leading a sheltered existence, without any hint of alarms or perils. Then, suddenly, there comes an earthquake, like that of two years ago. The ground shakes violently, houses tumble down, the inhabitants run out terrified; in a word, there is a genuine catastrophe, indicating incredible heedlessness on the part of Mother Nature. Learning from this bitter experience, Tikhomirov is compelled to reconsider his geological concepts

and come to the conclusion that "the slow transformation of phenomena" (in this case, the phenomena of the earth's crust) does not exclude the possibility of changes of another order, changes which, from a certain outlook, may appear sudden and may seem to be produced violently.<sup>1</sup>

Now let us suppose that Tikhomirov puts a saucepan full of water on a stove. The water will remain water as long as its temperature is rising from 32 degrees to 212 degrees. He will have no occasion to be alarmed about any suddenness. Then will come a moment when the temperature reaches a critical point and, all of a sudden (what a terrible thing!), a catastrophe occurs; the water is changed into steam, just as if its imagination had been running on forcible revolutions.

Now Tikhomirov cools the water down, and the same strange story repeats itself at the other end of the scale. By slow degrees, at first, the temperature of the water falls, while the water remains water. Now comes a moment when the cooling-down reaches freezing point and the water is changed into ice, regardless of any theory that the idea of sudden revolutions is a false one.

Tikhomirov is watching the development of one of those insects which are subject to metamorphoses. The changes in the chrysalis go on slowly and, until the time arrives for a new order of things, the chrysalis remains a chrysalis. The observer rubs his hands joyfully, saying: "Here everything is going on as it should. Neither the social organism nor the animal organism experiences any of those sudden upsets whose existence I have been forced to recognise in the inorganic world. At anyrate, when devoting herself to the creation of living beings, nature has recovered her sobriety." Soon, however, his happiness is dashed. One fine day the chrysalis undergoes a "forcible revolution," splits up the back and makes a new entry into the world as a butterfly. Thus Tikhomirov has been compelled to admit that even the organic world is not insured against "sudden changes."

It would be exactly the same if Tikhomirov were to direct his attention to his own evolution. Beyond that, he would discover there a similar sharp turn, a like revolutionary change. He would have to remember some particular drop which filled the cup of his impressions to the brim and made it run over, so that he was

<sup>1</sup> Because the geological doctrines of Cuvier have been exploded, it does not follow that science has proved the general impossibility of geological catastrophes or revolutions. The attempt to give such a proof would conflict with widely known phenomena; for instance, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, etc. What science has to do is to explain these phenomena as the outcome of the cumulative action of certain forces in nature whose slowly progressive influences can be watched from moment to moment. In other words, geology has to explain the "revolutions" that affect the earth's crust, as the outcome of the "evolution" undergone by this same crust. Sociology has to work along the same lines, and, doing so, with Hegel and Marx as spokesmen, has achieved successes akin to those achieved by geology.

transformed from a more or less hesitating defender of the revolution into its more or less sincere opponent.

Tikhomirov and I will set to work at addition. We will take the number five and, being thoroughly respectable persons, we will add to it one by one "gradually," making six, seven, eight. Up to nine everything goes well. But when, after this, we want to add another unit, a disaster occurs. Suddenly, without any plausible reason, our units get changed into a ten. The like misfortune befalls us when we pass from tens to a hundred.

Tikhomirov and I will not be able to enjoy music, for here there are too many sudden transitions of all kinds which will put our "conceptions" to flight.

To all Tikhomirov's confused arguments concerning "forcible revolutions," contemporary revolutionists can answer by asking this simple question: "What are you going to do about those sudden upsets which have already occurred in real life and which, in any case, represent periods of destruction? Are we to declare them null and void, or are we to regard them as the work of frivolous and futile people whose actions are not worth the attention of a serious-minded sociologist?" Whatever we may decide to do about such phenomena, it must certainly be admitted that history records many violent revolutions and political catastrophes. Why, then, should Tikhomirov imagine that any one who thinks that similar phenomena may occur in the future is cherishing "erroneous social conceptions"?

History makes no jumps! This is perfectly true. On the other hand, it is equally true that history has made a number of jumps, has witnessed a number of violent revolutions. Instances could be quoted in abundance. What is the meaning of this contradiction? Only that the former of the two theses has not been correctly phrased, and that is why it is so often misunderstood. What ought to have been said was that history never makes jumps unless the way has been prepared for them. There can be no sudden change without a sufficient cause, and this cause is to be found in the previous march of social evolution. But, inasmuch as this evolution never ceases in societies that are in course of development, we may say that history is continually engaged in preparing for such sudden changes and revolutions. It goes on doing this assiduously and imperturbably; it works slowly; but the results of its efforts, these sudden changes, these political catastrophes, are absolutely inevitable.

The transformation of type undergone by the French bourgeoisie was a slow process. The bourgeois of the time of the Regency differed in many respects from the bourgeois of the days of Louis XI., but, speaking generally, the one and the other belonged to the same type, that of the burgher of the old regime. As the centuries passed he had grown richer, better educated, had developed more extensive needs, but he had not ceased to be the

plebeian who had always and everywhere to give ground before the noble. Then came the year 1789, when the bourgeois raised his head proudly. A few years more, and he had become the king of the castle. How has this change been effected? "With torrents of blood," to the rolling of the drums, accompanied by "explosions of gunpowder"—though not by explosions of dynamite, since high explosives had not yet been invented. The bourgeois forced France to undergo a "period of destruction," recking not of the fact that in days to come there would be a pedant to proclaim that forcible revolutions are a "false conception."

Very slowly there was a change of type in Russian social conditions. The petty principedoms, whose internecine quarrels had dismembered the country, disappeared; the boyars submitted to the authority of the Tsar and became simple nobles, compelled, like all their class, to devote themselves to the service of the crown. Muscovy subjugated the Tartar khanates, annexed Siberia and the border countries of the south, but still remained the capital of an Asiatic realm. Then Peter the Great appeared and effected a violent revolution in the life of the country. A new period of Russian history, the European period, began. The slavophiles reviled Peter as "antichrist," precisely because he effected a sudden revolution. They declared that, in his eagerness for change, he had forgotten the need for gradual evolution, for a slow transformation of the social system. But everyone competent to think must surely be able to understand that the sudden overturning of the extant order effected by Peter the Great was a change imposed by the historical evolution of Russia, which had paved the way for the revolutionary transformation.

Quantitative changes, accumulating by slow degrees, become in the end qualitative changes. These transitions occur by jumps and cannot occur in any other way.

"Gradualists" of one kind or another, those who make a dogma of moderation and of meticulous order, cannot understand this phenomenon, although it was long ago brought into relief by German philosophy. Here, as on many other occasions, we shall do well to quote Hegel, who certainly cannot be charged with a passion for "revolutionary activity." He wrote: "The ordinary notion of the appearance or disappearance of anything is the notion of a gradual appearance and disappearance. Nevertheless, there are transformations of being which are not only changes from one quantity to another, but also changes from the quantitative to the qualitative; such a transformation is an interruption of 'gradual becoming' and gives rise to a kind of being qualitatively different from the preceding. Every time that there is an interruption of 'gradual becoming,' there occurs a jump in the course of evolution, after which the place of one phenomenon has been occupied by another. Underlying the theory of gradualness is the idea that that which makes its appearance already exists effectively, and only

remains imperceptible because it is so very small. In like manner, when we speak of the gradual disappearance of a phenomenon, we represent to ourselves that this disappearance is an accomplished fact and that the phenomenon which takes the place of the extant one already exists, but that neither the one nor the other is as yet perceptible. . . . In this way, however, we are really suppressing all appearance and all disappearance. . . . To explain the appearance or the disappearance of a given phenomenon by the gradualness of the transformation is absurdly tautological, for it implies that we consider as having already appeared or disappeared that which is actually in course of appearing or disappearing."<sup>1</sup> This is equivalent to saying that if you had to explain the origin of the State you would simply imagine a microscopic organisation of the State which, gradually becoming larger, would at length make people aware of its existence. In the same way, if you had to explain the disappearance of primitive clan relations, you would suppose their becoming by degrees more and more minute until they ceased to be visible, and then the trick would be done. I need hardly say that by such ways of thinking we shall not get far in the sciences. One of Hegel's greatest merits was that he purged the doctrine of evolution of these absurdities. But what does Tikhomirov care about Hegel and his merits? Tikhomirov has told us, once for all, that the theories of the Western World are not applicable to Russia.

Notwithstanding his views regarding forcible revolutions and political catastrophes, we can rest assured that, at the present moment, history is preparing, in the most advanced countries, a revolutionary change of altogether exceptional importance, and one which, we may presume, will be achieved by force. This change will affect the way in which products are distributed. Economic evolution has brought into being titanic forces of production; and, if these forces are to be kept at work, there must be a particular kind of organisation of production. The forces in question can only be applied in large-scale industrial establishments where work is carried on collectively; they necessitate social production.

The individual appropriation of products, deriving from the utterly different economic conditions of a period when petty industry and petty agriculture were dominant, is in flagrant conflict with this social method of production. Thanks to the extant methods of appropriation, the products of the social labour of the workers become the private property of entrepreneurs. This primary economic contradiction is the cause of all the other social and political contradictions in contemporary society. It is a contradiction which becomes ever more flagrant. The entrepreneurs cannot dispense with the social organisation of production, for this is the source of their wealth. Nay, competition forces them to extend the social organisation of production to branches of industry where it

<sup>1</sup> Wissenschaft der Logik, Vol. I., pp. 313-314, in the Nuremberg edition of 1812.

does not yet exist. The great industrial enterprises crowd out the petty producers, and in this way bring about an increase in the number of the working class and intensify its power. The fatal denouement is at hand. In order to do away with the contradiction between the extant method of production and the extant method of distribution, a contradiction harmful to the workers, these must seize political power, which is at present in the hands of the bourgeoisie. If you like to phrase it thus, you may say that the workers must bring about a "political catastrophe." Economic evolution is necessarily leading to a political revolution; and this latter, in its turn, will be the cause of important changes in the economic structure of society. It is by slow degrees that the method of production assumes a social character; but the appropriate change in the method of distribution will be the outcome of a forcible revolution.

That is how the historical movement is proceeding, not here in Russia, but in the West. Tikhomirov, although he is so much concerned to "watch the powerful civilisation of France," has absolutely no "conception" of the social life of the West.

Forcible revolutions, "torrents of blood," scaffolds and executions, gunpowder and dynamite—these are distressing phenomena. What are you going to do about them, since they are inevitable? Force has always been the midwife of an old society pregnant with a new one. That is what Marx said, and he is not the only one to have such thoughts. F. C. Schlosser, the historian, was convinced that only "by fire and sword" are great revolutions in the destiny of mankind accomplished.<sup>1</sup> Why is there this distressing necessity? Whose fault is it? Can it be that truth is not yet all-powerful in this world of ours?

Not yet! The reason is to be found in the difference between the interests of the different classes of society. For one of these classes, it is advantageous, and even indispensable, that social relations shall be remodelled. For the other class, it is advantageous, and even indispensable, to oppose any such remodelling. To the members of one class, the proposed remodelling promises happiness and freedom; to the members of the other class it will bring the abolition of their privileged position and even their total suppression

<sup>1</sup> His profound knowledge of history actually inclined Schlosser to accept the "outworn geological conceptions" of Cuvier. In his *Geschichte des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts*, he writes regarding Turgot's plans for reform—plans which still arouse the admiration of philistines: "These plans embraced in their scope all the main advantages subsequently gained by France through the revolution. The advantages could only be secured by a revolution, for the Turgot Ministry showed itself a prey to illusion. Despite experience and history, it expected that, simply by issuing ordinances, it would be able to transform a social organisation which had come into being in the course of time, and was maintained by solid ties. Radical reforms, whether in nature or in history, are only possible when all the extant has been annihilated by fire, sword and destruction." (Cf. the French translation, *Histoire du XVIIIème siècle*, second edition, St. Petersburg, 1868, Vol. III, p. 361). Tikhomirov will assure us that this German scientist must have had a bee in his bonnet!

as a privileged class. What class is there which does not fight to maintain its own existence? What class is there which has no instinct of self-preservation? The social regime profitable to any given class, seems to the members of that class, not merely just, but the only possible one. The members of this class consider that any attempt to change the extant order is an attempt to destroy the foundations of human society. They think that they are called upon to defend these foundations, even by force. Hence "torrents of blood," hence the clash of arms.

Besides, the socialists, when meditating on the approaching social revolution, can console themselves with the idea that the more widely their "subversive" doctrines are diffused, the more the working class has been developed and organised and disciplined—the fewer will be the victims in the inevitable "catastrophe."

Nevertheless, the triumph of the proletariat, by putting an end to the exploitation of man by man, and thus to the division of society into a class of exploiters and a class of exploited, will make civil wars not only useless, but impossible. Thenceforward, mankind will advance by the sole "power of truth," and will no longer have occasion for the argument of the mailed fist.

## NEGATION OF THE NEGATION.

### THESIS, ANTI-THESIS, SYNTHESIS.

#### From Marx's "Poverty of Philosophy."

"The economic categories are only the theoretical expressions, the abstractions, of the social relations of production."

Men make cloth, linen, silk-stuffs, in certain determined relations of production.

But these determined social relations are as much produced by men as are the cloth, linen, etc.

The social relations are intimately attached to the productive forces.

In acquiring new productive forces, men change their mode of production, their manner of gaining a living, they change all their social relations.

The windmill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill, society with the industrial capitalist.

The same men who establish social relations conformably with their material productivity, produce also the principles, the ideas, the categories, conformably with their social relations.

Thus these ideas, these categories, are not more eternal than the relations they express.

They are historical and transitory products.

There is a continual movement of growth in the productive forces, of destruction in the social relations, of formation in ideas; there is nothing immutable but the abstraction of movement—*mors immortalis*.

Economists explain to us how production is carried on in the relation given, but what they do not explain is how these relations

are produced, that is to say the historical movement which has created them.

The material of the economists is the active and busy life of men.

But from the moment that we cease to follow the historical movement of the relations of production of which the categories are nothing but the theoretical expression, from the moment that we see in these categories only spontaneous thoughts and ideas, independent of the real relations, we are forced to assign the movement of pure reason as the origin of these thoughts and ideas.

How does pure reason, eternal, impersonal, give birth to these thoughts?

How does it proceed in order to produce them?

Hegelianism would say: Reason is distinguished in itself from itself.

What does this expression mean?

Impersonal reason having outside of itself neither ground upon which to stand, nor object to which it can be opposed, nor subject with which it can be composed, finds itself forced to make a somersault in posing, opposing and composing itself—position, opposition, composition.

To speak Greek we have the thesis, the antithesis and the synthesis.

Affirmation, negation, and negation of the negation.

It is the language of this reason so pure, separated from the individual.

Instead of the ordinary individual, with his ordinary manner of speaking and thinking, we have nothing but this ordinary manner pure and simple, minus the individual.

Is there occasion to be surprised that everything, in the final abstraction, because it is abstraction and not analysis, presents itself in the state of logical category?

Is there need to be astonished that in casting down little by little all which constitutes the individuality of a house, that in making abstraction of the materials of which it is composed, of the form which distinguishes it, you would come to have nothing but a body—that in making abstraction of the limits of this body you would very soon have nothing but empty space—that, finally, in making abstraction of the dimensions of this space you would finish by having nothing more than quantity pure and simple, the logical category?

In consequence of abstracting all the so-called accidents, animate and inanimate, men or things, we are right in saying that in the final abstraction we have as substance the logical categories.

Thus the metaphysicians who imagine that in making these abstractions they make an analysis, and who in proportion as they detach more and more from certain objects imagine that they approach the point of penetrating them these metaphysicians have

in their turn the right to say that the things of this earth are embroideries of which the logical categories form the canvas.

That all which exists, that all which lives on land and in water, may, by force of abstraction, be reduced to a logical category; that in this fashion the whole of the real world may be drowned in the world of abstractions, in the world of logical categories, who can wonder?

For Hegel there is no longer "history according to the order of time"; there is only "the succession of the ideas in the understanding."

He thinks to construct the world by the movement of thought, while all that he does is to reconstruct systematically, and range under the absolute method, the thoughts which are in the heads of everybody.

We all know that competition was engendered by feudal monopoly.

Thus, primarily, competition has been the contrary of monopoly, and not monopoly the contrary of competition.

Therefore modern monopoly is not a simple antithesis; it is, on the contrary, the true synthesis.

Thesis: Feudal monopoly anterior to competition.

Antithesis: Competition.

Synthesis: Modern monopoly, which is the negation of feudal monopoly in so far as it supposes the regime of competition, and which is the negation of competition in so far as it is monopoly. Thus modern monopoly, bourgeois monopoly is synthetic monopoly, the negation of the negation, the unity of contraries.

It is monopoly in its pure, normal, rational state.

In practical life we find not only competition, monopoly, and their antagonisms, but also their synthesis, which is not a formula but a movement.

Monopoly produces competition, competition produces monopoly.

The monopolists are made by competition, the competitors become monopolists.

If the monopolists restrict competition among themselves by partial association, competition grows among the workers; and the more the mass of the workers grows as against the monopolists of one nation, the more keen becomes the competition between the monopolists of different nations.

The synthesis is that monopoly can only maintain itself by continually passing through the struggle of competition.

## PART 3.

### PHILOSOPHICAL MATERIALISM ON PHILOSOPHY.

#### From Engels' "Anti-Duhring" (Introduction).

When we consider and reflect upon nature at large, or the history of mankind, or our own intellectual activity, at first we see the picture of an endless entanglement of relations and reactions, permutations and combinations, in which nothing remains what, where, and as it was, but everything moves, changes, comes into being and passes away.

We see, therefore, at first the picture as a whole, with its individual parts still more or less kept in the background.

We observe the movements, transitions, connections, rather than the things that move, combine, and are connected.

This primitive, naive, but intrinsically correct conception of the world is that of ancient Greek philosophy, and was first clearly formulated by Heraclitus; everything is and is not, for everything is fluid, is constantly changing, constantly coming into being and passing away.

But this conception, correctly as it expresses the general character of the picture of appearance as a whole, does not suffice to explain the details of which this picture is made up, and so long as we do not understand these, we have not a clear idea of the picture as a whole.

In order to understand these details we must detach them from their natural or historical connection and examine each one separately, its nature, special causes, effects, etc. This is primarily the task of natural science and historical research; branches of science which the Greeks of classical times, on very good grounds, relegated to a subordinate position, because they had first of all to collect materials for these sciences to work upon. A certain amount of natural work and historical material must be collected before there can be any critical analysis, comparison, and arrangement into classes, orders and species.

The foundations of the exact natural sciences were, therefore, first worked out by the Greeks of the Alexandrian period and later on, in the Middle Ages by the Arabs.

Real natural science dates from the second half of the 15th century, and thence onward it has advanced with constantly increasing rapidity.

The analysis of nature into its individual parts, the grouping of the different natural processes and objects in definite classes, the study of the internal anatomy of organised bodies in their manifold forms—these were the fundamental conditions of the

giant strides in our knowledge of nature that have been made during the last few hundred years.

But this method of work has also left us as a legacy the habit of observing natural objects and processes in isolation, apart from their connection with the vast whole; of observing them in repose, not in motion; as constants, not as essentially variables; in their death, not in their life.

And when this way of looking at things was transferred by Bacon and Locke from the natural science to philosophy, it begot the narrow, metaphysical mode of thought peculiar to the 18th century.

To the metaphysician, things and their mental reflexes, ideas, are isolated, are to be considered one after the other and apart from one another, are objects of investigation fixed, rigid, given once for all. He thinks in absolutely irreconcilable antithesis. "His communication is 'yea, yea; nay, nay': for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." For him a thing exists, or it does not exist; a thing cannot at the same time be itself and something else. Positive and negative absolutely exclude one another; cause and effect stand in a rigid antithesis one to the other.

At first sight this mode of thinking seems to us very luminous, because it is that of so-called sound commonsense. But sound commonsense, respectable fellow that he is, in the homely realm of his own four walls, has very wonderful adventures directly he ventures out into the wide world of research.

And the metaphysical mode of thought, justifiable and necessary as it is in a number of domains whose extent varies according to the nature of the particular object of investigation, sooner or later reaches a limit, beyond which it becomes one-sided, restricted, abstract, lost in insoluble contradictions.

In the contemplation of individual things it forgets the connection between them; in the contemplation of their existence, it forgets the beginning and end of that existence; of their repose, it forgets their motion. It cannot see the wood for the trees.

For every-day purposes we know and can say, for instance, whether an animal is alive or not. But upon closer inquiry, we find that this is, in many cases, a very complex question, as the jurists know very well. They have cudgelled their brains in vain to discover a rational limit beyond which the killing of a child in its mother's womb is murder. It is just as impossible to determine absolutely the moment of death, for physiology proves that death is not an instantaneous, momentary phenomenon, but a very protracted process. In like manner, every organised being is every moment the same and not the same; every moment it assimilates matter from without and gets rid of other matter; every moment some cells of its body die and others build themselves anew; in a longer or shorter period the matter of its body is completely re-



newed, and is replaced by other molecules of matter, so that every organised being is always itself, and yet something other than itself.

Further, we find upon closer investigation that the two poles of an antithesis, positive and negative, for example, are as inseparable as they are opposed, and that despite all their opposition, they mutually interpenetrate.

And we find, in like manner, that cause and effect are conceptions that only hold good in their application to individual cases; but as soon as we consider the individual cases in their general connection with the universe as a whole, they run into each other, and they become confounded when we contemplate that universal action and reaction in which causes and effects are eternally changing places, so that what is effect here and now will be cause there and then, and vice versa.

None of these processes and modes of thought enters into the framework of metaphysical reasoning.

Dialectics, on the other hand, comprehends things and their representations, ideas, in their essential connection, concatenation, motion, origin and ending. Such processes before-mentioned are therefore so many corroborations of its own method of procedure.

Nature is the proof of dialectics, and it must be said for modern science that it has furnished this proof with very rich materials increasing daily, and thus has shown that, in the last resort, nature works dialectically and not metaphysically; that she does not move in eternal oneness of a perpetually recurring circle, but goes through a real historical evolution.

In this connection Darwin must be named before all others.

He dealt the metaphysical conception of nature the heaviest blow by his proof that all organic beings, plants, animals, and man himself, are the products of a process of evolution going on through millions of years.

But the naturalists who have learned to think dialectically are few and far between, hence this conflict of the discoveries made and preconceived modes of thinking explains the endless confusion now reigning in theoretical natural science, the despair of teachers as well as learners, of authors and readers alike.

An exact representation of the universe, of its evolution, of the development of mankind, and of the reflection of this evolution in the minds of men, can therefore only be obtained by the methods of dialectic with its constant regard to the innumerable actions and reactions of life and death, of progressive and retrogressive changes.

And in this spirit the new German philosophy has worked.

Kant began his career by resolving the stable solar system of Newton and its external duration, after the famous initial impulse had once been given, into the result of an historic process, the formation of the sun and all the planets out of a rotating nebulous mass.

From this he at the same time drew the conclusion that, given this origin of the solar system, its future death followed of necessity. His theory half a century later was established mathematically by

Laplace, and a half a century after that the spectroscope proved the existence in space of such incandescent masses of gas in various stages of condensation.

This new German philosophy culminated in the Hegelian system.

In this system—and herein is its great merit—for the first time the whole world, natural, historical, intellectual, is represented as a process, that is, as in constant motion, change, transformation, development; and the attempt is made to trace out the internal connection that makes a continuous whole of all this movement and development.

From this point of view the history of mankind no longer appeared as a wild whirl of senseless deeds of violence, all equally condemnable at the mature judgment seat of philosophic reason, and which are best forgotten as quickly as possible; but as the process of evolution of man himself.

It was now the task of the intellect to follow the gradual march of this process through all its devious ways, and to trace out the inner laws running through all its apparently accidental phenomena.

That the Hegelian system did not solve the problem it here propounded is immaterial.

### THE CRITERION OF PRACTICE.

From "Materialism and Empirio-Criticism" (Lenin).

To ask outside the realm of practice whether "the objective truth corresponds to human reason" is scholasticism, says Marx in the 2nd Thesis on Feuerbach. The best refutation of Kantianism and Humean agnosticism, as well as of other philosophic whims, is practice, repeats Engels. The success of our actions proves the correspondence of our perception with the objective nature of the objects perceived.

Human practice proves the correctness of the materialist theory of knowledge, said Marx and Engels, declaring as "scholastic" and "philosophic legerdemain" all attempts to solve fundamental epistemological questions which ignore practice. (Page 110, Vol. XIII, Col. Works.)

From the standpoint of life, practice ought to be the first and fundamental criterion of the theory of knowledge. It inevitably leads to materialism, brushing aside the infinite inventions of professional scholasticism. (Page 113, Ibid.)

Of course we must not forget that the criterion of practice, in the nature of things, neither confirms nor refutes completely any human presentations. This criterion is sufficiently indefinite not to allow any human knowledge to become "absolute," and at the same time sufficiently definite to wage a bitter struggle with all varieties of idealism and agnosticism.

If that which our practice confirms, is the sole, ultimate and objective truth, then it follows that the sole path to this truth is the road of science which stands by the materialist creed.

Practice, i.e., the development of capitalist countries in the last few decades, actually proves the objective truth of the whole social and economic theory of Marx in general, and not only some of its specific formulations.

The sole inference from the proposition upheld by Marxists, that the theory of Marx is the objective truth, is this: Following in the direction of the Marxian theory, we shall draw nearer and nearer to the objective truth (without exhausting it); following another path we shall arrive at confusion and falsehood. (Page 114.)

Lenin quotes Rucker: "A man peering into a darkened room may unclearly discern the objects, but if he does not stumble over the furniture and does not walk into a looking-glass as in to a door, that means that he sees correctly."

Lenin adds: "The substance of his position is this—the theory of physics is a copy, becoming more exact in time, of objective reality." (Page 235.)

### MATTER AND MATERIALISM.

"Matter is a philosophic category which refers to the objective reality given to man in his sensations, a reality which is copied, photographed and reflected by our sensations, but which exists independently of them. To say that such a doctrine can become antiquated, is childish prattle." (Page 101-2.)

"The acceptance or rejection of the notion of matter presents a problem concerning the confidence of man in the evidence of his sense organs, a problem which bears on the question of the source of cognition, one which has been asked, debated and answered from the very inception of philosophy, one which can be elaborated in a thousand ways by professorial circus-clowns but which can no more become obsolete than the question as to whether the source of human cognition is sight, hearing and smell. To regard our sensations as copies of the external world is to admit an objective truth, that is, to hold a materialist view." (Page 102.)

Materialism takes matter as the PRIUS, regarding consciousness, reason and sensation as derivative because in a well-expressed form it is connected only with the higher forms of (organic) matter. (Page 26.)

There still remains much to investigate, much to find out about how matter, devoid of sensation, is related to matter which, though composed of the same atoms (or electrons), is yet endowed with a definite faculty of sensation. Materialism by putting the problem clearly, gives impetus to continual experimentation, thus making possible the solution. (Page 27.)

Consciousness and thought are products of the brain of man. The material, perceptual universe to which we ourselves belong is the only reality, and our consciousness and thought, however supernatural they may seem, are only evidences of a material bodily organ, the brain.

Matter is not a product of mind, but mind itself is only the highest product of matter. (Engels is quoted by Lenin, page 63.)

Matter exists independently of our sense perceptions. (Page 67.)

For the materialist the world is richer, livelier, more varied than it actually seems, for with each scientific step taken in advance new parts of it are discovered. (Page 101.)

Is objective reality assumed as given us when we see red or perceive hard? If one holds that it is not given he relapses into subjectivism. If one holds that it is given, materialism necessarily follows. (Page 101.)

Matter is that which, acting upon our sense organs, produces sensation; matter is the objective reality given to us in sensation. (Page 116.)

Matter is primary, spirit secondary. (Page 116.)

Of course, the contradistinction between matter and mind has an absolute significance only between the boundaries of a very limited region—in this case exclusively within the limits of the fundamental epistemological problem of what was to be considered primary and what secondary. Beyond these bounds the relativity of the contradistinction is unquestionable. (Page 118.)

Matter is the boundary, beyond which the mind cannot pass. Mind is a product of matter but matter is more than a product of mind. (Page 206.)

Matter, nature, being, the physical, is the primary entity—and spirit, consciousness, sensation, mind, is the secondary entity.

The genius of Marx and Engels expressed itself in that they despised the pseudo-erudite play upon new words, wise terms, cunning isms. They simply and explicitly said that there was a materialist and idealist division in philosophy and between them there are various shades of agnosticism. (Page 117.)

### SUBSTANCE.

A word which the professors like to employ for the sake of "importance," instead of the clear and more exact word "matter." (Page 138.)

### MATTER HAS "DISAPPEARED"!

When the physicists say "matter disappears," they mean by this that until the present, the natural sciences had reduced their measurements of the physical realm to three ultimate concepts—matter, electricity and ether; and that now only the last two remain, for they have finally succeeded in reducing matter to electricity.<sup>1</sup>

The atom is explained as being the simulacrum of the infinitely small solar system within which the negative electrons move around the positive electron with a definite and immeasurably immense velocity. Instead of scores of elements they consequently have

<sup>1</sup> To a similar statement by Engels, Prof. Haldane adds this footnote: "This has certainly been verified in the sense that for modern physics the properties of particles can be regarded as repulsions and attractions in the space around them, which is also full of radiation. On the other hand, the idea of the ether has proved so full of internal contradictions that the word is now little used."—L.S.

succeeded in reducing the physical realm to two or three elements (in so far as the positive and negative electron constitute two kinds of essentially distinct matter). Hence the natural sciences lead to the "unity of matter"; this is the real meaning of the disappearance of matter, of its change into electricity, etc., which baffles so many people.

"Matter disappears" means that matter in the form of the limit which we have known up to now vanishes, as our knowledge penetrates deeper; those properties of matter which before seemed absolute, immutable and primary (impenetrability, inertia, mass, etc.), disappear and become relative, belonging only to certain states of matter. For the sole "property" of matter—with the recognition of which materialism is vitally connected—is the property of being objective reality, of existing outside of our cognition. (Page 220.)

They tell us that matter has disappeared and wish to draw epistemological conclusions therefrom. "And has thought itself remained?" we ask. If not, if with the disappearance of the brain and nervous system our ideas and sensations, too, have disappeared, then it means that everything has disappeared. So does the argument together with whatever "thought"—or thoughtlessness—there is in it!

If thought has remained, if you assume that with the disappearance of matter, thought, idea, sensations, etc., do not disappear, then you have secretly embraced the idealist viewpoint.

This happens to people who wish, for "economy's sake," to conceive of motion without matter, for by implication, from the very fact that they continue their discourse, they recognise the existence of thought after the disappearance of matter.

This means that a very simple or very complex system of idealism is taken as fundamental; very simple, if the position reduces to solipsism (I exist and the world is only my sensation); very complex, if instead of the thought, idea and sensation of a living man, a dead abstraction is posited, that is, no particular thought, no particular idea, no particular sensation, but thought in general (the Absolute Idea, the Universal Will, etc.), sensation as an indeterminate "element," the "psychical" which replaces the whole of physical nature, etc., etc.

Among the varieties of idealism there may be thousands of peculiar shades and kinds and it is always possible to add a thousand and first shade. To the author of this thousand and first puppet-system (empirio-monism, for instance) its difference from all the other varieties will seem to be very momentous. From the point of view of materialism, however, these distinctions are totally unimportant.

Important only is the point of departure. Important only is that the attempt to conceive motion without matter, smuggles in thought separate from matter—this is idealism. (Page 227.)

## MOTION.

The dialectic materialist regards motion as the inseparable property of matter. (Page 229.)

## THOUGHT.

Thought is the function of the brain. (Page 65.)

"Thought is real but not material" (Lenin). The pink elephants in the thoughts of a drunkard are not material.—L.S.

## MIND.

The existence of mind is shown to be dependent on that of the body—mind is declared to be secondary, a function of the brain, or a reflection of the outer world. (Page 66.)

## PERCEPTIONS.

Perceptions, that is, images of the external world, are effects of external objects on our sense-organs. (Page 65.)

## SENSATION.

Sensation is a result of the action of matter on our sense-organs. (Page 34.)

Sensation is nothing but a direct connection of the mind with the external world; it is the transformation of energy of external excitation into a mental state. (Page 31.)

Sensation, thought, consciousness, are the highest products of matter organised in a certain way. This is the doctrine of materialism in general, and of Marx and Engels in particular. (Page 34.)

Sensation is a reflection of the outer world. (Page 38.)

Sensation is a function of matter organised in a certain way. (Page 42.)

Sensation is an image of the outer world. (Page 42.)

Sensation is the result of the action of an objectively existing thing-in-itself upon our sense-organs. (Page 92.)

Sensation is a subjective image of an objective world. (Page 92.)

Sensations are copies of the external world. (Page 103.)

If bodies are reduced to "complexes of sensations" then it inevitably follows that the "world is my idea," and it is impossible to arrive at the existence of other selves, except myself, i.e., solipsism. (Page 23.)

If sensation exists without matter, then thought exists without a brain—a brainless philosophy.

## SPACE AND TIME.

Having recognised the existence of objective reality, that is, of moving matter, independently of our mind, materialism must also inevitably recognise the objective reality of space and time.

Kantianism, and idealism, regard space and time not as objective reality, but as forms of human understanding.

"Space and time," says Feuerbach, "are not simple forms of phenomena, but essential conditions of existence.

Just as things or bodies are not mere appearances, not complexes of sensation, but objective realities which act on our senses, so space and time are not mere forms of appearances, but objectively real forms of being.

There is nothing in the world but matter in motion, and matter cannot move save in space and time.

Human conceptions of space and time are relative, but on the basis of those relative conceptions we arrive at absolute truth. These relative conceptions in their development follow the line of absolute truth and continually approach it.

The mutability of human ideas in regard to space and time no more refutes the objective reality of either than the mutability of scientific knowledge concerning the structure and forms of matter in motion refutes the objective reality of the outer world. (Page 143.)

Are our relative conceptions of space and time approximations to real forms of being? Or are these only products of the developing and harmonising human mind? This, and this only, is the fundamental problem of the theory of knowledge on which the fundamental philosophic schools divide. (Page 143.)

"The fundamental forms of all being," says Engels, "are space and time; being outside of time is as much of an absurdity as being outside of space." (Page 144.)

The existence of nature in time which is measured in millions of years prior to the existence of man shows how absurd is the idealist theory.

Man would never have adapted himself to his environment if his sensations had not given him an objective representation of it.

The doctrine of space and time are inseparably connected with the solution of the fundamental question of the theory of knowledge: are our sensations copies of bodies and things, or are bodies complexes of our sensations? (Page 146.)

Natural science does not transcend the bounds of space and time, leaving this occupation to the professors of reactionary philosophy.

Natural science does not doubt that the electron—the atom of electricity—exists in three-dimensional space, and hence, though they are so small that we cannot see them, nevertheless, must exist in three-dimensional space. (Page 147.)

The materialists, recognising the actual world, i.e., matter, which is perceived by us as the objective reality, have a right to infer that no spectral human phantasm is real for any purpose whatsoever, so long as it is beyond time and space.

Philosophical idealism itself is only a thinly disguised ghost-story. (Page 149.)

Physics, as such, accepts the phenomenal world as external to, and for its purposes, independent of, the mind of the investigator. (Page 150.)

Non-spatial and non-temporal beings which are invented by the clergy and are given credence by the ignorant fancy of the downtrodden mass are products of a diseased mind, artful deceptions of philosophical idealism—bad products of a bad social order. (Page 152.)

### PRINCIPLES.

How are subjective principles derived? From thought itself? No! These forms can never be created by thought or derived from it, but only from the external world.

Principles are not the starting points of investigation, but the conclusion of it. They are not to be applied to Nature and History, but are derived from them.

Nature and Humanity are not steered by principles, but principles are, on the other hand, only correct insofar as they correspond to nature and history. (Page 22.)

### FREEDOM AND NECESSITY.

Engels says "Hegel was the first man to give a proper explanation of the relation of freedom and necessity. In his eyes freedom is the recognition of necessity. Necessity is blind only insofar as it is not understood."

Freedom does not consist in an imaginary independence of natural laws, but in a knowledge of these laws and in the possibility then derived of applying them intelligently to given ends. This is true both as regards nature and as regards those forces which control the spiritual and physical existence of man himself—two classes of laws which we can distinguish as an abstraction but cannot separate in reality.

Freedom of the will consists in nothing but the ability to come to a decision when one is in possession of a knowledge of the facts.

The freer the judgment of a man, then, in relation to a given subject of discussion, the more necessary is it that he arrive at a positive decision.

Freedom, therefore, consists in a mastery over ourselves and external nature founded upon the knowledge of the necessities of nature.

1. Engels recognises the laws of external nature and the necessity of nature.

2. Engels starts with the knowledge and volition of man on one side, and the necessity of nature on the other, and says that the necessity of nature is primary and that of human volition and consciousness secondary. The latter must operate in conformity with the former.

3. Engels recognises the existence of blind necessity, a necessity which is not known to man.

To have knowledge of the existence of "unknown" necessity—is this not "mysticism," "metaphysics," "recognition of fetishes" and "idols"?

No, it is a similar argument concerning the objectivity of nature and the transformation of the "thing-in-itself" into the "thing-for-us."

The development of consciousness in each individual and the development of the collective knowledge of humanity at large shows us at each step the transformation of the unknown (thing-in-itself), "necessity-in-itself" into "necessity-known-to-us."

The world and its laws are absolutely knowable to man, but they can never be completely known. We do not know natural necessity in the phenomena of the weather, and to that extent we are slaves of the weather. Nevertheless, without knowledge of this necessity, we know that it exists.

Whence this knowledge? Whence the knowledge that things exist outside of knowledge and independent of it? Only from the historical development of our knowledge in the course of which every man has learned millions of times that his ignorance gives way to knowledge when an object acts on his sense-organs and vice versa; that knowledge becomes ignorance when the possibility of such action is eliminated.

4. In the abovementioned argument Engels palpably applies the "salto-vitale" method in philosophy, that is, he makes a leap from theory to practice. For Engels the whole of human practice is part of the theory of knowledge, thus giving an objective criterion of truth. Until we acquire knowledge of the laws of nature, which exist and act independently of our mind, we are slaves of "blind necessity." When we acquire knowledge of laws which act—as Marx repeated a thousand times—independently of our volition and our consciousness, we acquire mastery of nature.

The domination over nature which manifests itself in human practice is a result of an accurate objective "reflection" within the mind of man, of the phenomena of nature, and is proof that this reflection within the bounds of practice expresses an objective, absolute and eternal truth. (Page 156.)

### CAUSE AND EFFECT.

The recognition of the fact of natural order and the approximate reflection of that order in the mind of man is materialism.

Engels does not admit a shadow of a doubt about the existence (objective) of law, order, causality and necessity in nature.

He says: "In order to study these individual phenomena we are obliged to take them out of their natural or social connections and examine each of them by itself according to its own form and particular origin and development." (Page 125.)

"Cause and effect are concepts which can only realise themselves in relation to a particular case. However, when we come to examine the separate case in its general relation to the world at

large they come together and dissolve themselves in face of the working out of the universal problem, for, here, cause and effect exchange places; what was at one time and place effect, becomes cause, and vice versa."

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 side or other of the same world process.

### DID NATURE EXIST PRIOR TO MAN?

Natural science positively asserts that the earth once existed in a state in which no man or any other living creature existed or could have existed. Inasmuch as organic matter is a later appearance, the result of a long evolution, it follows that there could have been no perceiving matter, no "complex of sensation," no self which is "inseparably" connected with environment.

Hence matter is primary, and mind, consciousness, sensation are products of a very high development. Such is the materialist theory of knowledge, which natural science instinctively holds (Page 52.)

### TRUTH.

1. Is there such a thing as objective truth, that is, can there be in human representation a given content whose truth does not depend upon the existence of either a subject, a human being, or on humanity in general?

2. And if objective truth does exist, can a human conception, which gives expression to it, express it as a whole, at one time, unconditionally, absolutely, or only approximately, relatively?

It is impossible to deny the existence of absolute truth without denying the existence of objective truth. (Page 95.)

Natural science does not leave any room for doubt about the truth of its assertion that the earth existed before the appearance of man.

The doctrine of the independence of the outer world from consciousness is the fundamental question of materialism.

That the earth existed before man is objective truth. (Page 96.)

If objective truth exists (as materialists contend), if natural science, reflecting the outer world in human "experience," is alone capable of giving us objective truth, then every kind of fideism is false. (Page 98.)

Was the earth evolved in the manner taught by the science of geology, or was the earth created in seven days?

To be a materialist is to acknowledge objective truth revealed by our sense-organs. To acknowledge as objective truth, a truth independent of man and mankind is to recognise, in one way or another, absolute truth. Now this "one way or another" separates the metaphysical materialist Duhring from the dialectic materialist Engels. Duhring juggled with the words "last," "final," "eternal" truth in discussing the most complicated questions of science and

especially in discussing history. "Of course there are eternal truths," says Engels, "but it is unwise to use high sounding words for small matters." (Page 104.)

### COLOUR.

If colour is a sensation dependent upon the retina (as natural science compels us to admit) then the light rays falling on the retina produce the sensation of colour. That means that independent of us and our consciousness there exists the vibration of matter, of ether waves of a certain length and certain velocity which, acting upon the retina, produce in us the sensation of one colour or another. That is how natural science regards it. The various sensations of one colour or another are explained by science in terms of various lengths of light waves existing outside the human retina and independently of man. (Page 34.)

The sensation of red reflects ether vibrations whose frequency approximately amounts to 450 trillions per second; blue approximately 620 trillions per second.

Our visual sensations depend upon the effects of the vibrations of ether upon our organs of vision. (Page 259.)

### GOD.

"God is primarily a complex of ideas which result from the overwhelming oppression of man through external nature and class slavery—of ideas which fasten this slavery on him, and which try to neutralise the class struggle. Even the most refined, well-intentioned defence or justification of the idea of God is a justification of reaction, a justification of the slavery of the masses.

In reality it was not the idea of God which curbed "animal individualism"; this was done by the primitive herd and the primitive commune. The idea of God has always weakened and dulled "social sentiment," substituting the dead for the living, for it was always an idea of slavery (of the worst and most hopeless kind of slavery).

The idea of God never "tied the individual to society," but always kept the oppressed classes in bondage through the belief which it spread in the divinity of the oppressors." (Page 23, Foreword.)

### RELIGION.

From Marx's "Hegel's Philosophy of Law": "Of this world, religion is the general theory, its encyclopaedic compendium, its logic in popular form, its spiritual point d'honneur, its enthusiasm, its moral sanction, its solemn complement, its general consolation and justification. . . . Religion is the sigh of the hard-pressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, as it is the soul of soulless circumstances. It is the opium of the people." (Available to English readers in "The Jewish Question," Lawrence & Wishart.—Ed.)

"Attitude of Workers' Party Towards Religion" (extract from Lenin)—"Selected Works," Vol. XI, p. 667: "In modern capitalist countries these (religious) roots are mainly Social. The deepest root of religion to-day 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 threatened 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."

### RELIGION THE REFLEX OF THE REAL WORLD.

(Marx, "Capital," Vol. 1.)

The religious world is but the reflex of the real world. And for a society based upon the production of commodities, in which the producers in general enter into social relations with one another by treating their products as commodities and values, whereby they reduce their individual private labour to the standard of homogeneous human labour—for such a society Christianity, with its cultus of abstract man, more especially in its bourgeois developments, Protestantism, Deism, &c., is the most fitting form of religion. In the ancient Asiatic and other ancient modes of production we find that the conversion of products into commodities, and therefore the conversion of men into producers of commodities, holds a subordinate place, which, however, increases in importance as the primitive communities approach nearer and nearer to their dissolution. Trading nations, properly so called, exist in the ancient world only in its interstices, like the gods of Epicurus in the Intermundia, or like Jews in the pores of Polish society. Those ancient social organisms of production are, as compared with bourgeois society, extremely simple and transparent. But they are founded either on the immature development of man individually, who has not yet severed the umbilical cord that unites him with his fellow-men in a primitive tribal community, or upon direct relations of subjection. They can arise and exist only when the development of the productive power of labour has not risen beyond a low stage, and when, therefore, the social relations within the sphere of material life between man and man and between man and nature are correspondingly narrow. This narrowness is reflected in the ancient worship of nature, and in the other elements of the popular religions. The religious reflex of the real world can, in any case, only then finally vanish when the practical relations of every-day life offer to man none but perfectly intel-



ligible and reasonable relations with regard to his fellow-men and to nature.

The life-process of society, which is based on the process of material production, does not strip off its mystical veil until it is treated as production by freely associated men, and is consciously regulated by them in accordance with a settled plan. This, however, demands for society a certain material groundwork or set of conditions of existence which in their turn are the spontaneous product of a long and painful process of development.

### ON COMMUNIST AND RELIGIOUS ETHICS.

From a speech given by Lenin to the Third All-Russian Congress of the Young Communist League, October 3, 1920:

Is there such a thing as Communist ethics? Is there such a thing as Communist morality? Of course there is. It is frequently asserted that we have no ethics, and very frequently the bourgeoisie say that we Communists deny all morality. That is one of their methods of confusing the issue, of throwing dust into the eyes of the workers and peasants.

In what sense do we deny ethics, morals?

In the sense in which they are preached by the bourgeoisie, a sense which deduces these morals from God's commandments. Of course we say that we do not believe in God. We know perfectly well that the clergy, the landlords and the bourgeoisie all claimed to speak in the name of God in order to protect their own interests as exploiters. Or, instead of deducing their ethics from the commandments of morality, from the commandments of God, they deduced them from idealistic or semi-idealistic phrases which in substance were always very similar to divine commandments.

We deny all morality taken from super-human or non-class conceptions. We say that this is a deception, a swindle, a befogging of the minds of the workers and peasants in the interests of the landlords and capitalists.

We say that our morality is wholly subordinated to the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat. We deduce our morality from the facts and needs of the class struggle of the proletariat.

The old society was based on the oppression of all the workers and peasants by the landlords and capitalists. We had to destroy this society. We had to overthrow these landlords and capitalists. But to do this organisation was necessary. God could not create such organisation.

Such organisation could only be created by the factories and workshops, only by the trained proletariat, awakened from its former slumber. Only when this class had come into existence did the mass movement commence which led to what we have to-day . . . to the victory of the proletarian revolution in one of the weakest countries in the world . . . a country which for three years has resisted the attacks of the bourgeoisie of the whole world. We see how the proletarian revolution is growing all over the world. And

we can say now, on the basis of experience, that only the proletariat could have created that compact force which is carrying along with it the once disunited and disorganised peasantry—a force which has withstood all the attacks of all the exploiters. Only this class can help the toiling masses to unite their forces, to close their ranks, to establish and build up a definitely Communist society and finally to complete it.

That is why we say that a morality taken from outside of human society does not exist for us; it is a fraud. For us morality is subordinated to the interests of the proletarian class struggle. . . .

From "Address and Provisional Rules of the Workingmen's International Association":

Describing the malpractices of diplomacy, Marx urged the workers ". . . to vindicate the simple laws of morals and justice, which ought to govern the relations of private individuals, as the rules paramount of the intercourse of nations."

From Marx's "Critique of the Gotha Programme":

Right can never be higher than the economic structure of Society and the cultural development thereby determined.

### GRADUATED FLUNKYS.

"That science is impartial (Lenin quotes Dietzgen) in the clash of materialism, idealism and religion, is a favourite idea of all modern bourgeois professors who are graduated flunkys using their sham idealism to keep the people in ignorance." (Page 110.)

Lenin again quotes Dietzgen—"All those who call themselves philosophers, university lecturers, have, despite their pretensions to free-thought, not yet freed themselves from superstition and mysticism. They must be regarded from the social-democratic point of view as a compact mass of uneducated reactionaries." (Page 295.)

"Diploma-ed lackeys of clericalism." (L.L.L. Vol. 7, Page 36.)

### ABSOLUTE AND RELATIVE TRUTHS.

To further materialism, we must drop the vulgar play upon the expression eternal truth; we must know how to put and solve dialectically the question of the correlation between absolute and relative truths.

"We now come to the question," writes Engels, "as to what product, if any, of human knowledge can especially have 'sovereign validity' and 'unrestricted claims to truth.'"

"The sovereignty of thought is realised in a number of highly unsovereign men capable of thinking; the knowledge which has unlimited pretensions to truth is realised in a number of relative blunders; neither the one nor the other can be fully realised except through an endless eternity of human existence.

"We have again the same contradiction as above between the necessary, as an absolute, conceived characteristic of human thought, and its reality in the very limited thinking single individual, a contradiction which can only be solved in the endless

progression of the human race, that is, endlessly as far as we are concerned. In this sense human thought is just as sovereign as not, and its possibility of knowledge just as unlimited as limited."

"It is sovereign and unlimited as regards its nature, its significance, its possibilities, its historical end; it is not sovereign and is limited with respect to individual expression and its actuality at any particular time."

"It is just the same with eternal truths."

Lenin adds: "This discussion is very important for the question of relativism, or the principle of the relativity of our knowledge." (Page 105.)

For Engels' absolute truth is made up of relative truths.

"Truth and error, like all such mutually antagonistic concepts, have only an absolute reality under very limited conditions, as we have seen. The first elements of dialectics show the insufficiency of all polar antagonisms. As soon as we bring the antagonisms of truth and error out of this limited field it becomes relative and is not serviceable for new scientific statements. If we should seek to establish its reality beyond those limits we are at once confronted with a dilemma: both poles of the antagonism come into conflict with their opposite, truth becomes error, and error becomes truth."

There follows the example of Boyle's law (that the volume of gas is inversely proportional to its pressure). The "particle of truth" contained in that law is only absolute truth within certain limits. The law is proven to be a truth "only approximately."

Human reason, then, in its nature is capable of yielding and does yield the absolute truth which is composed of the sum total of relative truths. (Page 106.)

### ELECTRICITY.

Electricity is motion of some sort of substance.

Electricity and light are forms of motion of one and the same substance (ether). (Page 258.)

Lenin quotes Ramsay: "I have frequently been 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 these minute corpuscles, but when they have any object, a wave, like a wave of light, spreads through the ether and this wave is used for wireless telegraphy!'" 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 it is itself undergoing change into a simpler form of matter."

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.

It used to be believed, formerly, that there were two kinds of electricity, one called positive and one negative. 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 1-700th of the mass of an atom of hydrogen. Atoms of electricity are named "electrons."

Modern physics reaches the only true method and the only true philosophy of natural science; not directly, but through zig-zag progress; not consciously, but instinctively; not clearly aware of its "final goal," but continually drawing nearer to it, through groping, vacillating, even retrogressive motion. Modern physics is in a state of confinement; it is giving birth to dialectical materialism.

The child-birth is painful. Besides a living being, it inevitably brings forth certain dead products, refuse which should be sent where it belongs. To the category of such refuse belong the entire school of "idealistic physics," the whole of empirio-critical philosophy, together with empirio-symbolism, empirio-monism, etc. (Page 268.)

### SOME SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERIES SINCE LENIN.

From T. A. Jackson's "Dialectics."

"But at the same time, in respect of the 'stuff' of which they were all 'quantities, Mendelyeff's 'guess' was modified in a surprising fashion. This 'stuff' was now conceived not in terms of unity, but as opposition—an antagonism. The atom was resolved into a relation between a nucleus and an attendant electron (or electrons). The Periodic Scale now rested upon the quantitative differences in both the nuclei and the electrons. The nucleus (an enormously concentrated 'core') was charged with positive electricity: the electron (enormously smaller, but correspondingly more active) was a 'particle' of negative electricity. The nucleus (now called a proton) had as many units of positive electrical charge as it had negatively charged units (the electrons) in attendance upon it. The simplest atom, that of hydrogen, had therefore one positive charge. A simple numerical progression, in units of positive charge in the nucleus, which in units of negative charge in its attendant electrons, from 1 (hydrogen) up to 92 (uranium) gave the whole table of elements in a perfectly periodic series.

"Two vitally important conclusions were thus established. The first and most obvious was that the atom was a structure, but of electricity. The second, not so obvious, was that the atom was a unity of opposites. The first conclusion pointed to a contradiction which threw the world of scientific theory into convulsions. Insofar as electricity is a form of energy—a particular kind of wave-motion—it proved that 'matter is composed of energy.' But insofar as it rested on the conception of a specific structural inter-relation of unit-quantities and weight—that is to say, having mass, it proved that electrical energy is a form of matter! Thus 'matter' is, really, energy; while 'energy' is really matter! (Final proof of the indissoluble unity of matter and motion.—L.S.)

"The second conclusion, that the atom is a unity of opposites, drew redoubled force from this contradiction, since it pointed to the conclusion that both energy and matter, to be understood, must be understood, each by means of its opposite—that the fundamental

reality is, as dialectical materialism has all along supposed, the material activity of active material, energy being the active aspect of 'mass' (i.e., matter), and matter (i.e., mass) the inertial aspect of energy. Moreover, it pointed to the fact that the specific movements of objective reality were, in fact, not simple, mechanical continuations, but dialectical developments."

### RELATIVITY.

Soviet science regards Einstein's Theory of Relativity, in general, as a further confirmation of dialectics; as a dialectical conception.—L.S.

### LIGHT — HEAT.

#### From Engels' "Dialectics of Nature."

Heat passes into electricity in the thermopile, it becomes identical with light at a certain stage or radiation, and in its turn reproduces mechanical motion. Electricity and magnetism, a twin pair like heat and light, not only become transformed into each other, but also into heat and light as well as mechanical motion. (Page 79.)

### REAL, AS LONG AS NECESSARY.

#### From Engels' Feuerbach (Section 1).

Hegel's "All that is real is reasonable and all that is reasonable is real."

This was essentially the blessing of all that is, the philosophical benediction of despotism, police-government, star-chamber justice and censorship.

So Frederick William III. understood it. But, according to Hegel, not everything which exists is, without exception, real.

The attribute of reality belongs to that which is at the same time necessary.

Reality proves itself in the course of its development as necessity.

Any governmental act by no means strikes him as real in the absence of other qualities.

But what is necessary proves itself in the last instance as reasonable also, and applied to the Prussian Government the Hegelian doctrine, therefore, only means this state is reasonable, corresponding with reason, as long as it is necessary, and if it appear to us an evil, but in spite of the evil still continues to exist, the evil of the government finds its justification and its explanation in the corresponding evil of the subjects.

The Prussians of that day had the government which they desired.

But reality, according to Hegel, is by no means an attribute which belongs to a given social or political condition under all circumstances and at all times.

Quite the contrary.

The Roman Republic was real, but the Roman Empire that replaced it was also real.

The French Monarchy had become unreal in 1789, that is, it

had lost all the quality of necessity, and was so contrary to reason that it had to be destroyed by the great Revolution, of which Hegel always speaks with enthusiasm. Here, therefore, the Monarchy was the unreal, the Revolution the real.

So, in the course of progress all earlier reality becomes unreality, loses its necessity, its right of existence, its rationality; in place of the dying reality comes a new, vital reality, peaceable when the old is sufficiently sensible to go to its death without a struggle, forcible when it strives against this necessity.

And so the Hegelian statement, through the Hegelian dialectic, turns to its opposite—all that is real, in the course of human history, becomes in the process of time irrational and is, therefore, according to its destiny, irrational, and has from the beginning inherited want of rationality; and everything which is reasonable in the minds of men is destined to become real, however much it may contradict the apparent reality of existing conditions.

The statement of the rationality of everything real dissolves itself, according to the Hegelian mode of thought, into the other—

"All that stands has ultimately only so much worth that it must fall."

### HOW ENGELS WAS PROVED RIGHT.

#### (Prof. Haldane, Preface to "Dialectics of Nature")

When all such criticisms have been made, it is astonishing how Engels anticipated the progress of science in the sixty years which have elapsed since he wrote. He certainly did not like the atomic theory of electricity, which held sway from 1900 to 1930, and until it turned out that the electron behaved not only like a particle but like a system of moving waves he might well have been thought to have "backed the wrong horse." His insistence that life is the characteristic mode of behavior of proteins appeared to be very one-sided to most biochemists, since every cell contains many other complicated organic substances besides proteins. Only in the last four years has it turned out that certain pure proteins do exhibit one of the most essential features of living things, reproducing themselves in a variety of environments. . . .

### THE INFINITE.

#### (Engels' "Dialectics of Nature.")

"We can know only the finite, etc." This is quite correct in so far as only finite objects enter the sphere of our knowledge. But the statement needs to be completed by this: "fundamentally we can know only the infinite." In fact all real, exhaustive knowledge consists solely in raising the single thing in thought from singularity into particularity and from this into universality in seeking and establishing the infinite in the finite, the eternal in the transitory. The form of universality, however, is the form of self-completeness, hence infinity; it is the comprehension of the many finites in the infinite. . . .

First of all one makes sensuous things into abstractions and

then one wants to know them through the senses, to see time and smell space. The empiricist becomes so steeped in the habit of empirical experience that he believes that he is still in the field of sensuous knowledge when he is operating with abstractions. We know what an hour is, or a metre, but not what time and space are! As if time was anything other than just hours, and space anything but just cubic metres! . . .

### **LIFE AND DEATH.**

(Engels' "Dialectics of Nature.")

Already no physiology is held to be scientific if it does not consider death as an essential factor of life (Note: Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*, I., pp. 152-5), the negation of life as being essentially contained in life itself, so that life is always thought of in relation to its necessary result, death, which is always contained in it in germ. The dialectical conception of life is nothing more than this. But for anyone who has once understood this, all talk of the immortality of the soul is done away with. Death is either the dissolution of the organic body, leaving nothing behind but the chemical constituents that formed its substance, or it leaves behind a vital principle, more or less the soul, that then survives all living organisms, and not only human beings. Here, therefore, by means of dialectics, simply becoming clear about the nature of life and death suffices to abolish an ancient superstition. Living means dying. . . .

### **THE ETERNAL CYCLE.**

(Engels' "Dialectics of Nature.")

It is an eternal cycle in which matter moves, a cycle that certainly only completes its orbit in periods of time for which our terrestrial year is no adequate measure, a cycle in which the time of highest development, the time of organic life and still more that of the life of beings conscious of nature and themselves, is just as narrowly restricted as the space in which life and self-consciousness come into operation; a cycle in which every finite mode of existence of matter, whether it be sun or nebular vapour, single animal or genus of animals, chemical combination or dissociation, is equally transient, and wherein nothing is eternal but eternally changing, eternally moving matter and the laws according to which it moves and changes. But however often, and however relentlessly, this cycle is completed in time and space, however many millions of suns and earths may arise and pass away, however long it may last before the conditions for organic life develop, however innumerable the organic beings that have to arise and to pass away before animals with a brain capable of thought are developed from their midst, and for a short span of time find conditions suitable for life, only to be exterminated later without mercy, the same in all its transformations, that none of its attributes can ever be lost, and therefore, also, that with the same iron necessity that it will exterminate on the earth its highest creation, the thinking mind, it must somewhere else and at another time again produce it.

## **PART 4.**

### **HISTORICAL MATERIALISM.**

#### **SAVAGERY.**

(Engels' "Origin of the Family.")

Lower Stage: Infancy of the human race. Human beings still dwelt in their original habitation, in tropical or subtropical forests. They lived at least part of the time in trees, for only in this way they could escape the attacks of large beasts of prey and survive. Fruit, nuts, and roots served as food. The formation of articulated speech is the principal result of this period. Not a single one of all the nations that have become known in historic times dates back to this primeval stage.

Although the latter may extend over thousands of years, we have no means of proving its existence by direct evidence. But once the descent of man from the Animal Kingdom is acknowledged, the acceptance of this stage of transition becomes inevitable.

Middle Stage: Commencing with the utilisation of fish (including crabs, mollusks and other aquatic animals) and the use of fire. Both these things belong together, because fish becomes thoroughly palatable by the help of fire only. With this new kind of food, human beings became completely independent of climate and locality. Following the course of rivers and coast lines, they could spread over the greater part of the earth even in the savage state. The so-called palaeolithic implements of the early stone age, made of rough, unsharpened stones, belong almost entirely to this period. Their wide distribution over all the continents testifies to the extent of these wanderings. The unceasing bent for discovery, together with the possession of fire gained by friction, created new products in the lately occupied regions. Such were farinaceous roots and tubers, baked in hot ashes or in baking pits (ground ovens). When the first weapons, club and spear, were invented, venison was occasionally added to the bill of fare. Nations subsisting exclusively by hunting, such as we sometimes find mentioned in books, have never existed; for the proceeds of hunting are too uncertain. In consequence of continued precariousness of the sources of subsistence, cannibalism seems to arise at this stage. It continues in force for a long while. Even in our day, Australians and Polynesians still remain in this middle stage of savagery.

Higher Stage: Coming with the invention of bow and arrow, this stage makes venison a regular part of daily fare and hunting a normal occupation. Bow, arrow and cord represent a rather complicated instrument, the invention of which presupposes a long and accumulated experience and increased mental ability; incidentally they are conditioned on the acquaintance with a number of other inventions.

In comparing the nations that are familiar with the use of bow and arrow, but not yet with the art of pottery (from which Morgan dates the transition to barbarism), we find among them the beginnings of village settlements, a control of food production, wooden vessels and utensils, weaving of bast fibre by hand (without a loom), baskets made of bast or reeds, and sharpened (neolithic) stone implements. Generally fire and the stone axe have also furnished the dugout and, here and there, timbers and boards for house-building. All these improvements are found, e.g., among the American Indians of the Northwest, who use bow and arrows, but know nothing as yet about pottery. Bow and arrows were for the stage of savagery what the iron sword was for barbarism and the fire-arm for civilisation—the weapon of supremacy.

### BARBARISM.

**Lower Stage:** Dates from the introduction of the art of pottery. The latter is traceable in many cases, and probably attributable in all cases, to the custom of covering wooden or plaited vessels with clay in order to render them fire-proof. It did not take long to find out that moulded clay served the same purpose without a lining of other material.

Hitherto we could consider the course of evolution as being equally characteristic, in a general way, for all the nations of a certain period, without reference to locality. But with the beginning of barbarism, we reach a stage where the difference in the natural resources of the two great bodies of land makes itself felt. The salient features of this stage of barbarism is the taming and raising of animals and the cultivation of plants. Now the eastern body of land, the so-called old world, contained nearly all the tamable animals and all the cultivable species of grain but one; while the western continent, America, possessed only one tamable mammal, the llama (even this only in a certain part of the South), and only one, although the best, species of grain: the corn. From now on these different conditions of nature lead the population of each hemisphere along divergent roads, and the land-marks on the boundaries of the various stages differ in both cases.

**Middle Stage:** Commencing in the East with the domestication of animals, in the West with the cultivation and irrigation of food-plants; also with the use of adobes (bricks baked in the sun) and stones for buildings.

We begin in the West, because there this stage was never outgrown up to the time of the conquest by Europeans.

At the time of their discovery, the Indians in the lower stage of barbarism (all those living east of the Mississippi) carried on cultivation on a small scale in gardens. Corn, and perhaps also pumpkins, melons and other garden truck were raised. A very essential part of their sustenance was produced in this manner. They lived in wooden houses, in fortified villages. The tribes of the Northwest, especially those of the region along the Columbia River, were still in the higher stage of savagery, ignorant of pottery and of any cultivation of plants whatever. But the so-called Pueblo

Indians in New Mexico, the Mexicans, Central-Americans and Peruvians, were in the middle-stage of barbarism. They lived in fort-like houses of adobe or stone, cultivated corn and other plants suitable to various conditions of localities and climate in artificially irrigated gardens that represented the main source of nourishment, and even kept a few tamed animals—the Mexicans the turkey and other birds, the Peruvians the llama. Furthermore, they were familiar with the use of metals—iron excepted, and for this reason they could not get along yet without stone weapons and stone implements. The conquest by the Spaniards cut short all further independent development.

In the East, the middle stage of barbarism began with the taming of milk and meat producing animals, while the cultivation of plants seems to have remained unknown far into this period. It appears that the taming and raising of animals and the formation of large herds gave rise to the separation of Aryans and Semites from the rest of the barbarians. Names of animals are still common to the languages of European and Asian Aryans, while this is almost never the case with the names of cultivated plants.

**Higher Stage:** Beginning with the melting of iron ore and merging into civilisation by the invention of letter script and its utilisation for writing records. This stage, which is passed independently only on the Eastern Hemisphere, is richer in improvements of production than all preceding stages together. It is the stage of the Greek heroes, the Italian tribes shortly before the foundation of Rome, the Germans of Tacitus, the Norsemen of the Viking age.

We are here confronted for the first time with the iron ploughshare drawn by animals, rendering possible agriculture on a large scale, in fields, and hence a practically unlimited increase in the production of food for the time being. The next consequence is the clearing of forests and their transformation into arable land and meadows—which process, however, could not be continued on a larger scale without the help of the iron axe and the iron spade. Naturally, these improvements brought a more rapid increase of population and a concentration of numbers into a small area. Before the time of field cultivation a combination of half a million of people under one central management could have been possible only under exceptionally favorable conditions; most likely this was never the case.

The greatest attainments of the higher stage of barbarism are presented in Homer's poems, especially in the Iliad. Improved iron tools; the bellows; the handmill; the potter's wheel; the preparation of oil and wine; a well developed fashioning of metals verging on artisanship; the wagon and chariot; ship-building with beams and boards; the beginning of artistic architecture; towns surrounded by walls with turrets and battlements; the Homeric epos and the entire mythology—these are the principal bequests transmitted by the Greeks from barbarism to civilisation. In comparing these attainments with the description given by Caesar or

even Tacitus of Germans, who were in the beginning of the same stage of evolution which the Greeks were preparing to leave for a higher one, we perceive the wealth of productive development comprised in the higher stage of barbarism.

The sketch which I have here produced after Morgan of the evolution of the human race through savagery and barbarism to the beginning of civilisation is even now rich in new outlines. More still, these outlines are incontrovertible, because traced directly from production.

### HIGHER TECHNIQUE AS BASIS OF SOCIAL ADVANCE.

Engels shows in the above how pre-civilised man advanced on the basis of new discoveries and inventions.

Marx shows that "the watermill gave us the feudal lord . . . the steam mill, the capitalist."

The electric mill and the probable harnessing of the atom, a problem upon which science is now working, provide the basis for Communism.—L.S.

### MARRIAGE.

(From Engels' "Origin of the Family.")

Full freedom of marriage can therefore only be generally established when the abolition of capitalist production and of the property relations created by it has removed all the accompanying economic considerations which still exert such a powerful influence on the choice of a marriage partner. For then there is no other motive left except mutual inclination.

And as sexual love is by its nature exclusive—although at present this exclusiveness is fully realised only in the woman—the marriage based on sexual love is by its nature individual marriage. We have seen how right Bachofen was in regarding the advance from group marriage to individual marriage as primarily due to the women. Only the step from pairing marriage to monogamy can be put down to the credit of the men, and historically the essence of this was to make the position of the women worse and the infidelities of the men easier. If now the economic considerations also disappear which made women put up with the habitual infidelity of their husbands—concern for their own means of existence and still more for their children's future—then, according to all previous experience, the equality of women thereby achieved will tend infinitely more to make men really monogamous than to make woman polyandrous.

But what will quite certainly disappear from monogamy are all the features stamped upon it through its origin in property relations; these are, in the first place, supremacy of the man, and, secondly, indissolubility. The supremacy of the man in marriage is the simple consequence of his economic supremacy, and with the abolition of the latter will disappear of itself. The indissolubility of marriage is partly a consequence of the economic situation in

which monogamy arose, partly tradition from the period when the connection between this economic situation and monogamy was not yet fully understood and was carried to extremes under a religious form. To-day it is already broken through at a thousand points. If only the marriage based on love is moral, then also only the marriage in which love continues. But the intense emotion of individual sex-love varies very much in duration from one individual to another, especially among men, and if affection definitely comes to an end or is supplanted by a new passionate love, separation is a benefit for both partners as well as for society—only people will then be spared having to wade through the useless mire of a divorce case.

What we can now conjecture about the way in which sexual relations will be ordered after the impending overthrow of capitalist production is mainly of a negative character, limited for the most part to what will disappear. But what will there be new? That will be answered when a new generation has grown up: a generation of men who never in their lives have known what it is to buy a woman's surrender with money or any other social instrument of power; a generation of women who have never known what it is to give themselves to a man from any other considerations than real love, or to refuse to give themselves to their lover from fear of the economic consequences. When these people are in the world, they will care precious little what anybody to-day thinks they ought to do; they will make their own practice and their corresponding public opinion about the practice of each individual—and that will be the end of it.

### "LABOR CREATED MAN HIMSELF."

(Engels' "Dialectics of Nature.")

Labor is the source of all wealth, the economists assert. It is this—next to nature—which supplies it with the material that it converts into wealth. But it is also infinitely more than this. It is the primary basic condition for all human existence, and this to such an extent that, in a sense, we have to say that labor created man himself. . . .

Darwin has given us an approximate description of these ancestors of ours. They were completely covered with hair, they had beards and pointed ears, and they lived in bands in the trees. . . .

Almost certainly as an immediate consequence of their mode of life, for in climbing the hands fulfil quite different functions from the feet, these apes when moving on level ground began to drop the habit of using their hands and to adopt a more and more erect posture in walking. This was the decisive step in the transition from ape to man."

All anthropoid apes of the present day can stand erect and move about on their feet alone, but only in case of need and in a



very clumsy way. Their natural gait is in a half-erect posture and includes the use of the hands. . . .

Many monkeys use their hands to build nests for themselves in the trees, or even, like the chimpanzee, to construct roofs between the branches for protection against the weather. With their hands they seize hold of clubs to defend themselves against enemies, or bombard the latter with fruits and nuts. In captivity, they carry out with their hands a number of simple operations copied from human beings.<sup>1</sup> But it is just here that one sees how great is the gulf between the undeveloped hand of even the most anthropoid of apes and the human hand that has been highly perfected by the labor of hundreds of thousands of years. The number and general arrangement of the bones and muscles are the same in both; but the hand of the lowest savage can perform hundreds of operations that no monkey's hand can imitate. No simian hand has ever fashioned even the crudest stone knife. . . .

More important is the direct, demonstrable reaction of the development of the hand on the rest of the organism. As already said, our simian ancestors were gregarious; it is obviously impossible to seek the derivation of man, the most social of all animals, from non-gregarious immediate ancestors. The mastery over nature, which begins with the development of the hand, with labor, widened man's horizon at every new advance. He was continually discovering new, hitherto unknown properties of natural objects. On the other hand, the development of labor necessarily helped to bring the members of society closer together by multiplying cases of mutual support, joint activity, and by making clear the advantage of this joint activity to each individual. In short, men in the making arrived at the point where they had something to say to one another. The need led to the creation of its organ; the undeveloped larynx of the ape was slowly but surely transformed by means of gradually increased modulation, and the organs of the mouth gradually learned to pronounce one articulate letter after another.

Comparison with animals proves that this explanation of the origin of language from and in the process of labor is the only correct one. The little that even the most highly-developed animals need to communicate to one another can be communicated even without the aid of articulate speech. In a state of nature, no animal feels its inability to speak or to understand human speech. It is quite different when it has been tamed by man. The dog and the horse, by association with man, have developed such a good ear for articulate speech that they easily learn to understand any language within the range of their circle of ideas. Moreover, they have acquired the capacity for feelings, such as affection for man,

<sup>1</sup> Haldane points out that chimpanzees can do simple things on their own initiative.—L.S.

gratitude, etc., which were previously foreign to them. Anyone who has had much to do with such animals will hardly be able to escape the conviction that there are plenty of cases where they now feel their inability to speak is a defect, although, unfortunately, it can no longer be remedied owing to their vocal organs being specialised in a definite direction. However, where the organ exists, within certain limits, even this inability disappears. The buccal organs of birds are, of course, radically different from those of man, yet birds are the only animals that can learn to speak; and it is the bird with the most hideous voice, the parrot, that speaks best of all. It need not be objected that the parrot does not understand what it says. It is true that for the sheer pleasure of talking and associating with human beings, the parrot will chatter for hours at a time, continuing to repeat its whole vocabulary, but within the limits of its circle of ideas it can also learn to understand what it is saying. Teach a parrot swear words in such a way that it gets an idea of their significance (one of the great amusements of sailors returning from the tropics); on teasing it one will soon discover that it knows how to use its swear words just as correctly as a Berlin costermonger. Similarly with begging for titbits.

First comes labor, after it, and then side by side with it articulate speech—these were the two most essential stimuli under the influence of which the brain of the ape gradually changed into that of man, which for all its similarity to the former, is far larger and more perfect. Hand in hand with the development of the brain went the development of its most immediate instruments—the sense organs. Just as the gradual development of speech is inevitably accompanied by a corresponding refinement of the organ of hearing, so the development of the brain as a whole is accompanied by a refinement of all the senses. The eagle sees much farther than man, but the human eye sees considerably more in things than does the eye of the eagle. The dog has a far keener sense of smell than man, but it does not distinguish a hundredth part of the odors that for man are definite features of different things.<sup>1</sup> And the sense of touch, which the ape hardly possesses in its crudest initial form, has been developed side by side with the development of the human hand itself, through the medium of labor.

Hundreds of thousands of years—of no greater significance in the history of the earth than one second in the life of man—certainly elapsed before human society arose out of a band of tree-climbing monkeys. Yet it did finally appear. And what do we find once more as the characteristic difference between the band of monkeys and human society? Labor.

<sup>1</sup> A dog cannot distinguish between smells which are distinct to men, but the converse is also true.—Haldane.

**MAN—A TOOL-MAKING ANIMAL.****(Extract from Marx's "Capital," Vol. I.)**

Labor is, in the first place, a process in which both man and nature participate, and in which man of his own accord starts, regulates, and controls the material reactions between himself and nature. He opposes himself to nature as one of her own forces, setting in motion arms and legs, head and hands, the natural forces of his body, in order to appropriate nature's products in a form adapted to his own wants. By thus acting on the external world and changing it, he at the same time changes his own nature. He develops his slumbering powers and compels them to act in obedience to his sway. We are not now dealing with those primitive instinctive forms of labor that remind us of the mere animal. An immeasurable interval of time separates the state of things in which a man brings his labor-power to market for sale as a commodity, from that state in which human labor was still in its first instinctive stage. We presuppose labor in a form that stamps it as exclusively human. A spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this: that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality. At the end of every labor-process, we get a result that already existed in the imagination of the laborer at its commencement. . . .

The use and fabrication of instruments of labor, although existing in the germ among certain species of animals, is specifically characteristic of the human labor-process, and Franklin therefore defines man as a tool-making animal. . . .

**ROLE OF PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION.****(From Marx's "Critique of Political Economy." Page 268.)**

Man is, in the most literal sense of the word, a *zoon politikon*, not only a social animal, but an animal which can develop into an individual only in society.

Production by isolated individuals outside of society is as great an absurdity as the idea of the development of language without individuals living together and talking to one another.

Whenever we speak, therefore, of production, we always have in mind production at a certain stage of social development, or production by social individuals.

Production is at the same time also consumption. Twofold consumption, subjective and objective. The individual who develops his faculties in production is also expending them, consuming them in the act of production, just as procreation is in its way a consumption of vital powers.

In the second place, production is consumption of means of production which are used and used up and partly (as e.g., burning) reduced to their natural elements.

The same is true of the consumption of raw materials which do not remain in their natural form and state, being greatly absorbed in the process.

The act of production is, therefore, in all its aspects, an act of consumption as well.

Consumption is directly also production, just as in nature the consumption of the elements and of chemical matter constitutes production of plants.

It is clear, that in nutrition, e.g., which is but one form of consumption, man produces his own body; but it is equally true of every kind of consumption which goes to produce the human being in one way or another. It is consumptive production.

But, say the economists, this production which is identical with consumption is a second production resulting from the destruction of the product of the first.

In the first, the producer transforms himself into things; in the second, things are transformed into human beings.

Consequently, this productive consumption—although constituting a direct unity of production and consumption—differs essentially from production proper.

The direct unity in which production coincides with consumption, and consumption with production, does not interfere with their direct quality.

Production is thus at the same time consumption, and consumption is at the same time production.

Each is directly its own counterpart. But at the same time an intermediary movement goes on between the two.

Production furthers consumption by erecting material for the latter which otherwise would lack its object.

But consumption in its turn furthers production by providing for the products the individual for whom they are products.

The product receives its finishing touches in consumption.

A railroad on which no one rides, which is consequently not used up, not consumed, is but a potential railroad, and not a real one.

Without production, no consumption; but, on the other hand, without consumption, no production; since production would then be without a purpose.

Consumption produces production in two ways. In the first place, in that the product first becomes a real product in consumption; e.g., a garment becomes a real garment only through the act of being worn; a dwelling that is not inhabited is really no dwelling.

Consequently a product as distinguished from a mere natural object, proves to be such, first becomes a product, in consumption.

Consumption gives the product the finishing touch by annihilating it, since the product is the result of production not only as the material embodiment of activity, but also as a mere object for the active subject.

In the second place, consumption produces production by creating the necessity for new production, i.e., by providing the ideal, inward, impelling cause which constitutes the prerequisite for production.

Consumption furnishes the impulse for production as well as its object, which plays in production the part of its guiding aim.

It is clear that while production furnishes the material object of consumption, consumption provides the ideal object of production, as its image, its want, its impulse and its purpose.

It furnishes the object of production in its subjective form.

No wants, no production. But consumption reproduces the want.

In its turn production furnishes consumption with its material, its object.

Consumption without an object is no consumption, hence production works in this direction by producing consumption.

But it is not only the object that production provides for consumption.

It gives consumption its definite outline, its character, its finish.

Just as consumption gives the product its finishing touch as a product, production puts the finishing touch on consumption.

For the object is not simply an object in general, but a definite object, which is consumed in a definite manner prescribed in its turn by production.

Hunger is hunger; but the hunger that is satisfied with cooked meat eaten with fork and knife is a different kind of hunger from the one that devours raw meat with the aid of hands, nails and teeth.

Not only the object of consumption, but also the manner of consumption is produced by production; that is to say, consumption is created by production not only objectively, but also subjectively.

Production thus creates the consumers.

Production not only supplies the want with material, but supplies the material with a want.

When consumption emerges from its first stage of crudeness and directness and its continuation in that state would in itself be the result of a production still remaining in a state of natural crudeness—it is itself furthered by its object as a moving spring.

The want of it which consumption experiences is created by its appreciation of the product.

The object of art, as well as any other product, creates an artistic and beauty enjoying public.

Production thus produces not only an object for the individual, but also an individual for the object.

Production thus produces consumption: first, by furnishing the latter with material; second, by determining the manner of consumption; third, by creating in consumers a want for its products as objects of consumption.

It thus produces the object, the manner and the moving spring for consumption.

In the same manner consumption creates the disposition of the producer by setting him up as an aim and by stimulating wants.

The identity of consumption and production thus appears to be a threefold one.

First, direct identity; production is consumption, consumption is production.

Consumptive production. Productive consumption.

Economists call both productive consumption but make one distinction by calling the former reproduction, and the latter productive consumption.

All inquiries into the former deal with productive and unproductive labor; those into the latter treat of productive and unproductive consumption.

Second. Each appears as the means of the other and as being brought about by the other, which is expressed as their mutual interdependence; a relation by virtue of which they appear as mutually connected and indispensable, yet remaining outside of each other.

Production creates the material as the outward object of consumption; consumption creates the want as the inward object, the purpose of production.

Without production, no consumption; without consumption, no production; this maxim figures in political economy in many forms.

Third. Production is not only directly consumption and consumption directly production; nor is production merely a means of consumption and consumption the purpose of production.

In other words, not only does each furnish the other with its object: production, the material of consumption; consumption, the ideal object of production.

On the contrary, either one is not only directly the other, not only a means of furthering the other, but while it is taking place creates the other as such for itself.

Consumption completes the act of production by giving the finishing touch to the product as such, by destroying the latter, by breaking up its independent material form; by bringing to a state of readiness, through the necessity of repetition, the disposition to produce developed in the first act of production; that is to say, it is not only the concluding act through which the product becomes a product, but also the one through which the producer becomes a producer.

On the other hand, production produces consumption by determining the manner of consumption, and, further, by creating the incentive for consumption, the very ability to consume, in the form of want.

This latter identity is much discussed in political economy in connection with the treatment of the relations of demand and supply, of objects and wants, of natural wants and those created by society.

Hence, it is the simplest matter with a Hegelian to treat production and consumption as identical.

And this has been done not only by socialist writers of fiction but even by economists, e.g., Say; the latter maintained that if we consider a nation as a whole, or mankind in abstracto, her production is at the same time her consumption.

Storch pointed out Say's error by calling attention to the fact that a nation does not entirely consume her product, but also creates means of production, fixed capital, etc.

To consider society as a single individual is moreover a false mode of speculative reasoning.

With an individual production and consumption appear as different aspects of one act.

The important point to be emphasised here is that if production and consumption be considered as activities of one individual or of separate individuals, they appear at anyrate as aspects of one process in which production forms the actual starting point and is, therefore, the predominating factor.

Consumption, as a natural necessity, as a want, constitutes an internal factor of productive activity, but the latter is the starting point of realisation and, therefore, its predominating factor, the act into which the entire process resolves itself in the end.

The individual produces a certain article and turns again into himself by consuming it; but he returns as a productive and a self-reproducing individual.

Consumption thus appears as a factor of production.

In society, however, the relation of the producer to his product, as soon as it is completed, is an outward one, and the return of the product to the individual depends on his relation to other individuals.

He does not take immediate possession of it.

Nor does the direct appropriation of the product constitute his purpose when he produces in society.

Between the producer and the product distribution steps in which determines by social laws his share in the world of products; that is to say, distribution steps in between production and consumption.

Does distribution form an independent sphere standing side by side with and outside production?

**Production and Distribution.**—In perusing the common treatises on economics one cannot help being struck with the fact that everything is treated there twice; e.g., under distribution there figure rent, wages, interest and profits; while under production we find land, labor and capital as agents of production. As regards capital, it is at once clear that it is counted twice; first as an agent of production; second as a source of income; as determining factors and definite forms of distribution, interest and profit figure as such also in production, since they are forms in which capital

increases and grows, and are consequently factors of its own production.

Interest and profits, as forms of distribution, imply the existence of capital as an agent of production.

They are forms of distribution which have for their prerequisite capital as an agent of production.

They are also forms of reproduction of capital.

In the same manner wages in wage-labor when considered under another head; the definite character which labor has in one case as an agent of production appears in the other as a form of distribution.

If labor were not fixed as wage labor its manner of participation in distribution would not appear as wages, as is the case, e.g., under slavery.

Finally, rent—to take at once the most developed form of distribution—by means of which landed property receives its share of the products, implies the existence of large landed property—properly speaking, agriculture on a large scale—as an agent of production, and not simply land, no more than wages represent simply labor.

The relations and methods of distribution appear, therefore, merely as the reverse sides of the agents of production.

An individual who participates in production as a wage laborer, receives his share of the products, i.e., of the results of production in the form of wages.

The subdivisions and organisation of distribution are determined by the subdivisions and organisation of production.

Distribution is itself a product of production, not only in so far as the material goods are concerned, since only the results of production can be distributed, but also as regards its form, since the definite manner of participation in production determines the particular form of distribution, the form under which distribution takes place.

It is quite an illusion to place land under production, rent under distribution, etc.

To the single individual distribution naturally appears as a law established by society determining his position in the sphere of production, within which he produces, and thus antedating production.

At the outset the individual has no capital, no landed property.

From his birth he is assigned to wage labor by the social process of distribution.

But this very condition of being assigned to wage labor is the result of the existence of capital and landed property as independent agents of production.

From the point of view of society as a whole, distribution seems to antedate and to determine production in another way as well, as a pre-economic fact, so to say.

A conquering people divides the land among the conquerors, establishing thereby a certain division and form of landed property

and determining the character of production; or, it turns the conquered people into slaves and thus makes slave labor the basis of production.

Or a nation, by revolution, breaks up large estates into small parcels of land, and by this new distribution imparts to production a new character.

Or, legislation perpetuates land ownership in large families or distributes labor as a hereditary privilege and thus fixes it in castes.

In all these cases, and they are all historic, it is not distribution that seems to be organised and determined by production, but, on the contrary, production by distribution.

In the most shallow conception of distribution, the latter appears as a distribution of products and to that extent as further removed from and quasi-independent of production. But before distribution means a distribution of products it is first a distribution of the means of production, and second, what is practically another wording of the same fact, it is a distribution of the members of society among the various kinds of production (the subjection of individuals to certain kinds of production).

The distribution of products is manifestly a result of this distribution, which is bound up with the process of production and determines the very organisation of the latter.

To treat of production apart from the distribution which is comprised in it, is plainly an idle abstraction.

Conversely, we know the character of the distribution of products the moment we are given the nature of that other distribution which forms originally a factor of production.

What relation to production this distribution, which has a determining influence on production itself, assumes, is plainly a question which falls within the province of production.

Should it be maintained that at least to the extent that production depends on a certain distribution of the instruments of production, distribution in that sense precedes production and constitutes its prerequisite; it may be replied that production has in fact its prerequisite conditions, which form factors of it.

These may appear at first to have a natural origin.

By the very process of production they are changed from natural to historical and if they appear during one period as a natural prerequisite of production they formed at other periods its historical result.

Within the sphere of production itself they are undergoing a constant change.

The application of machinery produces a change in the distribution of the instruments of production as well as in that of products, and modern land ownership on a large scale is as much the result of modern trade and modern industry as that of the application of the latter to agriculture.

All these questions resolve themselves in the last instance to this: How do general historical conditions affect production and what part does it play at all in the course of history?

It is evident that this question can be taken up only in connection with the discussion and analysis of production.

Yet in the trivial form in which these questions are raised, they can be answered just as briefly.

In the case of all conquests three ways lie open.

The conquering people may impose its own methods of production upon the conquered (the English in Ireland in the 19th century, partly also in India).

Or, it may allow everything to remain as it was, contenting itself with tribute (e.g., the Turks and the Romans).

Or, the two systems by mutually modifying each other may result in something new, a synthesis (which partly resulted from the Germanic conquests).

In all these conquests the method of production, be it of the conquerors, the conquered, or the one resulting from a combination of both, determines the nature of the new distribution which comes into play.

Although the latter appears now as the prerequisite condition of the new period of production, it is in itself but a product of production, not of production belonging to history in general, but of production relating to a definite historical period.

The Mongols with their devastations in Russia acted in accordance with their system of production, for which sufficient pastures on large uninhabited stretches of country are the main prerequisite.

The Germanic barbarians with whom agriculture carried on with the aid of serfs was the traditional system of production, and who were accustomed to lonely life in the country, could introduce the same conditions in the Roman provinces so much the easier since the concentration of landed property which had taken place did away completely with the older systems of agriculture.

There is a prevalent tradition that in certain periods robbery constituted the only source of living. But in order to be able to plunder, there must be something to plunder, i.e., there must be production.

And even the method of plunder is determined by the method of production. A stock-jobbing nation cannot be robbed in the same manner as a nation of shepherds.

In the case of the slave the instrument of production is robbed directly. But then the production of the country in whose interest he is robbed must be so organised as to admit of slave labor, or (as in South America) a system of production must be introduced adapted to slavery.

Laws may perpetuate an instrument of production, e.g., land, in certain families.

These laws assume an economic importance if large landed property is in harmony with the system of production prevailing in society, as is the case in England.

In France agriculture has been carried on on a small scale in spite of the large estates, and the latter were, therefore, broken up by the Revolution.

But how about the legislative attempt to perpetuate the minute sub-division of the land?

In spite of these laws land ownership is concentrating again. The effect of legislation on the maintenance of a system of distribution is shown in "Capital."

**Exchange and Circulation.**—Circulation is but a certain aspect of exchange, or it may be defined as exchange considered as a whole.

Since exchange is an intermediary factor between production and its dependent distribution on the one hand, and consumption, on the other, and since the latter appears but as a constituent of production, exchange is also a constituent part of production.

In the first place it is clear that the exchange of activities and abilities which takes place in the sphere of production falls directly within the latter and constitutes one of its essential elements.

In the second place, the same is true of the exchange of products, in so far as it is a means of completing a certain product designed for immediate consumption.

To that extent exchange constitutes an act included in production.

Thirdly, the so-called exchange between dealers and dealers is by virtue of its organisation determined by production, and is itself a species of productive activity.

Exchange appears to be independent of and indifferent to production only in the last stage when products are exchanged directly for consumption.

But in the first place there is no exchange without a division of labor, whether natural or as a result of historical development.

Secondly, private exchange implies the existence of private production.

Thirdly, the intensity of exchange, as well as its extent and character, are determined by the degree of development and organisation of production, as, e.g., exchange between city and country, in the city, etc.

Exchange thus appears in all its aspects to be directly included in or determined by production.

The result we arrive at is not that production, distribution, exchange and consumption are identical, but that they are all members of one entity, different sides of one unit.

Production predominates not only over production itself in the opposite sense of that term, but over the other elements as well.

With it the process constantly starts over again.

That exchange and consumption cannot be the predominating elements is self-evident.

The same is true of distribution in the narrow sense of distribution of products as for distribution in the sense of distribution of the agents of production, it is itself but a factor of production.

A definite form of production thus determines the forms of consumption, distribution, exchange and also the mutual relations between these various elements.

Of course, production in its one-sided form is in its turn influenced by other elements; with the expansion of the markets, of the sphere of exchange production grows in volume and is subdivided to a greater extent.

With a change in distribution, production undergoes a change, as in the case of concentration of capital, of a change in the distribution of population in city and country, etc.

Finally, the demands of consumption also influence production.

A mutual interaction takes place between the various elements. Such is the case with every organic body.

### THE STRUGGLE FOR LIFE.

Engels' "Dialectics of Nature."

The interaction of dead natural bodies includes both harmony and collisions, that of living bodies conscious and unconscious co-operation equally with conscious and unconscious struggle. Hence, even in regard to nature, it is not permissible one-sidedly to inscribe only "struggle" on one's banners. But it is absolutely childish to desire to sum up the whole manifold wealth of historical evolution and complexity in the meagre and one-sided phrase "struggle for life." That says less than nothing.

The whole Darwinian theory of the struggle for life is simply the transference from society to organic nature of Hobbes' theory of bellum omnium contra omnes, and of the bourgeois economic theory of competition, as well as the Malthusian theory of population. When once this feat has been accomplished (the unconditional justification for which, especially as regards the Malthusian theory, is still very questionable), it is very easy to transfer these theories back again from natural history to the history of society, and altogether too naive to maintain that thereby these assertions have been proved as eternal natural laws of society . . .

### FORCE.

(Extracts from Marx's "Capital," Vol. I.)

The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins, signalised the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief momenta of primitive accumulation. On their heels treads the commercial war of the European nations, with the globe for a theatre. It begins with the



revolt of the Netherlands from Spain, assumes giant dimensions in England's anti-Jacobin war, and is still going on in the opium wars against China, etc.

The different momenta of primitive accumulation distribute themselves now, more or less in chronological order, particularly over Spain, Portugal, Holland, France and England. In England at the end of the 17th century, they arrive at a systematical combination, embracing the colonies, the national debt, the modern mode of taxation, and the protectionist system. These methods depend in part on brute force, e.g., the colonial system. But they all employ the power of the State, the concentrated and organised force of society, to hasten, hothouse fashion, the process of transformation of the feudal mode of production into the capitalist mode, and to shorten the transition. Force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one. It is itself an economic power.

### THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

**From the Introduction to Anti-Duhring. (Engels.)**

The great men who in France prepared men's minds for the coming revolution were themselves extreme revolutionists. They recognised no external authority of any kind whatever. Religion, natural science, society, political institutions, everything, was subjected to the most unsparing criticism, everything must justify its existence before the judgment seat of reason, or give up existence. Reason became the sole measure of everything. It was the time when, as Hegel says,<sup>1</sup> the world stood upon its head, first, in the sense that the human head and the principles arrived at by its thought, claimed to be the basis of all human action and association; but by and by, also, in the wider sense that the reality which was in contradiction to these principles had, in fact, to be turned upside down.

### "DAYS WHICH ARE THE CONCENTRATED ESSENCE OF TWENTY YEARS."

**(From the Teachings of Karl Marx. By Lenin.)**

All classes and all countries are at the same time looked upon, not statically, but dynamically; i.e., not as motionless, but as in motion (the laws of their motion being determined by the economic conditions of existence of each class). The motion, in its turn, is looked upon, not only from the point of view of the past, but also from the point of view of the future; and, moreover, not only in

<sup>1</sup> Thought, the concept of law, all at once made itself felt, and against this the old scaffolding of wrong could make no stand.

"In this conception of law, therefore, a constitution has now been established, and henceforth everything must be based on this.

"Since the sun had been in the firmament and the planets circled round him, the sight had never been seen of man standing upon his head—i.e., on the 'Idea'—and building reality after this image.

"Anaxagoras first said that the Nous, reason, rules the world; but now, for the first time, had man come to recognise that the Idea must rule the mental reality. And this was a magnificent sunrise. All thinking beings have participated in celebrating this holy day."—Hegel.

accordance with the vulgar conception of the "evolutionists," who seen only slow changes—but dialectically:

"In such great developments, twenty years are but as one day, and then may come days which are the concentrated essence of twenty years," wrote Marx to Engels. (Briefwechsel, Vol. III, p. 127.)

At each stage of development, at each moment, proletarian tactics must take account of these objectively unavoidable dialectics of human history, utilising, on the one hand, the phases of political stagnation, when things are moving at a snail's pace along the road of the so-called "peaceful" development, to increase the class consciousness, strength, and fighting capacity of the most advanced class; on the other hand, conducting this work in the direction of the "final aims" of the movement of this class, cultivating in it the faculty for the practical performance of great tasks in great days that are the "concentrated essence of twenty years."

### THE FUNDAMENTAL LAW OF REVOLUTION.

**(From Left-Wing Communism. By Lenin.)**

The fundamental law of revolution, confirmed by all revolutions, and particularly by all three Russian revolutions in the twentieth century, is as follows: It is not sufficient for revolution that the exploited and oppressed masses understand the impossibility of living in the old way and demand changes; for revolution, it is necessary that the exploiters should not be able to live and rule in the old way. Only when the "lower classes" do not want the old, and when the "upper classes" cannot continue in the old way, then only can revolution conquer. This truth may be expressed in other words: Revolution is impossible without a national crisis affecting both the exploited and the exploiters. It follows that for revolution it is essential, first, that a majority of the workers (or at least a majority of the class-conscious, thinking, politically active workers) should fully understand that revolution is necessary and be ready to sacrifice their lives for it; secondly, that the ruling classes be in a state of governmental crisis which draws even the most backward masses into politics (**a symptom of every real revolution is the rapid, tenfold, and even hundredfold, increase in the number of representatives of the toiling masses—who hitherto have been apathetic—capable of waging the political struggle**) weakens the government and makes it possible for the revolutionaries to overthrow it rapidly.

### ART.

**(From "Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy." By Karl Marx.)**

(According to note by Karl Kautsky, this is a fragmentary sketch of a treatise that was to have served as an introduction to his main work. . . .) It is not the introduction to the work published under the title "Critique." It is published as an appendix

to the "Critique," Kerr Edition, p. 265. Quote begins on page 309 and continues to end of MS.

In square brackets are K.K.'s suggestions for indecipherable words.

"It is well known that certain periods of highest development of art stand in no direct connection with the general development of society, nor with the material basis and the skeleton structure of its organisation. Witness the example of the Greeks as compared with the modern nations or even Shakespeare. As regards certain forms of art, as e.g., the epos, it is admitted that they can never be produced in the world-epochmaking form as soon as art as such comes into existence; in other words, that in the domain of art certain important forms of it are possible only at a low stage of its development. If that be true of the mutual relations of different forms of art within the domain of art itself, it is far less surprising that the same is true of the relations of art as a whole to the general development of society. The difficulty lies only in general formulation of these contradictions. No sooner are they specified than they are explained. Let us take for instance the relation of Greek art. and of that of Shakespeare's time to our own. It is a well-known fact that Greek mythology was not only the arsenal of Greek art, but also the very ground from which it had sprung. Is the view of nature and of social relations which shaped Greek imagination and Greek [art] possible in the stage of automatic machinery, and railways, and locomotives and electric telegraphs? Where does Vulcan come in as against Roberts & Co.; Jupiter, as against the lightning rod; and Hermes, as against the Credit Mobilier? All mythology masters and dominates and shapes the forces of nature in and through the imagination; hence it disappears as soon as man gains mastery over the forces of nature. What becomes of the Goddess Fame side by side with Printing House Square?"<sup>1</sup>

"Greek art presupposes the existence of Greek mythology, i.e., that nature and even the form of society are wrought up in popular fancy in an unconsciously artistic fashion. That is its material. Not, however, any mythology taken at random, nor any accidental unconsciously artistic elaboration of nature (including under the latter all objects, hence [also] society). Egyptian mythology could never be the soil or womb which would give birth to Greek art. But in any event [there had to be] a mythology. In no event [could Greek art originate] in a society which excludes any mythological explanation of nature, any mythological attitude towards it and which requires from the artist an imagination free from mythology.

"Looking at it from another side, is Achilles possible side by side with powder and lead? Or is the Iliad at all compatible with the printing press and steam press? Does not singing and reciting

<sup>1</sup> The site of the "Times" building in London.—K.K.

and the Muses necessarily go out of existence with the appearance of the printer's bar, and do not, therefore, disappear the pre-requisites of epic poetry?

"But the difficulty is not in grasping the idea that Greek art and epos are bound up with certain forms of social development. It rather lies in understanding why they still constitute with us a source of aesthetic enjoyment and in certain respects prevail as the standard and model beyond attainment.

"A man cannot become a child again unless he becomes childish. But does he not enjoy the artless ways of the child and must he not strive to reproduce its truth on a higher plane? Is not the character of every epoch revived perfectly true to nature in child nature? Why should the social childhood of mankind, where it had obtained its most beautiful development, not exert an eternal charm as an age that will never return? There are ill-bred children and precocious children. Many of the ancient nations belong to the latter class. The Greeks were normal children. The charm their art has for us does not conflict with the primitive character of the social order from which it had sprung. It is rather the product of the latter, and is rather due to the fact that the unripe social conditions under which the art arose and under which alone it could appear can never return."

## FROM "DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM AND COMMUNISM."

By L. Rudas.

The greatest strength of historical materialism is precisely that it is proved by practice.

There is no such thing as "human-nature" in general, without further qualification, equally the same and invariable for all historical periods and classes.

Man is an historical product, a product of the given society in which he lives.

"Human-nature" therefore changes together with the development of society, and as long as society is divided into classes "human-nature" changes also with the classes to which its owners belong.

Dialectical materialism never asserted that the motive of development is antagonism.

On the contrary, Engels and Lenin categorically protested against the identification of antagonism with contradiction, of which the latter is indeed the driving force of development in society not less than in nature.

"Totally inexact," writes Lenin against Bukharin, who identified contradiction and antagonism in his "Transition Period." "Antagonism and contradiction are far from being the same. The first will disappear, the second remain, under socialism."

Neither Marx, nor Engels, nor Lenin ever said that the dialectical process operates in society by the antagonisms of classes.

They always said that it operates by the contradiction between the productive forces and productive relations.

In Marx's Preface to "Critique of Political Economy" he does not even mention the classes; there is not a single word about the classes and class antagonisms.

Class antagonisms are rooted in the deeper lying contradiction between the productive forces and productive relations, they are the driving forces in class society only because they are the expression, the result of the decisive contradiction of class society.

The philosophy of dialectical materialism which was originated by such geniuses as Marx, Engels and Lenin, which is the basis of the most powerful movement in the history of the world, the Communist Movement, our sharpest weapon in the struggle for the liberation of the proletariat—a philosophy which is daily celebrating the greatest triumphs in the construction of a new order in the land of socialism—such a philosophy is not the ordinary philosophy of the schools and can neither be measured by the standard of the schools nor understood by them.

#### EXTRACT FROM KARL MARX—SELECTED WORKS. Vol. I.

Engels to Joseph Bloch,<sup>1</sup> London, September 21, 1890.

According to the materialist conception of history the determining element in history is ultimately the production and reproduction in real life. More than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. If, therefore, somebody twists this into the statement that the economic element is the only determining one, he transforms it into a meaningless, abstract and absurd phrase. The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure—political forms of the class struggle and its consequences, constitutions established by the victorious class after a successful battle, etc.—forms of law—and then even the reflexes of all these actual struggles in the brains of the combatants: political, legal, philosophical theories, religious ideas and their further development into system of dogma—also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles and in many cases preponderate in determining their form. There is an interaction of all these elements in which, amid all the endless host of accidents (i.e., of things and events, whose inner connection is so remote or so impossible to prove that we regard it as absent and can neglect it), the economic movement finally asserts itself as necessary. Otherwise the application of the theory to any period of history one chose would be easier than the solution of a simple equation of the first degree.

We make our own history, but in the first place under very definite presuppositions and conditions. Among these the economic ones are finally decisive. But the political, etc., ones, and indeed even the traditions which haunt human minds, also play a part,

<sup>1</sup> This letter is an answer to the question: How do Marx and Engels understand the basic principle of the materialist conception of history? According to their conception, is the determining factor in the final analysis only production and reproduction in actual life, or is this only the basis for all other relations, which themselves exert a further influence.—Ed.

although not the decisive one. The Prussian state arose and developed from historical, ultimately from economic causes. But it could scarcely be maintained without pedantry that among the many small states of North Germany, Brandenburg was specifically determined by economic necessity to become the great power embodying the economic, linguistic, and, after the Reformation, also the religious difference between north and south and not by other elements as well (above all by its entanglement with Poland, owing to the possession of Prussia, and hence with international, political relations—which were indeed also decisive in the formation of the Austrian dynastic power). Without making oneself ridiculous, it would be difficult to succeed in explaining in terms of economics the existence of every small state in Germany, past and present, or the origin of the High German consonant mutations, which the geographical wall of partition formed by the mountains from the Sudetic range to the Taunas extended to a regular division throughout Germany.

In the second place, however, history makes itself in such a way that the final result always arises from conflicts between many individual wills, of which each again has been made what it is by a host of particular conditions of life. Thus there are innumerable intersecting forces, an infinite series of parallelograms of forces which give rise to one resultant—the historical event. This again may itself be viewed as the product of a power which, taken as a whole, works unconsciously and without volition. For what each individual wills is obstructed by everyone else, and what emerges is something that no one willed. Thus past history proceeds in the manner of a natural process and is also essentially subject to the same laws of movement. But from the fact that individual wills—of which each desires what he is impelled to by his physical constitution and external, in the last resort economic, circumstances (either his own personal circumstances or those of society in general)—do not attain what they want, but are merged into a collective mean, a common resultant, it must not be concluded that their value equals 0. On the contrary, each contributes to the resultant and is to this degree involved in it.

I would ask you to study this theory further from its original sources and not at second-hand, it is really much easier. Marx hardly wrote anything in which it did not play a part. But especially The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte is a most excellent example of its application. There are also many allusions in Capital. Then I may also direct you to my writings: Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science and Ludwig Feuerbach and the Outcome of Classical German Philosophy, in which I have given the most detailed account of historical materialism which, so far as I know, exists.

Marx and I are ourselves partly to blame for the fact that younger writers sometimes lay more stress on the economic side than is due to it. We had to emphasise this main principle in opposition to our adversaries, who denied it, and we had not always the time, the place or the opportunity to allow the other elements involved in the interaction to come into their rights. But when it was a case of presenting a section of history, that is, of a practical application, the thing was different and there no error was possible. Unfortunately, however, it happens only too often that people think they have fully understood a theory and can apply it without more ado from the moment they have mastered its main principles, and those even not always correctly. And I cannot exempt many of the more recent "Marxists" from this reproach, for the most wonderful rubbish has been produced from this quarter, too.

**Engels to Conrad Schmidt, London, October 27, 1890:**

... The thing<sup>1</sup> is easiest to grasp from the point of view of the division of labour. Society gives rise to certain common functions which it cannot dispense with. The persons selected for these functions form a new branch of the division of labour within society. This gives them particular interests, distinct too from the interests of those who gave them their office; they make themselves independent of the latter and—the state is in being. And now the development is the same as it was with commodity trade and later with money trade; the new independent power, while having in the main to follow the movement of production, also, owing to its inward independence, the relative independence originally transferred to it and gradually further developed, reacts in its turn upon the conditions and course of production. It is the interaction of two unequal forces: on one hand the economic movement, on the other the new political power, which strives for as much independence as possible, and which, having once been established, is also endowed with a movement of its own. On the whole, the economic movement gets its way, but it has also to suffer reactions from the political movement which it established and endowed with relative independence itself, from the movement of the state power on the one hand and of the opposition simultaneously engendered on the other.

Just as the movement of the industrial market is, in the main and with the reservations already indicated, reflected in the money market, and, of course, in inverted form, so the struggle between the classes already existing and already in conflict with one another is reflected in the struggle between government and opposition, but also in inverted form, no longer directly but indirectly, not as a class struggle but as a fight for political principles, and so distorted that it has taken us thousands of years to get behind it again.

<sup>1</sup>The preceding part of the letter deals with the relations between the money market, trade and production.—Ed.

The reaction of the state power upon economic development can be one of three kinds: it can run in the same direction, and then development is more rapid; it can oppose the line of development, in which case nowadays state power in every great nation will go to pieces in the long run, or it can cut off the economic development from certain paths, and impose on it certain others. This case ultimately reduces itself to one of the two previous ones. But it is obvious that in cases two and three the political power can do great damage to the economic development and result in the squandering of great masses of energy and material.

Then there is also the case of the conquest and brutal destruction of economic resources, by which, in certain circumstances, a whole local or national economic development could formerly be ruined. Nowadays such a case usually has the opposite effect, at least among great nations: in the long run the defeated power often gains more economically, politically and morally than the victor.

It is similar with law. As soon as the new division of labour which creates professional lawyers becomes necessary, another new and independent sphere is opened up which, for all its general dependence on production and trade, still has its own capacity for reacting upon these spheres as well. In a modern state, law must not only correspond to the general economic position and be its expression, but must also be an expression which is consistent in itself, and which does not, owing to inner contradictions, look glaringly inconsistent. And in order to achieve this, the faithful reflection of economic conditions is more and more infringed upon. All the more so the more rarely it happens that a code of law is the blunt, unmitigated, unadulterated expression of the domination of a class—this in itself would already offend the "conception of justice." Even in the Code Napoleon the pure logical conception of justice held by the revolutionary bourgeoisie of 1792-96 is already adulterated in many ways, and in so far as it is embodied there has daily to undergo all sorts of attenuation owing to the rising power of the proletariat. Which does not prevent the Code Napoleon from being the statute book which serves as a basis for every new code of law in every part of the world. Thus to a great extent the course of the "development of law" only consists: first in the attempt to do away with the contradictions arising from the direct translation of economic relations into legal principles, and to establish a harmonious system of law, and then in the repeated breaches made in this system by the influence and pressure of further economic development, which involves it in further contradictions (I am only speaking here of civil law for the moment).

The reflection of economic relations as legal principles is necessarily also a topsyturvy one: it happens without the person who is acting being conscious of it; the jurist imagines he is operating with a priori principles, whereas they are really only economic

reflexes, so everything is upside down. And it seems to me obvious that this inversion, which, so long as it remains unrecognised, forms what we call ideological conception, reacts in its turn upon the economic basis and may, within certain limits, modify it. The basis of the law of inheritance—assuming that the stages reached in the development of the family are equal—is an economic one. But it would be difficult to prove, for instance, that the absolute liberty of the testator in England and the severe restrictions imposed upon him in France are only due in every detail to economic causes. Both react back, however, on the economic sphere to a very considerable extent, because they influence the division of property.

As to the realms of ideology which soar still higher in the air, religion, philosophy, etc., these have a prehistoric stock, found already in existence and taken over in the historic period, of what we should to-day call bunk. These various false conceptions of nature, of man's own being, of spirits, magic forces, etc., have for the most part only a negative economic basis; but the low economic development of the prehistoric period is supplemented and also partially conditioned and even caused by the false conceptions of nature. And even though economic necessity was the main driving force of the progressive knowledge of nature and becomes ever more so, it would surely be pedantic to try and find economic causes for all this primitive nonsense. The history of science is the history of the gradual clearing away of this nonsense or of its replacement by fresh but already less absurd nonsense. The people who deal with this belong in their turn to special spheres in the division of labour and appear to themselves to be working in an independent field. And in so far as they form an independent group within the social division of labour, in so far do their productions, including their errors, react back as an influence upon the whole development of society, even on its economic development. But all the same they themselves remain under the dominating influence of economic development. In philosophy, for instance, this can be most readily proved in the bourgeois period. Hobbes was the first modern materialist (in the eighteenth century sense) but he was an absolutist in a period when absolute monarchy was at its height throughout the whole of Europe and when the fight of absolute monarchy versus the people was beginning in England. Locke, both in religion and politics, was the child of the class compromise of 1688. The English Deists and their more consistent successors, the French materialists, were the true philosophers of the bourgeoisie: the French, even of the bourgeois revolution. The German petty bourgeois runs through German philosophy from Kant to Hegel, sometimes positively and sometimes negatively. But the philosophy of every epoch, since it is a definite sphere in the division of labour, has as its presupposition certain definite intellectual material handed down to it by its predecessors, from which it takes its start.

And that is why economically backward countries can still play first fiddle in philosophy: France in the eighteenth century compared with England, on whose philosophy the French based themselves, and later Germany in comparison with both. But the philosophy both of France and Germany and the general blossoming of literature at that time were also the result of a rising economic development. I consider the ultimate supremacy of economic development established in these spheres too, but it comes to pass within conditions imposed by the particular sphere itself: in philosophy, for instance, through the operation of economic influences (which again generally only act under political, etc., disguises) upon the existing philosophic material handed down by predecessors. Here economy creates nothing absolutely new (*a novo*), but it determines the way in which the existing material of thought is altered and further developed, and that too for the most part indirectly, for it is the political, legal and moral reflexes which exercise the greatest direct influence upon philosophy.

About religion I have said the most necessary things in the last section on Feuerbach.

If therefore Barth supposes that we deny any and every reaction of the political, etc., reflexes of the economic movement upon the movement itself, he is simply tilting at windmills. He has only got to look at Marx's "Eighteenth Brumaire," which deals almost exclusively with the particular part played by political struggles and events, of course, within their general dependence upon economic conditions. Or "Capital," the section on the working day, for instance, where legislation, which is surely a political act, has such a trenchant effect. Or the section on the history of the bourgeoisie (Chapter XXIV.). Or why do we fight for the political dictatorship of the proletariat if political power is economically impotent? Force (that is state power) is also an economic power.

But I have no time to criticise the book now: I must first get Volume III. out, and besides, I think too that Bernstein, for instance, could deal with it quite effectively.

What these gentlemen all lack is dialectic. They never see anything but here cause and there effect. That this is a hollow abstraction, that such metaphysical polar opposites only exist in the real world during crises, while the whole vast process proceeds in the form of interaction (though of very unequal forces, the economic movement being by far the strongest, most elemental and most decisive) and that here everything is relative and nothing is absolute—this they never begin to see. Hegel has never existed for them. . . .

Da

**Engels to Franz Mehring,<sup>1</sup> London, July 14, 1893.**

... Ideology is a process accomplished by the so-called thinker consciously indeed but with a false consciousness. The real motives impelling him remain unknown to him, otherwise it would not be an ideological process at all. Hence he imagines false or apparent motives. Because it is a process of thought he derives both its form and its content from pure thought, either his own or that of his predecessors. He works with mere thought material which he accepts without examination as the product of thought; he does not investigate further for a more remote process independent of thought; indeed its origin seems obvious to him, because, as all action is produced through the medium of thought, it also appears to him to be ultimately based upon thought. The ideologist who deals with history (history is here simply meant to comprise all the spheres—political, juridical, philosophical, theological—belonging to society and not only to nature), the ideologist dealing with history then, possesses in every sphere of science material which has formed itself independently out of the thought of previous generations and has gone through an independent series of developments in the brains of these successive generations. True, external facts belonging to its own or other spheres may have exercised a co-determining influence on this development, but the tacit presupposition is that these facts themselves are also only the fruits of a process of thought, and so we still remain within that realm of pure thought which has successfully digested the hardest facts.

It is above all this appearance of an independent history of state constitutions, of systems of law, of ideological conceptions in every separate domain, which dazzles most people.

If Luther and Calvin "overcome" the official Catholic religion or Hegel "overcomes" Fichte and Kant, or if the constitutional Montesquieu is indirectly "overcome" by Rousseau with his "Social Contract," each of these events remains within the sphere of theology, philosophy or political science, represents a stage in the history of these particular spheres of thought and never passes outside the sphere of thought. And since the bourgeois illusion of the eternity and the finality of capitalist production has been added as well, even the victory of the physiocrats and Adam Smith over the mercantilists is accounted as a sheer victory of thought; not as the reflection in thought of changed economic facts but as the finally achieved correct understanding of actual conditions subsisting always and everywhere—in fact if Richard Coeur-de-

1 The impulse to this letter was provided by Mehring's article "On Historical Materialism," published as an appendix to his book, "Die Lessing-legende" (The Lessing Legend). In this article Mehring mentions the work of the idealist Barth: "Die Geschichtsphilosophie—Hegel's und der Hegelianer bis auf Marx und Hartmann" (The Philosophy of History of Hegel and the Hegelians, down to Marx and Hartmann).—Ed.

Lion and Philip Augustus had introduced free trade instead of getting mixed up in the Crusades we should have been spared five hundred years of misery and stupidity.

This side of the matter, which I can only indicate here, we have all, I think, neglected more than it deserves. It is the old story: form is always neglected at first for content. As I say, I have done that too and the mistake has always only struck me later. So I am not only far from reproaching you with this in any way, but as the older of the guilty parties I have no right to do so, on the contrary; but I would like all the same to draw your attention to this point for the future. Hanging together with this too is the fatuous notion of the ideologists that because we deny an independent historical development to the various ideological spheres which play a part in history, we also deny them any effect upon history. The basis of this is the common undialectical conception of cause and effect as rigidly opposite poles, the total disregarding of interaction; these gentlemen often almost deliberately forget that once a historic element has been brought into the world by other elements, ultimately by economic facts, it also reacts in its turn and may react on its environment and even on its own causes. E.g., Barth on the priesthood and religion on your page 475.<sup>1</sup>

**Engels to Heinz Starkenburg,<sup>2</sup> London, January 25, 1894.**

1. What we understand by the economic conditions which we regard as the determining basis of the history of society are the methods by which human beings in a given society produce their means of subsistence and exchange the products among themselves (insofar as division of labour exists). Thus the entire technique of production and transport is here included. According to our conception this technique also determines the method of exchange and, further, the division of products and with it, after the dissolution

1 In the section of the article to which Engels refers, Mehring gives an extract from Barth's work, "The Philosophy of History of Hegel and the Hegelians, down to Marx and Hartmann," as follows:

"In the East there was created everywhere by religion a specially privileged priesthood which was freed from physical labour, and set apart for spiritual activity by the obligation of tribute laid on the other orders.

"While in Greek and Roman civilisation the activity of the priests was seldom relegated to special organs, Christianity returned to the oriental differentiation, created a special order of priests which it equipped abundantly, and thus set apart a part of the economic wealth as the material substrate for religious activity which quickly became a general mental activity."

Mehring further quotes a passage from Marx's "Capital," which explains the economic cause of the prominent role of the priests in ancient Egyptian economy: "The necessity of calculating the periods of the movement of the Nile created Egyptian astronomy, and with it the dominance of the priest classes as the leader of agriculture." ("Capital," Vol. I.)—Ed.

2 In this letter, Engels answers two questions: (1) How do economic relations have a causal effect? Are they an adequate cause, basis, agency, permanent condition, etc., for development? (2) What is the role played by the race factor and historical individuality?—Ed.



of tribal society, the division into classes also, and hence the relations of lordship and servitude and with them the state, politics, law, etc. Under economic conditions are further included the geographical basis in which they operate and those remnants of earlier stages of economic development which have actually been transmitted and have survived—often only through tradition or the force of inertia; also of course the external milieu which surrounds this form of society.

If, as you say, technique largely depends on the state of science, science depends far more still on the state and the requirements of technique. If society has a technical need, that helps science forward more than ten universities. The whole of hydrostatics (Torricelli, etc.) was called forth by the necessity for regulating the mountain streams of Italy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. We have only known anything reasonable about electricity since its technical applicability was discovered. But unfortunately it has become the custom in Germany to write the history of the sciences as if they had fallen from the skies.

2. We regard economic conditions as the factor which ultimately determines historical development. But race is itself an economic factor. Here, however, two points must not be overlooked:

(a) Political, juridical, philosophical, religious, literary, artistic, etc., development is based on economic development. But all these react upon one another and also upon the economic base. It is not that the economic position is the cause and alone active, while everything else only has a passive effect. There is, rather, interaction on the basis of the economic necessity, which ultimately always asserts itself. The state, for instance, exercises an influence by tariffs, free trade, good or bad fiscal system; and even the deadly inanition and impotence of the German petty bourgeois, arising from the miserable economic position of Germany from 1648 to 1830 and expressing itself first in pietism, then in sentimentality and cringing servility to princes and nobles, was not without economic effect. It was one of the greatest hindrances to recovery and was not shaken until the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars made the chronic misery an acute one. So it is not, as people try here and there conveniently to imagine, that the economic position produces an automatic effect. Men make their history themselves, only in given surroundings which condition it and on the basis of actual relations already existing, among which the economic relations, however much they may be influenced by the other political and ideological ones, are still ultimately the decisive ones, forming the red thread which runs through them and alone leads to understanding.

(b) Men make their history themselves, but not as yet with a collective will or according to a collective plan or even in a definitely defined given society. Their efforts clash, and for that very

reason all such societies are governed by necessity, which is supplemented by and appears under the forms of accident. The necessity which here asserts itself amidst all accident is again ultimately economic necessity. This is where the so-called great men come in for treatment. That such and such a man and precisely that man arises at that particular time in that given country is, of course, pure accident. But cut him out and there will be a demand for a substitute, and this substitute will be found, good or bad, but in the long run he will be found. That Napoleon, just that particular Corsican, should have been the military dictator whom the French Republic, exhausted by its own war, had rendered necessary, was an accident; but that, if a Napoleon had been lacking, another would have filled the place, is proved by the fact that the man has always been found as soon as he became necessary: Caesar, Augustus, Cromwell, etc. While Marx discovered the materialist conception of history, Thierry, Mignet, Guizot, and all the English historians up to 1850 are the proof that it was being striven for, and the discovery of the same conception by Morgan<sup>1</sup> proves that the time was ripe for it and that indeed it had to be discovered.

So with all the other accidents, and apparent accidents, of history. The further the particular sphere which we are investigating is removed from the economic sphere and approaches that of pure abstract ideology, the more shall we find it exhibiting accidents in its development, the more will its curve run in a zigzag. But if you plot the average axis of the curve, you will find that the axis of this curve will approach more and more nearly parallel to the axis of the curve of economic development the longer the period considered and the wider the field dealt with.

In Germany the greatest hindrance to correct understanding is the irresponsible neglect by literature of economic history. It is hard, not only to disaccustom oneself of the ideas of history drilled into one at school, but still more to rake up the necessary material for doing so. Who, for instance, has read old G. von Gulich,<sup>2</sup> whose dry collection of material nevertheless contains so much stuff for the clarification of innumerable political facts!

For the rest, the fine example which Marx has given in "The Eighteenth Brumaire" should already, I think, provide you fairly well with information on your questions, just because

<sup>1</sup> The work of the American savant, Lewis H. Morgan, *Ancient Society*, or researches in the Lines of Human Progress, from Savagery, through Barbarism, to Civilisation, appeared in 1877. Engels says in his preface to "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State": "It is Morgan's great merit to have discovered and restored the main features of this pre-historical foundation of our written history, and to have found in the sex linkages of the North American Indians the key which unlocks the most important, hitherto insoluble riddles of the most ancient Greek, Roman and German history.—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> G. von Gulich: *Historical Account of the Trade, Industry and Agriculture of the Most Important Commercial States of Our Time (1830)*.—Ed.

it is a practical example. I have also, I believe, already touched on most of the points in "Anti-Duhring" I., Chapters 9-11. and II., 2-4, as well as in III., I. or Introduction, and then in the last section of Feuerbach. . . .<sup>1</sup>

## ON HISTORICAL MATERIALISM.<sup>2</sup>

(Engels.)

I am perfectly aware that the contents of this work will meet with objection from a considerable portion of the British public. But if we Continentals had taken the slightest notice of the prejudices of British "respectability," we should be even worse off than we are. This book defends what we call "historical materialism," and the word materialism grates upon the ears of the immense majority of British readers. "Agnosticism"<sup>3</sup> might be tolerated, but materialism is utterly inadmissible.

And yet the original home of all modern materialism, from the seventeenth century onwards, is England.

"Materialism is the natural-born son of Great Britain. Already the British schoolman, Duns Scotus, asked 'whether it was impossible for matter to think?'

"In order to effect this miracle, he took refuge in God's omnipotence, i.e., he made theology preach materialism. Moreover, he was a nominalist. Nominalism,<sup>4</sup> the first form of materialism, is chiefly found among the English schoolmen.

"The real progenitor of English materialism is Bacon. To him natural philosophy is the only true philosophy, and physics based upon the experience of the senses is the chief part of natural philosophy. Anaxagoras and his homoeomeriae, Democritus and his atoms, he often quotes as his authorities. According to him the

<sup>1</sup> At the conclusion of this letter Engels requests that special importance should not be attached to the actual wording, but that rather chief attention should be given to the ideas as a whole. He did not have time, he said, to work out everything as exactly and carefully as was necessary for publication.—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> This article of Engels is a part of his English Introduction to the pamphlet, "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific." The beginning of this introduction is to be found on p. 137 of Marx, Sel. Works, and the immediate continuation and remaining part appears here. It is given as a separate article, with the title as above, because it was published as such by Engels himself in the German organ, the "Neue Zeit," 1892-93, Vol. I.—Ed.

<sup>3</sup> Agnosticism is derived from the Greek prefix a equals not, and gnosis equals knowing. The agnostic says: I do not know whether there is an objective reality which is reflected by our senses, i.e., he refuses openly to acknowledge materialism. For the bourgeois savants, agnosticism represents a partial recognition of materialism.—Ed.

<sup>4</sup> Nominalism is derived from the Latin nomen equals name, and is a school of mediaeval philosophy whose adherents maintained that concepts are only names of things themselves, that ideas and concepts had no independent existence. In contrast to Nominalism, another school—that of Realism—took up the point of view that concepts are real in themselves. In this way the second school expressed the standpoint of idealism.—Ed.

senses are infallible and the source of all knowledge. All science is based on experience, and consists in subjecting the data furnished by the senses to a rational method of investigation. Induction, analysis, comparison, observation, experiment, are the principal forms of such a rational method. Among the qualities inherent in matter, motion is the first and foremost, not only in the form of an impulse, a vital spirit, a tension—or a 'qual,' to use a term of Jacob Bohme's<sup>1</sup>—of matter.

"In Bacon, its first creator, materialism still occludes within itself the germs of a many-sided development. On the one hand, matter, surrounded by a sensuous, poetic glamour, seems to attract man's whole entity by winning smiles. On the other, the aphoristically formulated doctrine pullulates with inconsistencies imported from theology."

"In its further evolution, materialism becomes one-sided. Hobbes is the man who systematises Baconian materialism. Knowledge based upon the senses loses its poetic blossom, it passes into the abstract experience of the mathematician; geometry is proclaimed as the queen of sciences. Materialism takes to misanthropy. If it is to overcome its opponent, misanthropic, fleshless spiritualism, and that on the latter's own ground, materialism has to chastise its own flesh and turn ascetic. Thus, from a sensual, it passes into an intellectual entity; but thus, too, it evolves all the consistency, regardless of consequences, characteristic of the intellect.

"Hobbes, as Bacon's continuator, argues thus: if all human knowledge is furnished by the senses, then our concepts and ideas are but the phantoms, divested of their sensual forms, of the real world. Philosophy can but give names to these phantoms. One name may be applied to more than one of them. There may even be names of names. It would imply a contradiction if, on the one hand, we maintained that all ideas had their origin in the world of sensation, and, on the other, that a word was more than a word; that besides the beings known to us by our senses, beings which are one and all individuals, there existed also beings of a general, not individual, nature. An unbodily substance is the same absurdity as an unbodily body. Body, being, substance, are but different terms for the same reality. It is impossible to separate thought from matter that thinks. This matter is the substratum of all changes going on in the world. The word infinite is meaningless, unless it states that our mind is capable of performing an endless process of addition. Only material things being perceptible to us, we cannot know anything about the existence of God. My own

<sup>1</sup> "Qual" is a philosophical play upon words. Qual literally means torture, a pain which drives to action of some kind; at the same time the mystic Bohme puts into the German word something of the meaning of the Latin qualitas: his "qual" was the activating principle arising from, and promoting in its turn, the spontaneous development of the thing, relation, or person subject to it, in contradistinction to a pain inflicted from without (Note by F. Engels.)

existence alone is certain. Every human passion is a mechanical movement which has a beginning and an end. The objects of impulse are what we call good. Man is subject to the same laws as nature. Power and freedom are identical.

"Hobbes has systematised Bacon, without, however, furnishing a proof for Bacon's fundamental principle, the origin of all human knowledge from the world of sensation. It was Locke who, in his 'Essay on the Human Understanding,' supplied this proof.

"Hobbes has shattered the theistic prejudices of Baconian materialism; Collins, Dodwall, Coward, Hartley, Priestley, similarly shattered the last theological bars that still hemmed in Locke's sensationalism. At all events, for practical materialists, theism is but an easy-going way of getting rid of religion."<sup>1</sup>

Thus Karl Marx wrote about the British origin of modern materialism. If Englishmen nowadays do not exactly relish the compliment he paid their ancestors, more's the pity. It is none the less undeniable that Bacon, Hobbes and Locke are the fathers of that brilliant school of French materialists which made the eighteenth century, in spite of all battles on land and sea won over Frenchmen by Germans and Englishmen, a pre-eminently French century, even before that crowning French Revolution, the results of which we outsiders, in England as well as in Germany, are still trying to acclimatise.

There is no denying it. About the middle of this century, what struck every cultivated foreigner who set up his residence in England was what he was then bound to consider the religious bigotry and stupidity of the English respectable middle class. We, at that time, were all materialists, or, at least, very advanced free-thinkers, and to us it appeared inconceivable that almost all educated people in England should believe in all sorts of impossible miracles and that even geologists like Buckland and Mantell should contort the facts of their science so as not to clash too much with the myths of the book of Genesis, while, in order to find people who dared to use their own intellectual faculties with regard to religious matters, you had to go amongst the uneducated, the "great unwashed," as they were then called, the working people, especially the Owenite socialists.

But England has been "civilised" since then. The exhibition of 1851 sounded the knell of English insular exclusiveness. England became gradually internationalised—in diet, in manners, in ideas; so much so that I began to wish that some English manners and customs had made as much headway on the Continent as other Continental habits have made here. Anyhow, the introduction and spread of salad oil (before 1851 known only to the aristocracy) has been accompanied by a fatal spread of Continental scepticism

<sup>1</sup> Marx and Engels, *Die Heilige Familie*, Frankfurt a. M. 1845, pp. 201-04. (Note by F. Engels).

in matters religious, and it has come to this, that agnosticism, though not yet considered "the thing" quite as much as the Church of England, is yet very nearly on a par, as far as respectability goes, with Baptism, and decidedly ranks above the Salvation Army. And I cannot help believing that under these circumstances it will be consoling to many, who sincerely regret and condemn this progress of infidelity, to learn that these "new-fangled notions" are not of foreign origin, are not "made in Germany," like so many other articles of daily use, but are undoubtedly Old English, and that their British originators two hundred years ago went a good deal further than their descendants now dare to venture.

What, indeed, is agnosticism but, to use an expressive Lancashire term, "shamefaced" materialism? The agnostic's conception of nature is materialistic throughout. The entire natural world is governed by law, and absolutely excludes the intervention of action from without. But, he adds, we have no means either of ascertaining or of disproving the existence of some supreme being beyond the known Universe. Now, this might hold good at the time when Laplace, to Napoleon's question why in the great astronomers' "*Mecanique Celeste*," the Creator was not even mentioned, proudly replied: "*Je n'avais pas besoin de cette hypothese*." But nowadays, in our revolutionary conception of the Universe, there is absolutely no room for either a creator or a ruler, and to talk of a supreme being shut out from the whole existing world implies a contradiction in terms, and, as it seems to me, a gratuitous insult to the feelings of religious people.

Again, our agnostic admits that all our knowledge is based upon the information imparted to us by our senses. But, he adds, how do we know that our senses give us correct representations 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 or their qualities, of which he cannot know anything for certain, but merely the impressions which they have produced on his senses. 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 That*." 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, 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—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 of our perceptions with the objective 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: We may correctly perceive the qualities of a thing, but we cannot by any sensible or mental process grasp the thing-in-itself. This "thing-in-itself" is beyond our ken. To this Hegel, long since, has replied: If you know all the qualities of a thing, you know the thing itself; nothing remains but the fact that the said thing exists without us; and when your senses have taught you that fact, you have grasped the last remnant of the thing-in-itself—Kant's celebrated unknowable "Ding an sich." To which it may be added that in Kant's time our knowledge of natural objects was indeed so fragmentary that he might well suspect, behind the little he knew about each of them, a mysterious "thing-in-itself." But one after another these ungraspable things have been grasped, analysed, and, what is more, reproduced by the giant progress of science; and what we can produce, we certainly cannot consider as unknowable.

To the chemistry of the first half of this century organic substances were such mysterious objects; now we learn to build them up one after another from their chemical elements without the aid of organic processes. Modern chemists declare that as soon as the chemical constitution of no matter what body is known, it can be built up from its elements. We are still far from knowing the constitution of the highest organic substances, the albuminous bodies; but there is no reason why we should not, if only after centuries, arrive at that knowledge and, armed with it, produce artificial albumen. But if we arrive at that, we shall at the same time have produced organic life, for life, from its lowest to its highest forms, is but the normal mode of existence of albuminous bodies.

As soon, however, as our agnostic has made these formal mental reservations, he talks and acts as the rank materialist he at bottom is. He may say that, as far as we know, matter and motion or, as it is now called, energy, can neither be created nor destroyed, but that we have no proof of their not having been created at some time or other. But if you try to use this admission against him in any particular case, he will quickly put you out of court. If he admits

the possibility of spiritualism in abstracto, he will have none of it in concreto. As far as we know, and can know, he will tell you there is no Creator and no Ruler of the universe; as far as we are concerned, matter and energy can neither be created nor annihilated; for us, mind is a mode of energy, a function of the brain; all we know is that the material world is governed by immutable laws, and so forth. Thus, as far as he is a scientific man, as far as he knows anything, he is a materialist; outside this science, in spheres about which he knows nothing, he translates his ignorance into Greek and calls it agnosticism.

At all events, one thing seems clear: even if I were an agnostic, it is evident that I could not describe the conception of history sketched out in this little book, as "historical agnosticism." Religious people would laugh at me, agnostics would indignantly ask, Was I going to make fun of them? And thus I hope even British respectability will not be overshocked if I use, in English, as well as in so many other languages, the term "historical materialism," to designate that view of the course of history which seeks the ultimate cause and the great moving power of all important historic events in the economic development of society, in the changes in the modes of production and exchange, in the consequent division of society into distinct classes, and in the struggles of these classes against one another.

This indulgence will perhaps be accorded to me all the sooner if I show that historical materialism may be of advantage even to British respectability. I have mentioned the fact that, about forty or fifty years ago, any cultivated foreigner settling in England was struck by what he was then bound to consider the religious bigotry and stupidity of the English respectable middle class. I am now going to prove that the respectable English middle class of that time was not quite as stupid as it looked to the intelligent foreigner. Its religious leanings can be explained.

When Europe emerged from the Middle Ages the rising middle class of the towns constituted its revolutionary element. It had conquered a recognised position within mediaeval feudal organisation; but this position also had become too narrow for its expansive power. The development of the middle class, the bourgeoisie, became incompatible with the maintenance of the feudal system; the feudal system, therefore, had to fall.

But the great international centre of feudalism was the Roman Catholic Church. It united the whole of feudalised Western Europe, in spite of all internal wars, into one grand political system, opposed as much to the schismatic Greeks as to the Mohammedan countries. It surrounded feudal institutions with the halo of divine consecration. It had organised its own hierarchy on the feudal model, and, lastly, it was itself by far the most powerful feudal lord, holding, as it did, fully one-third of the soil of the Catholic world. Before profane feudalism could be successfully attacked in each country and in detail, this, its sacred central organisation, had to be destroyed.

Moreover, parallel with the rise of the middle class went on the great revival of science; astronomy, mechanics, physics, anatomy, physiology, were again cultivated. And the bourgeoisie, for the development of its industrial production, required a science which ascertained the physical properties of natural objects and the modes of action of the forces of nature. Now up to then science had but been the humble handmaid of the Church, had not been allowed to overstep the limits set by faith, and for that reason had been no science at all. Science rebelled against the Church; the bourgeoisie could not do without science, and, therefore, had to join in the rebellion.

The above, though touching but two of the points where the rising middle class was bound to come into collision with the established religion, will be sufficient to show: first, that the class most directly interested in the struggle against the pretensions of the Roman Church was the bourgeoisie; and, second, that every struggle against feudalism, at that time, had to take on a religious disguise, had to be directed against the Church in the first instance. But if the universities and the traders of the cities started the cry, it was sure to find, and did find, a strong echo in the masses of the country people, the peasants, who everywhere had to struggle for their very existence with their feudal lords, spiritual and temporal.

The long fight of the bourgeoisie against feudalism culminated in three great decisive battles.

The first was what is called the Protestant Reformation in Germany. The war cry raised against the Church by Luther was responded to by two insurrections of a political nature: first, that of the lower nobility under Franz von Sickingen (1523), then the great Peasants' War, 1525. Both were defeated, chiefly in consequence of the indecision of the parties most interested, the burghers of the towns—an indecision into the causes of which we cannot here enter. From that moment the struggle degenerated into a fight between the local princes and the central power, and ended by blotting out Germany, for two hundred years, from the politically active nations of Europe.

The Lutheran Reformation produced a new creed indeed—a religion adapted to absolute monarchy. No sooner were the peasants of North-east Germany converted to Lutheranism than they were from freemen reduced to serfs.

But where Luther failed, Calvin won the day. Calvin's creed was one fit for the boldest of the bourgeoisie of his time. His predestination doctrine was the religious expression of the fact that in the commercial world of competition success or failure does not depend upon a man's activity or cleverness, but upon circumstances uncontrollable by him. It is not of him that willeth or of him that runneth, but of the mercy of unknown superior economic powers; and this was especially true at a period of economic revolution, when all old commercial routes and centres were replaced by new ones, when India and America were opened to the world,

and when even the most sacred economic articles of faith—the value of gold and silver—began to totter and to break down. Calvin's Church constitution was thoroughly democratic and republican; and where the Kingdom of God was republicanised, could the kingdoms of this world remain subject to monarchs, bishops and lords? While German Lutheranism became a willing tool in the hands of princes, Calvinism founded a republic in Holland and active republican parties in England, and, above all, Scotland.

In Calvinism, the second great bourgeois upheaval found its doctrine ready cut and dried. This upheaval took place in England. The middle class of the towns brought it on, and the yeomanry of the country districts fought it out. Curiously enough, in all the three great bourgeois risings, the peasantry furnishes the army that has to do the fighting; and the peasantry is just the class that, the victory once gained, is most surely ruined by the economic consequences of that victory.

A hundred years after Cromwell, the yeomanry of England had almost disappeared. Anyhow, had it not been for that yeomanry and for the plebeian element in the towns, the bourgeoisie alone would never have fought the matter out to the bitter end, and would never have brought Charles I. to the scaffold. In order to secure even those conquests of the bourgeoisie that were ripe for gathering at the time, the revolution had to be carried considerably further—exactly as in 1793 in France and 1848 in Germany. This seems, in fact, to be one of the laws of evolution of bourgeois society.

Well, upon this excess of revolutionary activity there necessarily followed the inevitable reaction which in its turn went beyond the point where it might have maintained itself. After a series of oscillations, the new centre of gravity was at last attained and became a new starting point. The grand period of English history, known to respectability under the name of "The Great Rebellion," and the struggles succeeding it, were brought to a close by the comparatively puny event entitled by Liberal historians, "the Glorious Revolution."

The new starting-point was a compromise between the rising middle class and the ex-feudal landowners. The latter, though called, as now, the aristocracy, had been long since on the way which led them to become what Louis Philippe in France became at a much later period, "the first bourgeois of the kingdom." Fortunately for England, the old feudal barons had killed one another during the Wars of the Roses. Their successors, though mostly scions of the old families, had been so much out of the direct line of descent that they constituted quite a new body, with habits and tendencies far more bourgeois than feudal. They fully understood the value of money, and at once began to increase their rents by turning hundreds of small farmers out and replacing them by sheep.

Henry VIII., while squandering the Church lands, created fresh bourgeois landlords by wholesale; the innumerable confiscations of estates regranted to absolute or relative upstarts, and continued during the whole of the seventeenth century, had the same result. Consequently, ever since Henry VII., the English "aristocracy," far from counteracting the development of industrial production, had, on the contrary, sought to indirectly profit thereby; and there had always been a section of the great landowners willing, from economical or political reasons, to co-operate with the leading men of the financial and industrial bourgeoisie. The compromise of 1689 was, therefore, easily accomplished.

The political spoils of "pelf and place" were left to the great landowning families, provided the economic interests of the financial, manufacturing and commercial middle class were sufficiently attended to. And these economic interests were at that time powerful enough to determine the general policy of the nation. There might be squabbles about matters of detail, but, on the whole, the aristocratic oligarchy knew too well that its own economic prosperity was irretrievably bound up with that of the industrial and commercial middle class.

From that time, the bourgeoisie was a humble, but still a recognised component of the ruling classes of England. With the rest of them, it had a common interest in keeping in subjection the great working mass of the nation. The merchant or manufacturer himself stood in the position of master, or, as it was until lately called, of "natural superior" to his clerks, his workpeople, his domestic servants. His interest was to get as much and as good work out of them as he could; for this end they had to be trained to proper submission. He was himself religious; his religion had supplied the standard under which he had fought the king and the lords; he was not long in discovering the opportunities this same religion offered him for working upon the minds of his natural inferiors, and making them submissive to the behests of the masters it had pleased God to place over them. In short, the English bourgeoisie now had to take a part in keeping down the "lower orders," the great producing mass of the nation, and one of the means employed for that purpose was the influence of religion.

There was another fact that contributed to strengthen the religious leanings of the bourgeoisie. That was the rise of materialism in England. This new doctrine not only shocked the pious feelings of the middle class; it announced itself as a philosophy only fit for scholars and cultivated men of the world, in contrast to religion which was good enough for the uneducated masses, including the bourgeoisie. With Hobbes it stepped on the stage as a defender of royal prerogative and omnipotence; it called upon absolute monarchy to keep down that puer robustus sed malitiosus, to wit, the people. Similarly, with the successors of Hobbes, with Bolingbroke, Shaftesbury, etc., the new deistic form of materialism

remained an aristocratic, esoteric doctrine, and, therefore, hateful to the middle class both for its religious heresy and for its anti-bourgeois political connections. Accordingly, in opposition to the materialism and deism of the aristocracy, those Protestant sects which had furnished the flag and the fighting contingent against the Stuarts, continued to furnish the main strength of the progressive middle class, and form even to-day the backbone of "the Great Liberal Party."

In the meantime materialism passed from England to France, where it met and coalesced with another materialistic school of philosophers, a branch of Cartesianism. In France, too, it remained at first an exclusively aristocratic doctrine. But soon its revolutionary character asserted itself. The French materialists did not limit their criticism to matters of religious belief; they extended it to whatever scientific tradition or political institution they met with; and to prove the claim of their doctrine to universal application, they took the shortest cut, and boldly applied it to all subjects of knowledge in the giant work after which they were named—the "Encyclopedie." Thus, in one or the other of its two forms—avowed materialism or deism—it became the creed of the whole cultured youth of France; so much so that, when the Great Revolution broke out, the doctrine hatched by the English Royalists gave a theoretical flag to French Republicans and Terrorists, and furnished the text for the Declaration of the Rights of Man. The Great French Revolution was the third uprising of the bourgeoisie, but the first that had entirely cast off the religious cloak and was fought out on undisguised political lines; it was the first, too, that was really fought out up to the destruction of one of the combatants, the aristocracy, and the complete triumph of the other, the bourgeoisie.

In England the continuity of pre-revolutionary and post-revolutionary institutions, and the compromise between landlords and capitalists, found its expression in the continuity of judicial precedents and in the religious preservation of the feudal forms of the law. In France the revolution constituted a complete breach with the traditions of the past; it cleared out the very last vestiges of feudalism, and created in the Code Civil a masterly adaptation of the old Roman law—that almost perfect expression of the juridical relations corresponding to the economic stage called by Marx the production of commodities—to modern capitalistic conditions; so masterly that this French revolutionary code still serves as a model for reforms of the law of property in all other countries, not excepting England. Let us, however, not forget that if English law continues to express the economic relations of capitalistic society in that barbarous feudal language which corresponds to the thing expressed, just as English spelling corresponds to English pronunciation—"vous ecrivez Londres et vous prononcez Constantinople," said a Frenchman—that same English law is the only



one which has preserved through the ages, and transmitted to America and the Colonies the best part of that old Germanic personal freedom, local self-government and independence from all interference but that of the law courts, which on the Continent has been lost during the period of absolute monarchy, and has nowhere been as yet fully recovered.

To return to our British bourgeois. The French Revolution gave him a splendid opportunity, with the help of the Continental monarchies, to destroy French maritime commerce, to annex French colonies, and to crush the last French pretensions to maritime rivalry. That was one reason why he fought it. Another was that the ways of this revolution went very much against his grain. Not only its "execrable" terrorism, but the very attempt to carry bourgeois rule to extremes. What should the British bourgeois do without his aristocracy, that taught him manners, such as they were, and invented fashions for him; that furnished officers for the army, which kept order at home, and the navy, which conquered colonial possessions and new markets abroad? There was indeed a progressive minority of the bourgeoisie, that minority whose interests were not so well attended to under the compromise; this section, composed chiefly of the less wealthy middle class, did sympathise with the revolution, but it was powerless in Parliament.

Thus, if materialism became the creed of the French Revolution, the God-fearing English bourgeois held all the faster to his religion. Had not the reign of terror in Paris proved what was the upshot if the religious instincts of the masses were lost? The more materialism spread from France to neighbouring countries, and was reinforced by similar doctrinal currents, notably by German philosophy, the more, in fact, materialism and free thought generally became on the Continent the necessary qualifications of a cultivated man, the more stubbornly the English middle class stuck to its manifold religious creeds. These creeds might differ from one another, but they were, all of them, distinctly religious, Christian creeds.

While the revolution ensured the political triumph of the bourgeoisie in France; in England Watt, Arkwright, Cartwright, and others initiated an industrial revolution, which completely shifted the centre of gravity of economic power. The wealth of the bourgeoisie increased considerably faster than that of the landed aristocracy. Within the bourgeoisie itself the financial aristocracy, the bankers, etc., were more and more pushed into the background by the manufacturers. The compromise of 1689, even after the gradual changes it had undergone in favour of the bourgeoisie, no longer corresponded to the relative position of the parties to it. The character of these parties, too, had changed; the bourgeoisie of 1830 was very different from that of the preceding century.

The political power still left to the aristocracy, and used by them to resist the pretensions of the new industrial bourgeoisie, became incompatible with the new economic interests. A fresh struggle with the aristocracy was necessary; it could end only in a victory of the new economic power. First, the Reform Act was pushed through, in spite of all resistance, under the impulse of the French Revolution of 1830. It gave to the bourgeoisie a recognised and powerful place in Parliament. Then the repeal of the Corn Laws, which settled, once and for all, the supremacy of the bourgeoisie, and especially of its most active portion, the manufacturers, over the landed aristocracy. This was the greatest victory of the bourgeoisie; it was, however, also the last it gained in its own exclusive interest. Whatever triumphs it obtained later on, it had to share with a new social power, first its ally, but soon its rival.

The industrial revolution had created a class of large manufacturing capitalists, but also a class—and a far more numerous one—of manufacturing workpeople. This class gradually increased in numbers, in proportion as the industrial revolution seized upon one branch of manufacture after another, and in the same proportion it increased in power. This power it proved as early as 1824 by forcing a reluctant Parliament to repeal the Acts forbidding combinations of workmen. During the Reform agitation, the workmen constituted the Radical wing of the Reform Party; the Act of 1832 having excluded them from the suffrage, they formulated their demands in the People's Charter, and constituted themselves. in opposition to the great bourgeois Anti-Corn Law Party, into an independent party, the Chartists, the first workingmen's party of modern times.

Then came the Continental revolutions of February and March, 1848, in which the working people played such a prominent part, and, at least in Paris, put forward demands which were certainly inadmissible from the point of view of capitalist society. And then came the general reaction. First the defeat of the Chartists on April 10, 1848, then the crushing of the Paris workingmen's insurrection in June of the same year, then the disasters of 1849 in Italy, Hungary, South Germany, and at last the victory of Louis Bonaparte over Paris, December 2, 1851. For a time, at least, the bugbear of working class pretensions was put down, but at what cost! If the British bourgeois had been convinced before of the necessity of maintaining the common people in a religious mood, how much more must he feel that necessity after all these experiences? Regardless of the sneers of his Continental compeers, he continued to spend thousands and tens of thousands, year after year, upon the evangelisation of the lower orders; not content with his own native religious machinery, he appealed to Brother Jonathan, the greatest organiser in existence of religion as a trade, and imported from America revivalism, Moody and Sankey, and the like; and, finally, he accepted the dangerous aid of the Salvation Army, which revives the propaganda of early Christianity, appeals to the poor as the

elect, fights capitalism in a religious way, and thus fosters an element of early Christian class antagonism, which one day may become troublesome to the well-to-do people who now find the ready money for it.

It seems a law of historical development that the bourgeoisie can in no European country get hold of political power—at least for any length of time—in the same exclusive way in which the feudal aristocracy kept hold of it during the Middle Ages. Even in France, where feudalism was completely extinguished, the bourgeoisie, as a whole, has held full possession of the government for very short periods only.

During Louis Philippe's reign, 1830-48, a very small portion of the bourgeoisie ruled the kingdom; by far the larger part were excluded from the suffrage by the high qualification. Under the second republic, 1848-51, the whole bourgeoisie ruled, but for three years only; their incapacity brought on the second empire. It is only now, in the third republic, that the bourgeoisie as a whole have kept possession of the helm for more than twenty years; and they are already showing lively signs of decadence. A durable reign of bourgeoisie has been possible only in countries like America, where feudalism was unknown, and society at the very beginning started from a bourgeois basis. And even in France and America, the successors of the bourgeoisie, the working people, are already knocking at the door.

In England the bourgeoisie never held undivided sway. Even the victory of 1832 left the landed aristocracy in almost exclusive possession of all the leading Government offices. The meekness with which the wealthy middle class submitted to this remained inconceivable to me until the great Liberal manufacturer, Mr. W. A. Forster, in a public speech, implored the young men of Bradford to learn French as a means to get on in the world, and quoted from his own experience how sheepish he looked when, as a Cabinet Minister, he had to move in society where French was, at least, as necessary as English! The fact was, the English middle class of that time were, as a rule, quite uneducated upstarts, and could not help leaving to the aristocracy those superior Government places where other qualifications were required than mere insular narrowness and insular conceit, seasoned by business sharpness.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> And even in business matters, the conceit of national chauvinism is but a sorry adviser. Up to quite recently the average English manufacturer considered it derogatory for an Englishman to speak any language but his own, and felt rather proud than otherwise of the fact that "poor devils" of foreigners settled in England and took off his hands the trouble of disposing of his products abroad. He never noticed that these foreigners, mostly Germans, thus got command of a very large part of British foreign trade, imports and exports, and that the direct foreign trade of Englishmen became limited, almost entirely, to the colonies, China, the United States and South America. Nor did he notice that these Germans traded with other Germans abroad, who gradually organised a complete network of commercial colonies all over the world. But when Germany, about forty years ago, seriously began manufacturing for export, this network served her admirably in her transformation, in so short a time, from a corn exporting into a first-rate manufacturing country. Then, about ten years ago, the British manu-

Even now the endless newspaper debates about middle class education show that the English middle class does not yet consider itself good enough for the best education, and looks to something more modest. Thus, even after the repeal of the Corn Laws, it appeared a matter of course that the men who had carried the day, the Cobdens, Brights, Forsters, etc., should remain excluded from a share in the official government of the country, until twenty years afterwards a new Reform Act opened to them the door of the Cabinet. The English bourgeoisie are, up to the present day, so deeply penetrated by a sense of their social inferiority that they keep up, at their own expense and that of the nation, an ornamental caste of drones to represent the nation worthily at all State functions; and they consider themselves highly honoured whenever one of themselves is found worthy of admission into this select and privileged body, manufactured, after all, by themselves.

The industrial and commercial middle class had, therefore, not yet succeeded in driving the landed aristocracy completely from political power when another competitor, the working class, appeared on the stage. The reaction after the Chartist movement and the Continental revolutions, as well as the unparalleled extension of English trade from 1848-66 (ascribed vulgarly to Free Trade alone, but due far more to the colossal development of railways, ocean steamers and means of intercourse generally), had again driven the working class into the dependency of the Liberal Party, of which they formed, as in pre-Chartist times, the radical wing. Their claims to the franchise, however, gradually became irresistible; while the Whig leaders of the Liberals "funked." Disraeli showed his superiority by making the Tories seize the favourable moment and introduce household suffrage in the boroughs, along with a redistribution of seats.

Then followed the ballot; then in 1884 the extension of household suffrage to the counties and a fresh redistribution of seats, by which electoral districts were to some extent equalised. All these measures considerably increased the electoral power of the working class, so much so that in at least 150 to 200 constituencies that class now furnishes the majority of voters. But parliamentary government is a capital school for teaching respect for tradition; if the middle class look with awe and veneration upon what Lord John Manners playfully called "our old nobility," the mass of the working people then looked up with respect and deference to what used to be designated as "their betters," the middle class. Indeed, the British workman, some fifteen years ago, was the model workman, whose respectful regard for the position of his master, and whose self-restraining modesty in claiming rights for himself, con-

facturer got frightened, and asked his ambassadors and consuls how it was that he could no longer keep his customers together. The unanimous answer was: (1) You don't learn your customer's language, but expect him to speak your own. (2) You don't even try to suit your customer's wants, habits and tastes, but expect him to conform to your English ones. (Note by F. Engels).

soled our German economists of the "Katheder-Socialist"<sup>1</sup> school for the incurable communistic and revolutionary tendencies of their own working men at home.

But the English middle class—good men of business as they are—saw farther than the German professors. They had shared their power but reluctantly with the working class. They had learnt, during the Chartist years, what that puer robustus sed malitiosus, the people, is capable of. And since that time, they had been compelled to incorporate the better part of the People's Charter in the Statutes of the United Kingdom. Now, if ever, the people must be kept in order by moral means, and the first and foremost of all moral means of action upon the masses is and remains—religion. Hence the parson's majorities on the School Boards, hence the increasing self-taxation of the bourgeoisie for the support of all sorts of revivalism, from ritualism to the Salvation Army.

And now came the triumph of British respectability over the free thought and religious laxity of the Continental bourgeois. The workmen of France and Germany had become rebellious. They were thoroughly infected with socialism, and, for very good reasons, were not at all particular as to the legality of the means by which to secure their own ascendancy. The puer robustus, here, turned from day to day more malitiosus. Nothing remained to the French and German bourgeoisie as a last resource but to silently drop their free thought, as a youngster, when sea-sickness creeps upon him, quietly drops the burning cigar he brought swaggeringly on board; one by one the scoffers turned pious in outward behaviour, spoke with respect of the Church, its dogmas and rites, and even conformed with the latter as far as could not be helped. French bourgeois dined maigre on Fridays, and German ones sat out long Protestant sermons in their pews on Sundays. They had come to grief with materialism. "Die Religion muss dem Volk erhalten werden"—religion must be kept alive for the people—that was the only and the last means to save society from utter ruin. Unfortunately for themselves, they did not find this out until they had done their level best to break up religion for ever. And now it was the turn of the British bourgeoisie to sneer and say: "Why, you fools, I could have told you that two hundred years ago."

However, I am afraid neither the religious stolidity of the British, nor the post festum conversion of the Continental bourgeois will stem the rising proletarian tide. Tradition is a great retarding force, is the vis inertiae of history, but, being merely passive, is sure to be broken down; and thus religion will be no lasting safeguard to capitalist society. If our juridical, philosophical and religious ideas are the more or less remote offshoots of the economic relations prevailing in a given society, such ideas cannot, in the long run, withstand the effects of a complete change in these relations. And, unless we believe in supernatural revela-

tion, we must admit that no religious tenets will ever suffice to prop up a tottering society.

In fact, in England, too, the working people have begun to move again. They are no doubt shackled by traditions of various kinds. Bourgeois traditions, such as the widespread belief that there can be but two parties, Conservatives and Liberals, and that the working class must work out its salvation by and through the great Liberal Party. Workingmen's traditions, inherited from their first tentative efforts at independent action, such as the exclusion from ever so many old trade unions, of all applicants who have not gone through a regular apprenticeship; which means the breeding, by every such union, of its own blacklegs. But for all that the English working class is moving, as even Professor Brentano has sorrowfully had to report to his brother Katheder-Socialists. It moves, like all things in England, with a slow and measured step, with hesitation here, with more or less unfruitful, tentative attempts there; it moves now and then with an over-cautious mistrust of the name of socialism, while it gradually absorbs the substance; and the movement spreads and seizes one layer of the workers after another.

It has now shaken out of their torpor the unskilled labourers of the East End of London, and we all know what a splendid impulse these fresh forces have given it in return. And if the pace of the movement is not up to the impatience of some people, let them not forget that it is the working class which keeps alive the finest qualities of the English character, and that, if a step in advance is once gained in England, it is, as a rule, never lost afterwards. If the sons of the old Chartists, for reasons explained above, were not quite up to the mark, the grandsons bid fair to be worthy of their forefathers.

But the triumph of the European working class does not depend upon England alone. It can only be secured by the co-operation of, at least, England, France and Germany. In both the latter countries the working class movement is well ahead of England. In Germany it is even within measurable distance of success. The progress it has there made during the last twenty-five years is unparalleled. It advances with ever-increasing velocity. If the German middle class have shown themselves lamentably deficient in political capacity, discipline, courage, energy and perseverance, the German working class have given ample proof of all these qualities. Four hundred years ago, Germany was the starting point of the first upheaval of the European middle class; as things are now, is it outside the limits of possibility that Germany will be the scene, too, of the first great victory of the European proletariat?

April 20, 1892.

<sup>1</sup> Professorial Socialist.—Ed.

## THE ROLE OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN HISTORY.

By G. V. PLEKHANOV.

### PREFACE.

Plekhanov's essay, "The Role of the Individual in History," was first published in 1898 in "Nauchnoye Obozreniye" under the nom de plume of A. Kirsanov. Subsequently it was included in the selection of Plekhanov's works entitled "Twenty Years." In the "Complete Works" (Russian Edition) it is to be found in Vol. VIII, published in 1925.

This essay occupies a very prominent place among those of Plekhanov's works in which he substantiates and defends Marxism and advocates the Marxian theory of social development.

The opponents of Marxism long ago argued that Marxism repudiated the role and significance of the individual in social development, and that it converted historical progress itself into something fatalistic, nameless and impersonal. This false argument was put forward with particular zeal in the nineties of the last century by the Russian Narodniks, the bitterest enemies of Marxism.

Plekhanov's essay played a very important part in exposing this slanderous argument against Marxism, and in explaining the real views of Marxism as to the role of the individual in history.

This essay may be regarded as one of the best in Marxist literature. Excellently written, picturesque in style and sparkling with wit, it holds the reader even to-day and helps him properly to understand the problem of the role of the individual in social development.

Besides being a brilliant exposition of the views of Marxism on the role of the individual in history, this essay delivered a crushing blow to one of the fundamental principles of Narodnik theory—namely, the theory of "heroes" and the "mob" according to which human history develops, not as a process expressing definite laws, but only in accidental ways, in accordance with the prescriptions and fantasies of "critically thinking individuals"; it is made only by "heroes," while the masses of the people remain an "inert force," a "mob"; he (the "hero") "cannot help looking down upon it, cannot help realising that everything depends upon him, the hero, whereas the mob is a mass, totally lacking the creative element and only to be compared to an enormous number of noughts, which acquire beneficent significance only when a kind, 'critically thinking' unit condescendingly takes its place at their head." (Plekhanov, "The Development of the Monistic Conception of History," Complete Works, Vol. VII, p. 156, Russian edition.)

Plekhanov utterly shattered these views and simultaneously shattered the political conclusions which the Narodniks (and subsequently the Socialist-Revolutionaries) drew from this "theory"—namely, that the masses must abandon the revolutionary struggle.

that individual terrorism must be adopted, which excludes the organisation of a mass revolutionary party.

In this essay Plekhanov also shattered the arguments of the direct apologists of capitalism, who, because the character of social development is governed by laws, tried to find "theoretical" grounds for the argument that the workers must abandon the struggle against capitalism, thus striving to eliminate the principal driving force in historical progress, namely, the revolutionary class and the leaders of the revolutionary class.

The open champions and apologists of capitalism also tried to proclaim as the true spirit of Marxism the stupid thesis which the Narodniks, in deliberately perverting Marxism, attributed to it, viz., as social development is a process conforming to laws, "the individual can do nothing." Plekhanov also frustrated this attempt. Human history as a process expresses laws, but does not proceed independently of man; history is made by men who set the problems of progress and solve them in conformity with the historical conditions of the epoch. Hence, the activity of men cannot but be of enormous significance in history, and Plekhanov clearly revealed and proved the exceptional role which prominent individuals can play in history. He says in this essay that a great man is great because "he possesses qualities which make him most capable of serving the great social needs of his time, needs which arise as a result of general and particular causes. Carlyle, in his well-known book on heroes and hero-worship, calls great men beginners. This is a very apt description. A great man is precisely a beginner, because he sees further than others and desires things more strongly than others."

The strength of an outstanding individual lies in his contact with a class, with the masses, with the people; his strength lies in his ability to organise the masses, in his ability to foresee the course of historical progress. Without this ability, the role of the individual is reduced to nought. Emphasising the great strength of the masses as the genuine makers of history, Stalin says: "Only the people are immortal. Everything else is transient. That is why we must be able to value the confidence of the people."

Notwithstanding the fact that subsequently Plekhanov, isolating himself from the masses, became politically lame, as it were, the present essay retains its enormous significance to this day. It can help our young people to understanding properly the Marxian tenets on the role of the individual in history and to combat the survivals of Narodnik and Socialist Revolutionary views on this question.

Lenin wrote that "his (Plekhanov's) personal services in the past were enormous. During the twenty years, 1883-1903, he produced a large number of excellent works, particularly in opposition to the opportunists, Machists and Narodniks." "Collected Works," Vol. XVII, pp. 415-16, Russian edition.) Lenin urged young Communists to study Plekhanov's philosophical works, and insisted on their republication and inclusion in a "series of obliga-

tory text books on Communism." ("Collected Works," Vol. XXVI, p. 135, Russian edition.)

In the second half of the 'seventies the late Kablitz wrote an article entitled, "The Mind and the Senses as Factors of Progress," in which, referring to Spencer, he argued that the senses played the principal role in human progress, and that the mind played only a secondary role, and quite a subordinate one at that. A certain "esteemed sociologist" replied to Kablitz, expressing amusement and surprise at a theory which placed the mind "on the footboard." The "esteemed sociologist" was right, of course, in defending the mind. He would have been much more right, however, had he, without going into the details of the question that Kablitz had raised, proved that his very method of presenting it was impossible and impermissible. Indeed, the "factors" theory is unsound in itself, for it arbitrarily picks out different sides of social life, hypostasises them, converts them into forces of a special kind, which, from different sides and with unequal success, draw the social man along the path of progress.

But, this theory is still less sound in the form presented by Kablitz, who converted into special sociological hypotases, not the various sides of the activities of the social man, but the different spheres of the individual mind. This is a veritable Herculean pillar of abstraction; beyond this one cannot go, for beyond it lies the comic kingdom of utter and obvious absurdity. It is to this that the "esteemed sociologist" should have drawn the attention of Kablitz and his readers. Perhaps, after revealing the depths of abstraction into which the effort to find the predominating "factor" in history had led Kablitz, the "esteemed sociologist" might, by chance, have made some contribution to the critique of this factors theory. This would have been very useful for all of us at that time. But he proved unequal to his mission. He himself subscribed to that theory, differing from Kablitz only in his leanings towards eclecticism, and consequently, all the "factors" seemed to him to be equally important.

Subsequently, the eclectic nature of his mind found particularly striking expression in his attacks on dialectical materialism, which he regarded as a doctrine which sacrifices all other factors to the economic "factor" and reduces the role of the individual in history to nothing. It never occurred to the "esteemed sociologist" that the "factors" point of view is alien to dialectical materialism, and that only one who is utterly incapable of thinking logically can see in it any justification of so-called quietism. Incidentally, it must be observed that the slip made by our "esteemed sociologist" is not unique; very many others have made it, are making it, and probably will go on making it.

Materialists began to be accused of betraying leanings towards quietism even before they had worked out their dialectical conception of Nature and of history. Without making an excursion into

the "depth of time," we will recall the controversy between the celebrated English scientist, Priestley, and Price. Analysing Priestley's theories, Price argued that materialism was incompatible with the concept free will, and that it precluded all independent activity on the part of the individual. In reply, Priestley referred to everyday experience. He would not speak of himself, he said, though by no means the most apathetic of creatures, but where would one find more mental vigour, more activity, more force and persistence in the pursuit of extremely important aims, than among those who subscribe to the doctrine of necessity? Priestley had in view the religious, democratic sect then known as Christian Necessarians.<sup>1</sup> We do not know whether this sect was as active as Priestley, who belonged to it, thought it was. But that is not important. There cannot be the slightest doubt that the materialist conception of the human will is quite compatible with the most vigorous practical activity. Lanson observes that "all the doctrines which called for the utmost exertion of human will asserted, in principle, that the will was impotent; they rejected free will and subjected the world to fatalism."<sup>2</sup> Lanson was wrong in thinking that every repudiation of what is called free will leads to fatalism; but this did not prevent him from noting an extremely interesting historical fact. Indeed, history shows that even fatalism was not always a hindrance to energetic, practical action; on the contrary, in certain epochs it was a psychologically necessary basis for such action. In proof of this, we will point to the Puritans, who in energy excelled all the other parties in England in the seventeenth century; and to the followers of Mohammed, who in a short space of time subjugated an enormous part of the globe, stretching from India to Spain. Those who think that the conviction that a certain series of events is inevitable is sufficient to cause all psychological possibility of helping on, or counteracting, these events to disappear, are very much mistaken.<sup>3</sup>

Here, everything depends upon whether my activities constitute an inevitable link in the chain of inevitable events. If they

1 A Frenchman of the seventeenth century would have been surprised at this combination of materialism and religious dogma. In England, however, nobody thought it strange. Priestley, himself, was very religious. Different countries, different customs.

2 Cf. his "Histoire de la Litterature Francaise," Vol. I.

3 It is well known that, according to the doctrines of Calvin, all men's actions are predetermined by God: "By predestination we mean the eternal decree of God, by which he within himself has ordained what it behoves shall happen to each man." (Institutio, Book III, Ch. 5.) According to the same doctrine, God chooses certain of his servants to liberate unjustly oppressed peoples. Such a one was Moses, who liberated the people of Israel. Everything goes to show that Cromwell also regarded himself as such an instrument of God; he always called his actions the fruits of the will of God, and probably he was quite sincerely convinced that they were so. For him, all these actions were colored by necessity beforehand. This did not prevent him from striving for victory after victory; it even gave this striving indomitable power.

do, then I waver less and the more resolute are my actions. There is nothing surprising in this: when we say that a certain individual regards his activities as an inevitable link in the chain of inevitable events, we mean, among other things, that for this individual, lack of free will is tantamount to incapability of inaction, and that this lack of free will is reflected in his mind as the impossibility of acting differently from the way he is acting. This is precisely the psychological mood that can be expressed in the celebrated words of Luther: "Here I stand, I can do no other," and thanks to which men display the most indomitable energy, perform the most astonishing feats. Hamlet never knew this mood; that is why he was only capable of moaning and reflecting. And that is why Hamlet would never have accepted a philosophy, according to which freedom is merely transformed into mind. Fichte rightly said, "As the man is, so is his philosophy."

Some people here have taken seriously Stammler's remarks about the allegedly insoluble contradiction that is said to be characteristic of a certain West European social-political theory.<sup>1</sup> We have in mind the well-known example of the eclipse of the moon. As a matter of fact, this is a supremely absurd example. The combination of conditions that are necessary to cause an eclipse of the moon does not, and cannot under any circumstances, include human action; and, for this reason alone, projects to assist the eclipse of the moon can arise only in a lunatic asylum. But even if human action did serve as one of these conditions, none of those who keenly desired to see an eclipse of the moon would, if they were convinced that it would certainly take place without their aid, join the eclipse of the moon party. In this case, "quietism" would merely be abstention from unnecessary, i.e., useless, action and would have no affinity with real quietism. In order that the example of the eclipse of the moon may cease to be nonsensical in the case of the above-mentioned party that we are examining, it must be entirely changed. It would have to be imagined that the moon is gifted with a mind, and that her position in celestial space, which causes her eclipse, appears to her to be the fruit of the self-determination of her own will; that it not only gives her enormous pleasure, but is absolutely necessary for her peace of mind; and that this is why she always passionately strives to occupy this position.<sup>2</sup> After imagining all this, the question would have to be asked: What would the moon feel if she discovered, at last, that it is not her will, and not her "ideals," that determine her movement in celestial space, but on the contrary, that her movement determines her will and her "ideals"? According to Stammler, such a discovery would certainly make her incapable of moving, unless she succeeded in extricating herself from her predicament by some

<sup>1</sup> I.e., Marxism.—Trans.

<sup>2</sup> "It is as if the compass needles took pleasure in turning towards the north, believing that its movement was independent of any other cause, and unaware of the imperceptible movements of magnetic matter."—Leibnitz, *Theodicee*, Lausanne, 1760, p. 598.

logical contradiction. But such an assumption is totally groundless. This discovery might serve as a formal reason for the moon's bad temper, for feeling out of harmony with herself, for the contradiction between her "ideals" and mechanical reality. But since we are assuming that the "moon's psychological state" in general is, in the last analysis, determined by her movement, then the cause of her disturbed peace of mind must be sought for in her movement. If this subject were examined carefully it would have transpired, perhaps, that when the moon was at her apogee she grieved over the fact that her will was not free; and when she was at her perigee, this very circumstance served as a new, formal cause of her happiness and good spirits. Perhaps the opposite would have happened: perhaps it would have transpired that she found the means of reconciling free will with necessity, not at her perigee, but at her apogee. Be that as it may, such a reconciliation is undoubtedly possible; being conscious of necessity is quite compatible with the most energetic, practical action. At all events, this has been the case in history so far. Men who have repudiated free will have often excelled all their contemporaries in strength of will, and asserted their will to the utmost. Numerous examples of this can be quoted. They are universally known. They can be forgotten, as Stammler evidently does, only if one deliberately refuses to see historical reality as it actually is. This attitude is strongly marked, among our subjectivists for example, and among some German philistines. Philistines and subjectivists, however, are not men, but mere phantoms, as Belinsky would have said.

Let us, however, examine more closely the case when a man's own—past, present, or future—actions seem to him to be entirely coloured by necessity. We know already that such a man, regarding himself as a messenger of God, like Mohammed, as one chosen by ineluctable destiny, like Napoleon, or as the expression of the irresistible force of historical progress, like some of the public men in the nineteenth century, displays almost elemental strength of will, and sweeps from his path like a house of cards all the obstacles set up by the small-town Hamlets and Hamletkins.<sup>1</sup> But this case interests us now from another angle . . . namely, as follows: When the consciousness of my lack of free will presents itself to me only in the form of the complete subjective and objective impossibility of acting differently from the way I am acting, and when, at the same time, my actions are to me the most desirable of all other possible actions, then, in my mind, necessity becomes identified with freedom and freedom with necessity; and then, I

<sup>1</sup> We will quote another example, which vividly illustrates how strongly people of this category feel. In a letter to her teacher, Calvin Renee, Duchess of Farrara (of the House of Louis XII.), wrote as follows: "No, I have not forgotten what you wrote to me: that David bore mortal hatred towards the enemies of God. And I will never act differently, for if I knew that the King, my father, the Queen, my mother, the late Lord, my husband (feu monsieur mon mari) and all my children had been cast out by God, I would hate them with a mortal hatred, and would wish them in Hell," etc. What terrible, all-destroying energy the people who felt like this could display! And yet these people denied that there was such a thing as free will.



am unfree only in the sense that I cannot disturb this identity between freedom and necessity. I cannot oppose one to the other, I cannot feel the restraint of necessity. But such a lack of freedom is at the same time its fullest manifestation.

Zimmel says that freedom is always freedom from something, and, where freedom is not conceived as the opposite of restraint, it is meaningless. That is so, of course. But this slight, elementary truth cannot serve as a ground for refuting the thesis, which constitutes one of the most brilliant discoveries ever made by philosophical thought; that freedom means being conscious of necessity. Zimmel's definition is too narrow: it applies only to freedom from external restraint. As long as we are discussing only such restraints it would be extremely ridiculous to identify freedom with necessity: a pick-pocket is not free to steal your pocket-handkerchief while you are preventing him from doing so and until he has overcome your resistance in one way or another. In addition to this elementary and superficial conception of freedom, however, there is another, incomparably more profound. For those who are incapable of thinking philosophically this concept does not exist at all; and those who are capable of thinking philosophically grasp it only when they have cast off dualism and realise that, contrary to the assumption of the dualists, there is no gulf between the subject and the object.

The Russian subjectivist opposes his utopian ideals to our capitalist reality and goes no further. The subjectivists have stuck in the bog of dualism. The ideals of the so-called Russian "disciples"<sup>1</sup> resemble capitalist reality far less than the ideals of the subjectivists. Notwithstanding this, however, the "disciples" have found a bridge which unites ideals with reality. The "disciples" have elevated themselves to monism. In their opinion, capitalism, in the course of its development, will lead to its own negation and to the realisation of their, the Russian "disciples"—and not only the Russian—ideals. This is historical necessity. The "disciple" serves as an instrument of this necessity and cannot help doing so, owing to his social status, and to his mentality and temperament, which were created by his status. This, too, is an aspect of necessity. Since his social status has imbued him with this character and no other, he not only serves as an instrument of necessity and cannot help doing so, but he passionately desires, and cannot help desiring, to do so. This is an aspect of freedom, and moreover, of freedom that has grown out of necessity, i.e., to put it more correctly, it is freedom that is identical with necessity—it is necessity transformed into freedom.<sup>2</sup> This freedom is also freedom from a certain amount of restraint; it is also the antithesis of a certain amount of restriction. Profound definitions do not refute super-

<sup>1</sup> I.e., The Marxists.—Trans.

<sup>2</sup> "Necessity becomes freedom, not by disappearing, but only by the external expression of their inner fidelity."—Heger, "Wissenschaft der Logik," 1816.

ficial ones, but, supplementing them, include them in themselves. But what sort of restraint, what sort of restriction, is in question in this case? This is clear: the moral restraint which curbs the energy of those who have not cast off dualism; the restriction suffered by those who are unable to bridge the gulf between ideals and reality. Until the individual has won this freedom by heroic effort in philosophical thinking, he does not fully belong to himself, and his mental tortures are the shameful tribute he pays to external necessity that stands opposed to him. But as soon as this individual throws off the yoke of this painful and shameful restriction he is born for a new, full and hitherto never experienced life; and his free actions become the conscious and free expression of necessity. Then he will become a great social force; and then nothing can, and nothing will, prevent him from

Bursting on cunning falsehood

Like a storm of wrath divine. . . .

Again, being conscious of the absolute inevitability of a given phenomenon can only increase the energy of a man who sympathises with it and who regards himself as one of the forces which called it into being. If such a man, conscious of the inevitability of this phenomenon, folded his arms and did nothing, he would show that he was ignorant of arithmetic. Indeed, let us suppose that phenomenon A must necessarily take place under a given sum of circumstances. You have proved to me that a part of this sum of circumstances already exists and that the other part will exist in a given time, T. Being convinced of this, I, the man who sympathises with phenomenon A, exclaim: "Good!" and then go to sleep until the happy day when the event you have foretold takes place. What will be the result? The following: In your calculations the sum of circumstances necessary to bring about phenomenon A, included my activities, equal, let us say to *a*. As, however, I am immersed in deep slumber, the sum of circumstances favourable for the given phenomenon at time T will be, not S but S-*a*, which changes the situation. Perhaps my place will be taken by another man, who was also on the point of inaction, but was saved by the sight of my apathy, which to him appeared to be pernicious. In that case, force *a* will be replaced by force *b*, and if *a* equals *b* (*a=b*), the sum of circumstances favourable for A will remain equal to S, and phenomenon A will take place, after all, at time T.

But if my force cannot be regarded as being equal to zero, if I am a skilful and capable worker, and nobody has replaced me, then we will not have the full sum S, and phenomenon A will take place later than we assumed, or not as fully as we expected, or it may not take place at all. This is as clear as daylight; and if I do not understand it, if I think that S remains S even after I am replaced, it is only because I am unable to count. But am I the only one who is unable to count? You, who prophesied that the sum S would certainly be available at time T, did not foresee that

I would go to sleep immediately after my conversation with you; you were convinced that I would remain a good worker to the end; the force was less reliable than you thought. Hence, you, too, counted badly. But let us suppose that you had made no mistake, that you had made allowance for everything. In that case your calculations will assume the following form: You say that at time  $T$  the sum  $S$  will be available. This sum of circumstances will include my replacement as a negative magnitude; and it will also include, as a positive magnitude, the stimulating effect on strong-minded men of the conviction that their strivings and ideals are the subjective expression of objective necessity. In that case, the sum  $S$  will indeed be available at the time you appointed, and phenomenon  $A$  will take place. I think this is clear. But if this is clear, why was I confused by the idea that phenomenon  $A$  was inevitable? Why did it seem to me that it condemned me to inaction? Why in discussing it, did I forget the simplest rules of arithmetic? Probably because, owing to the circumstances of my upbringing, I already had a very strong leaning towards inaction and my conversation with you served as the drop which filled the cup of this laudable inclination to overflowing. That is all. Only in this sense—as the cause that revealed my moral flabbiness and uselessness—did the consciousness of necessity figure here. It cannot possibly be regarded as the cause of this flabbiness: the causes of it are the circumstances of my upbringing. And so . . . and so—arithmetic is a very respectable and useful science, the rules of which should not be forgotten even by—I would say particularly by—philosophers.

But what effect will the consciousness of the necessity of a given phenomenon have upon a strong man who does not sympathise with it and resists its taking place? Here the situation is somewhat different. It is very possible that it will cause the vigour of his resistance to relax. But when do the opponents of a given phenomenon become convinced that it is inevitable? When the circumstances favourable to it are very numerous and very strong. The fact that its opponents realise that the phenomenon is inevitable, and the relaxation of their energy are merely manifestations of the force of circumstances favourable to it. These manifestations, in their turn, are a part of the favourable circumstances.

But the vigour of resistance will not be relaxed among all the opponents; among some of them the consciousness that the phenomenon is inevitable will cause it to grow and become transformed into the vigour of despair. History in general, and the history of Russia in particular, provides not a few instructive examples of this sort of vigour. We hope the reader will be able to recall these without our assistance.

Here we are interrupted by Mr. Kareyev, who, while, of course, disagreeing with our views on freedom and necessity, and moreover, disapproving of our partiality for the "extremes" to which strong men go, nevertheless is pleased to meet in the pages of our

journal the idea that the individual may be a great social force. The worthy Professor joyfully exclaims, "I have always said that!" And this is true. Mr. Kareyev, and all the subjectivists, have always ascribed a very important role to the individual in history. And there was a time when they enjoyed considerable sympathy among advanced young people who were imbued with noble strivings to work for the commonweal and were, therefore, naturally inclined to attach great importance to individual initiative.

In essence, however, the subjectivists have never been able to solve, or even to present properly, the problem of the role of the individual in history. As against the influence of the laws of social-historical progress, they advanced the "activities of critically thinking individuals," and thus created, as it were, a new species of the factors theory; critically thinking individuals were one factor of this progress; its own laws were the other factor. This resulted in an extreme incongruity, which one could put up with as long as the attention of the active "individuals" was concentrated on the practical problems of the day and they had no time to devote to philosophical problems. But the calm which ensued in the 'eighties gave those who were capable of thinking enforced leisure for philosophical reflection, and since then, the subjectivist doctrine has been bursting at all its seams, and even falling to pieces, like the celebrated overcoat of Acacii Acacievich. No amount of patching was of any use, and one after another thinking people began to reject subjectivism as an obviously and utterly unsound doctrine. As always happens in such cases, however, the reaction against this doctrine caused some of its opponents to go to the opposite extreme. While some subjectivists, striving to ascribe the widest possible role to the "individual" in history, refused to recognise the historical progress of mankind as a process expressing laws, some of their later opponents, striving to bring out more sharply the coherent character of this progress, were evidently prepared to forget that men make history, and therefore, the activities of individuals cannot help being important in history. They have declared the individual to be a "quantity negligible." In theory, this extreme is as impermissible as the one reached by the more ardent subjectivists. It is as unsound to sacrifice the thesis to the antithesis as to forget the antithesis for the sake of the thesis. The correct point of view will be found only when we succeed in uniting the points of truth contained in them into a synthesis.<sup>1</sup>

This problem has been interesting us for a long time, and we have long wanted to invite our readers to join us in tackling it. We were restrained, however, by certain fears: we thought that perhaps our readers had already solved it for themselves and that our proposal would be belated. These fears have now been dispelled. The German historians have dispelled them for us. We are quite serious in saying this. The fact of the matter is that lately a

<sup>1</sup> In our striving for a synthesis, we were forestalled by the same Mr. Kareyev. Unfortunately, however, he went no farther than to admit the truism that man consists of a soul and a body.

rather heated controversy has been going on among the German historians over great men in history. Some have been inclined to regard the political activities of these men as the main and almost the only spring of historical development, while others have been asserting that such a view is one-sided, and that the science of history must have in view, not only the activities of great men, and not only political history, but historical life as a whole ("das Ganze des geschichtlichen Lebens").

One of the representatives of the latter trend is Karl Lamprecht, author of "The History of the German People," translated into Russian by P. Nikolayev. Lamprecht's opponents accuse him of being a "collectivist" and a materialist; he was even placed on a par with—horrible dictu—the "Social-Democratic atheists," as he expressed it in winding up the debate. When we became acquainted with his views we found that the accusations hurled against this poor savant were utterly groundless. At the same time we were convinced that the present-day German historians were incapable of solving the problem of the role of the individual in history. We then decided that we had a right to assume that the problem was still unsolved even for a number of Russian readers, and that something could still be said about it that would not altogether be lacking in theoretical and practical interest.

Lamprecht gathered a whole collection ("eine artige Sammlung," as he expresses it) of the views of prominent statesmen on their own activities in the historical milieu in which they pursued them; in his polemics, however, he confined himself for the time being to references to some of the speeches and opinions of Bismarck. He quoted the following words, uttered by the Iron Chancellor in the North German Reichstag on April 16, 1869:

"Gentlemen, we can neither ignore the history of the past nor create the future. I would like to warn you against the mistake that causes people to advance the hands of their clocks, thinking that thereby they are hastening the passage of time. My influence on the events I took advantage of is usually exaggerated; but it would never occur to anyone to demand that I should make history. I could not do that even in conjunction with you, although together, we could resist the whole world. We cannot make history: we must wait while it is being made. We will not make fruit ripen more quickly by subjecting it to the heat of a lamp; and if we pluck the fruit before it is ripe we will only prevent its growth and spoil it."

Referring to the evidence of Jouly, Lamprecht also quotes the opinions which Bismarck expressed more than once during the Franco-Prussian war. Again, the idea that runs through these opinions is that "we cannot make great historical events, but must adapt ourselves to the natural course of things and limit ourselves to securing what is already ripe." Lamprecht regards this as the profound and whole truth. In his opinion, a modern historian can-

not think otherwise, provided he is able to peer into the depths of events and not restrict his field of vision to too short an interval of time. Could Bismarck have caused Germany to revert to natural economy? He would have been unable to do this even when he was at the height of his power. General historical circumstances are stronger than the strongest individuals. For a great man, the general character of his epoch is "empirically given necessity."

This is how Lamprecht reasons, calling his view a universal one. It is not difficult to see the weak side of this "universal" view. The above-quoted opinions of Bismarck are very interesting as a psychological document. One may not sympathise with the activities of the late German Chancellor, but one cannot say that they were insignificant, that Bismarck was distinguished for "quietism." It was about him that Lasalle said: "The servants of reaction are no orators; but God grant that progress has servants like them." And yet this man, who at times displayed truly iron energy, considered himself absolutely impotent in face of the natural course of things, evidently regarding himself as a simple instrument of historical development. This proves once again that one can see phenomena in the light of necessity and at the same time be a very energetic statesman.

But it is only in this respect that Bismarck's opinions are interesting; they cannot be regarded as a solution of the problem of the role of the individual in history. According to Bismarck, events occur of themselves, and we can secure what they prepare for us. But every act of "securing" is also an historical event: what is the difference between such events and those that occur of themselves? Actually, nearly every historical event is simultaneously an act of "securing" by somebody of the already ripened fruit of preceding development and a link in the chain of events which are preparing the fruits of the future. How can acts of "securing" be opposed to the natural course of things? Evidently Bismarck wanted to say that individuals and groups of individuals operating in history never were and never will be all-powerful. This, of course, is beyond all doubt. Nevertheless, we would like to know what their power, far from omnipotence, of course, depends on; under what circumstances it grows and under what circumstances it diminishes. Neither Bismarck nor the learned advocate of the "universal" conception of history who quotes him, answers these questions.

It is true that Lamprecht gives us more reasonable quotations<sup>1</sup> For example, he quotes the following words of Monod, one of the most prominent representatives of contemporary historical science in France:

<sup>1</sup> Leaving aside Lamprecht's other philosophical and historical essays, we refer to his essay, "Der Ausgang des geschichtswissenschaftlichen Kampfes," Die Zukunft, 1897, No. 41.

"Historians are too much in the habit of paying attention only to the brilliant, clamorous and ephemeral manifestations of human activity to great events and great men, instead of depicting the great and slow changes of economic conditions and social institutions, which constitute the really interesting and intransient part of human development—the part which, to a certain extent, may be reduced to laws and subjected, to a certain extent, to exact analysis. Indeed, important events and individuals are important precisely as signs and symbols of different moments of the aforesaid development. But most of the events that are called historical have the same relation to real history as the waves which rise up from the surface of the sea, gleam in the light for a moment and break on the sandy shore, leaving no trace behind them, have to the deep and constant motion of the tides."

Lamprecht declares that he is prepared to put his signature to every one of these words. It is well known that German savants are reluctant to agree with French savants and the French are reluctant to agree with the German. That is why the Belgian historian Pirenne was particularly pleased to emphasise in "*Revue Historique*" the fact that Monod's conception of history coincides with that of Lamprecht. "This harmony is extremely significant," he observed. "Evidently it shows that the future belongs to the new conception of history."

We do not share Pirenne's pleasant expectations. The future cannot belong to vague and indefinite views, and such, precisely, are the views of Monod and particularly of Lamprecht. Of course, one cannot but welcome a trend that declares that the most important task of the science of history is to study social institutions and economic conditions. This science will make great progress when such a trend becomes definitely consolidated. In the first place, however, Pirenne is wrong in thinking that this is a new trend. It arose in the science of history as far back as the twenties of the nineteenth century: Guizot, Mignet, Augustin Thierry and, subsequently, Tocqueville and others, were its brilliant and consistent representatives. The views of Monod and Lamprecht are but a faint copy of an old but excellent original. Secondly, profound as the views of Guizot, Mignet and the other French historians may have been for their time, much in them has remained unelucidated. They do not provide a full and definite solution of the problem of the role of the individual in history. And the science of history must provide this solution if its representatives are destined to rid themselves of their one-sided conception of their subject. The future belongs to the school that finds the best solution of this problem, among others.

The views of Guizot, Mignet and the other historians who belonged to this trend were a reaction against the views on history that prevailed in the eighteenth century and constituted their antithesis. In the eighteenth century the students of the philosophy of history reduced everything to the conscious activities of indivi-

duals. True, there were exceptions to the rule even at that time: the philosophical-historical field of vision of Vice, Montesquieu and Herder, for example, was much wider. But we are not speaking of exceptions; the great majority of the thinkers of the eighteenth century regarded history exactly in the way we have described. In this connection it is very interesting to peruse once again the historical works of Mably, for example. According to Mably, Minos created the whole of the social and political life and ethics of the Cretes, while Lycurgus performed the same service for Sparta. If the Spartans "spurned" material wealth, it was due entirely to Lycurgus, who "descended, so to speak, into the depths of the hearts of his fellow-citizens and there crushed the germ of love for wealth." ("descendit pour ainsi dire dans le fond du coeur des citoyens, etc.")<sup>1</sup> And if, subsequently, the Spartans strayed from the path the wise Lycurgus had pointed out to them, the blame for this rests on Lysander, who persuaded them that "new times and new conditions called for new rules and a new policy."<sup>2</sup> Researches written from the point of view of such conceptions have very little affinity with science, and were written as sermons solely for the sake of the moral "lessons" that could be drawn from them. It was against such conceptions that the French historians of the period of the Restoration revolted. After the stupendous events of the end of the eighteenth century it was absolutely impossible to think any longer that history was made by more or less prominent and more or less noble and enlightened individuals who at their own discretion imbued the unenlightened but obedient masses with certain sentiments and ideas. Moreover, this philosophy of history offended the plebian pride of the bourgeois theoreticians. They were prompted by the same feelings that revealed themselves in the eighteenth century in the rise of bourgeois drama. In combating the old conceptions of history, Thierry used the same arguments that were advanced by Beaumarchais and others against the old aesthetics.<sup>3</sup> Lastly the storms which France had just experienced very clearly revealed that the course of historical events was by no means determined solely by the conscious actions of men; this circumstance alone was enough to suggest the idea that these events were due to the influence of some hidden necessity, operating blindly, like the elemental forces of Nature, but in accordance with certain immutable laws. It is an extremely remarkable fact, which nobody, as far as we know, has pointed to before, that the French historians of the period of the Restoration applied the new conception of history as a process conforming to laws most consistently in their works on the French Revolution. This was the case, for example, in the works of Mignet. Chateaubriand called the new

<sup>1</sup> "Ouvres Completes de l'abbé de Mably," London, 1783 (Vol. IV., p. 3, 14-22, 24, at 192).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Compare his first letter on l'Histoire de France with l'Essai sur le genre dramatique sérieux in the first volume of *Ouvres Completes de Beaumarchais*.

school of history fatalistic. Formulating the tasks which it set the investigator, he said: "This system demands that the historian shall describe without indignation the most brutal atrocities, speak without love about the highest virtues and with his glacial eye see in social life only the manifestation of irresistible laws due to which every phenomenon occurs exactly as it inevitably had to occur."<sup>1</sup> This is wrong, of course. The new school did not demand that the historian should be impassive. Augustin Thierry even said quite openly that political passion, by sharpening the mind of the investigator, may serve as a powerful means of discovering the truth. It is sufficient to make oneself only slightly familiar with the historical works of Guizot, Thierry or Mignet to see that they strongly sympathised with the bourgeoisie in its struggle against the lords temporal and spiritual, as well as with its efforts to suppress the demands of the rising proletariat. What is incontrovertible is the following: the new school of history arose in the twenties of the nineteenth century, i.e., when the bourgeoisie had already vanquished the aristocracy, although the latter was still striving to restore some of its old privileges. The proud consciousness of the victory of their class was reflected in all the arguments of the historians of the new school. And as the bourgeoisie was never distinguished for knightly chivalry one can sometimes discern a note of harshness to the vanquished in the arguments of its scientific representatives. "Le plus fort absorbe le plus faible," says Guizot, in one of his polemical pamphlets. "et il est de droit."<sup>2</sup> (The strongest absorbs the weakest, and he has a right to do so.) His attitude towards the working class is no less harsh. It was this harshness, which at times assumed the form of calm detachment, that misled Chateaubriand. Moreover, at that time it was not yet quite clear what was meant when it was said that history conformed to certain laws. Lastly, the new school may have appeared to be fatalistic because, striving firmly to adopt this point of view, it paid little attention to the great individuals in history.<sup>3</sup> Those who had been brought up on the historical ideas of the eighteenth century found it difficult to accept this. Objections to the views of the new historians poured in from all sides and then the controversy flared up, which, as we have seen, has not ended to this day.

<sup>1</sup> Oeuvres Complètes de Chateaubriand, Paris, 1804, p. 58. We also recommend the next page to the reader; one might think that it was written by Mr. N. Mikhailevsky.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. "Consideratious sur l'Histoire de France," appendix to *Recito des temps Menevingiens*, Paris, 1840, p. 72.

<sup>3</sup> In a review of the third edition of Mignet's "History of the French Revolution," Saint-Beuve characterised that historian's attitude towards great men as follows: "In face of the vast and profound popular emotions which he had to describe, and of the impotence and nullity to which the sublimest genius and the saintliest virtue are reduced when the masses arise, he was seized with pity for men as individuals, could see in them, taken in isolation, only their weakness, and would not allow them to be capable of effective action, except through union with the multitude."

In January, 1826, Saint-Beuve, in a review, in the *Globe*, of the fifth and sixth volume of Mignet's "History of the French Revolution," wrote as follows: "At any given moment a man may, by the sudden decision of his will, introduce into the course of events a new, unexpected and changeable force, which may alter that course, but which cannot be measured itself owing to its changeability." It must not be thought that Saint-Beuve assumed that "sudden decisions" of human will occur without cause. No, that would have been too naive. He merely asserted that the mental and moral qualities of a man who is playing a more or less important role in public life, his talent, knowledge, resoluteness or irresoluteness, courage or cowardice, etc., cannot help having a marked influence on the course and outcome of events; and yet these qualities cannot be explained solely by the general laws of development of a nation; they are always, and to a considerable degree, acquired as a result of the action of what may be called the accidents of private life. We will quote a few examples to explain this idea, which, incidentally, seems to me clear enough as it is.

During the war of the Austrian Succession the French Army achieved several brilliant victories and it seemed that France was in a position to compel Austria to cede fairly extensive territory in what is now Belgium; but Louis XV. did not claim this territory because, as he said, he was fighting as a king and not as a merchant, and France got nothing out of the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. If, however, Louis XV. had been a man of a different character, the territory of France would have been enlarged and as a result her economic and political development would have taken a somewhat different course.

As is well known, France waged the Seven Years' War in alliance with Austria. It is said that this alliance was concluded as a result of the strong pressure of Madame Pompadour, who had been extremely flattered by the fact that, in a letter to her, proud Maria-Theresa had called her "cousin" or "dear friend" ("bien bonnie amie"). Hence, one can say that had Louis XV. been a man of stricter morals, or had he submitted less to his favourite's influence, Madame Pompadour would not have been able to influence the course of events that she did, and they would have taken a different turn.

Further, France was unsuccessful in the Seven Years' War: her generals suffered several very shameful defeats. Speaking generally, their conduct was very strange, to say the least. Richelieu engaged in plunder, and Soubise and Broglie were constantly hindering each other. For example, when Broglie was attacking the enemy at Villinghausen, Soubise heard the gunfire, but did not go to his comrade's assistance, as had been arranged, and as he

undoubtedly should have done, and Broglie was obliged to retreat.<sup>1</sup> The extremely incompetent Soubise enjoyed the protection of the aforesaid Madame Pompadour. We can say again that had Louis XV. been less lascivious, or had his favourite refrained from interfering in politics, events would not have turned out so unfavourably for France.

French historians say that there was no need at all for France to wage war on the European continent, and that she should have concentrated all her efforts on the sea in order to resist England's encroachment on her colonies. The fact that she acted differently was again due to the inevitable Madame Pompadour, who wanted to please her "dear friend," Maria-Theresa. As a result of the Seven Years' War, France lost her best colonies, which undoubtedly greatly influenced the development of her economic relations. In this case, feminine vanity appears in the role of the influential "factor" of economic development.

Do we need any other examples? We will quote one more, perhaps the most astonishing one. During the aforesaid Seven Years' War, in August, 1761, the Austrian troops, having united with the Russian troops in Silesia, surrounded Frederick near Striegau. Frederick's position was desperate, but the Allies were tardy in attacking, and General Buturlin, after facing the enemy for twenty days, withdrew his troops from Silesia, leaving only a part of his forces as reinforcements for the Austrian General Laudon. Laudon captured Schweidnitz, near which Frederick was encamped, but this victory was of little importance. Suppose, however, Buturlin had been a man of firmer character? Suppose the Allies had attacked Frederick before he had time to entrench himself? They might have routed him, and he would have been compelled to yield to all the victors' demands. And this occurred barely a few months before a new accidental circumstance, the death of Empress Elizabeth, immediately changed the situation greatly in Frederick's favour. We would like to ask: "What would have happened had Buturlin been a man of more resolute character, or had a man like Suvorov been in his place?"

In examining the views of the "fatalist" historians, Sainte-Beuve gave expression to another opinion which is also worthy of attention. In the aforementioned review of Mignet's "History of the French Revolution," he argued that the course and outcome of the French Revolution were determined not only by the general causes which had given rise to the Revolution, and not only by the passions which in its turn the Revolution had roused, but also by numerous minor phenomena, which had escaped the attention of the investigator, and which were not even a part of social phenomena, properly so called. He wrote:

<sup>1</sup> Incidentally, others say that Broglie was to blame for not waiting for his comrade, as he did not want to share the laurels of victory with him. This makes no difference to us, as it does not alter the case in the least.

"While these passions" (roused by social phenomena) "were operating, the physical and physiological forces of Nature were not inactive; stones continued to obey the law of gravity; the blood did not cease to circulate in the veins. Would not the course of events have changed had Mirabeau, say, not died of fever, had Robespierre been killed by the accidental fall of a brick or by a stroke of apoplexy, or if Bonaparte had been struck down by a bullet? And will you dare to assert that the outcome would have been the same? Given a sufficient number of accidents, similar to those I have assumed, the outcome might have been the very opposite of what, in your opinion, was inevitable. I have a right to assume the probability of such accidents, because they are precluded neither by the general causes of the Revolution nor by the passions roused by these general causes."

Then he goes on to quote the well-known observation that history would have taken an entirely different course had Cleopatra's nose been somewhat shorter; and, in conclusion, admitting that very much more could be said in defence of Mignet's view, he again shows where this author goes wrong. Mignet ascribes solely to the action of general causes results which many other minor, dark and elusive causes had helped to bring about; his stern logic, as it were, refuses to recognise the existence of anything that seems to him to be lacking in order and law.

Are Sainte-Beuve's objections sound? I think they contain a certain amount of truth. But what amount? To determine this we will first examine the idea that a man can "by the sudden decision of his will" introduce a new force into the course of events which is capable of changing their course considerably. We have quoted a number of examples, which, we think, very well explain this. Let us ponder over these examples.

Everybody knows that, during the reign of Louis XV, military affairs went steadily from bad to worse in France. As Henri Martin has observed, during the Seven Years' War, the French Army, which always had numerous prostitutes, tradesmen and servants in its train, and which had three times as many pack horses as saddle horses, had more resemblance to the hordes of Darius and Xerxes than to the armies of Turenne and Gustavus-Adolphus.<sup>1</sup> Archenholtz says in his history of this war that the French officers, when appointed for guard duty, often deserted their posts to go dancing somewhere in the vicinity and obeyed the orders of their superiors only when they thought fit. This deplorable state of military affairs was due to the deterioration of the aristocracy, which, however, continued to occupy all the high posts in the Army, and to the general dislocation of the "old order" which was rapidly drifting to its doom. These general causes alone would have been quite sufficient to make the outcome of the seven years' war unfavourable to France. But undoubtedly the incompetence of generals like Soubise greatly increased the chances of

<sup>1</sup> Histoire de France, 4-eme edition, t. XV., pp. 520-1.



failure for the French Army which these general causes already provided. Soubise retained his post, thanks to Madame Pompadour; and so we must count the proud Marquise as one of the "factors" significantly reinforcing the unfavourable influence of these general causes on the position of French affairs.

The Marquise de Pompadour was strong, not by her own strength, but by the power of the king who was subject to her will. Can we say that the character of Louis XV was exactly what it was inevitably bound to be, in view of the general course of development of social relations in France? No, given the same course of development a king might have appeared in his place with a different attitude towards women. Sainte-Beuve would say that the action of obscure and intangible physiological causes was sufficient to account for this. And he would be right. But if that is so, the conclusion emerges that these obscure physiological causes, by affecting the progress and results of the Seven Years' War, also in consequence affected the subsequent development of France, which would have proceeded differently if the Seven Years' War had not deprived her of a great part of her colonies. Does not this conclusion, we then ask, contradict the conception of a social development conforming to laws?

No, not in the least. The effect of personal peculiarities in the instances we have discussed is undeniable; but no less undeniable is the fact that it would occur only in the given social conditions. After the battle of Rosbach the French became fiercely indignant with Soubise's position. Every day he received numbers of anonymous letters, full of threats and abuse. This very seriously disturbed Madame Pompadour; she began to suffer from insomnia.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, she continued to protect Soubise. In 1762, she remarked in one of her letters to him that he was not justifying the hopes that had been placed in him, but she added: "Have no fear, however, I will take care of your interests and try to reconcile you with the king."<sup>2</sup> As you see, she did not yield to public opinion. Why did she not yield? Probably because French society of that day had no means of compelling her to do so. But why was French society of that day unable to do so? It was prevented from doing so by its form of organisation, which, in turn, was determined by the relation of social forces in France at that time. Hence, it is the relation of social forces which, in the last analysis, explains the fact that Louis XV's character, and the caprices of his favourites, could have such a deplorable influence on the fate of France. Had it not been the King who had a weakness for the fair sex, but the King's cook or groom, it would not have had any historical significance. Clearly, it is not the weakness that is important here, but the social position of the person afflicted with it. The reader will understand that these arguments can be applied to all the above-quoted examples. In these arguments it is necessary to change only what needs changing; for example, to put Russia in

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Memoires de Madame du Haliffet*, Paris, 1824, p. 181.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Lettres de la Marquise de Pompadour*, London, 1772, t. I.

the place of France, Buturlin in the place of Soubise, etc. That is why we will not repeat them.

It follows then that by virtue of particular traits of their character, individuals can influence the fate of society. Sometimes this influence is very considerable; but the possibility of exercising this influence, and its extent, are determined by the form of organisation of society, by the relation of forces within. The character of an individual is a "factor" in social development only where, when, and to the extent that social relations permit it to be such.

We may be told that the extent of personal influence may also be determined by the talents of the individual. We agree. But the individual can display his talents only when he occupies the position in society necessary for this. Why was the fate of France in the hands of a man who totally lacked the ability and desire to serve society? Because such was the form of organisation of that society. It is the form of organisation that in any given period determines the role and, consequently, the social significance that may fall to the lot of talented or incompetent individuals.

But if the role of individuals is determined by the form of organisation of society, how can their social influence, which is determined by the role they play, contradict the conception of social development as a process expressing laws? It does not contradict it; on the contrary, it serves as one of its most vivid illustrations.

But here we must observe the following: The possibility—determined by the form of organisation of society—that individuals may exercise social influence, opens the door to the influence of so-called accident upon the historical destiny of nations. Louis XV's lasciviousness was an inevitable consequence of the state of his physical constitution, but in relation to the general course of France's development the state of his constitution was accidental. Nevertheless, as we have said, it did influence the fate of France and served as one of the causes which determined this fate. The death of Mirabeau, of course, was due to pathological processes which obeyed definite laws. The inevitability of these processes, however, did not arise out of the general course of France's development, but out of certain particular features of the celebrated orator's constitution, but out of the physical conditions under which he had contracted his disease. In relation to the general course of France's development these features and conditions were accidental. And yet, Mirabeau's death influenced the further course of the revolution and served as one of the causes which determined it.

Still more astonishing was the effect of accidental causes in the above-mentioned example of Frederick II., who succeeded in extricating himself from an extremely difficult situation only because of Buturlin's irresolution. Even in relation to the general cause of Russia's development Buturlin's appointment may have been accidental, in the sense that we have defined that term, and, of course, it had no relation whatever to the general course of Prussia's development. Yet it is not improbable that Buturlin's

irresolution saved Frederick from a desperate situation. Had Suvorov been in Buturlin's place, the history of Prussia might have taken a different course. It follows then that sometimes the fate of nations depends on accidents, which may be called accidents of the second degree. "In allem Endlichen ist ein Element des Zufalligen," said Hegel. (In everything finite there are accidental elements). In science we deal only with the "finite"; hence we can say that all the processes studied by science contain some accidental elements. Does not this preclude the scientific cognition of phenomena? No.

Accident is something relative. It appears only at the point of intersection of inevitable processes. For the inhabitants of Mexico and Peru, the appearance of Europeans in America was accidental in the sense that it did not follow from the social development of these countries. But the passion for navigation which possessed West Europeans at the end of the Middle Ages was not accidental; nor was the fact that the European forces easily overcame the resistance of the natives. The consequences of the conquest of Mexico and Peru by Europeans were also not accidental; in the last analysis, these consequences were determined by the resultant of two forces: the economic position of the conquered countries on the one hand, and the economic position of the conquerors on the other. And these forces, like their resultant, can fully serve as objects of scientific investigation.

The accidents of the Seven Years' War exercised considerable influence upon the subsequent history of Prussia. But their influence would have been entirely different at a different stage of Prussia's development. Here, too, the accidental consequences were determined by the resultant of two forces: the social-political conditions of Prussia on the one hand, and the social-political condition of the European countries that influenced her, on the other. Hence, here, too, accidents do not in the least hinder the scientific investigation of phenomena.

We know now that individuals often exercise considerable influence upon the fate of society, but this influence is determined by the internal structure of that society and by its relation to other societies. But this is not all that has to be said about the role of the individual in history. We must approach this question from still another side.

Sainte-Beuve thought that had there been a sufficient number of petty and dark causes of the kind that he had mentioned, the outcome of the French Revolution would have been the opposite of what we know it to have been. This is a great mistake. No matter how intricately the petty, psychological and physiological causes may have been interwoven, they would not under any circumstances have eliminated the great social needs that gave rise to the French Revolution; and as long as these needs remained unsatisfied the revolutionary movement in France would have con-

tinued. To make the outcome of this movement the opposite of what it was, the needs that gave rise to it would have had to be the opposite of what they were; and this, of course, no combination of petty causes would ever be able to bring about.

The causes of the French Revolution lay in the character of the social relations; and the petty causes assumed by Sainte-Beuve could lie only in the personal qualities of individuals. The final cause of social relationships lies in the state of the productive forces. This depends on the qualities of individuals only in the sense, perhaps, that these individuals possess more or less talent for making technical improvements, discoveries and inventions. Sainte-Beuve did not have these qualities in mind. No other qualities, however, enable individuals directly to influence the state of productive forces, and, hence, the social relations which they determine, i.e., economic relations. No matter what the qualities of the given individual may be, they cannot eliminate the given economic relations if the latter conform to the given state of productive forces. But the personal qualities of individuals make them more or less fit to satisfy those social needs which arise out of the given economic relations, or to counteract such satisfaction.

The urgent social need of France at the end of the eighteenth century was the substitution for the obsolete political institutions of new institutions that would conform more to her economic system. The most prominent and useful public men of that time were those who were more capable than others of helping to satisfy this most urgent need. We will assume that Mirabeau, Robespierre and Napoleon were men of that type. What would have happened had premature death not removed Mirabeau from the political stage? The constitutional monarchist party would have retained its considerable power for a longer period; its resistance to the republicans would, therefore, have been more energetic. But that is all. No Mirabeau could, at that time, have averted the triumph of the republicans. Mirabeau's power rested entirely on the sympathy and confidence of the people; but the people wanted a republic, as the Court irritated them by its obstinate defence of the old order. As soon as the people had become convinced that Mirabeau did not sympathise with their republican strivings, they would have ceased to sympathise with him; and then the great orator would have lost nearly all influence, and in all probability would have fallen a victim to the very movement that he would vainly have tried to check. Approximately the same thing may be said about Robespierre. Let us assume that he was an absolutely indispensable force in his party; but even so, he was not the only force. If the accidental fall of a brick had killed him, say, in January, 1793, his place would, of course, have been taken by somebody else, and although this person might have been inferior to him in every respect, nevertheless, events would have taken the same course as they did when Robespierre was alive. For example, even under

these circumstances the Gironde would probably not have escaped defeat; but it is possible that Robespierre's party would have lost power somewhat earlier and we would now be speaking, not of the Thermidor reaction, but of the Floreal, Prairial or Messidor reaction. Perhaps some will say that with his inexorable Terror, Robespierre did not delay but hastened the downfall of his party. We will not stop to examine this supposition here; we will accept it as if it were quite sound. In that case we must assume that Robespierre's party would have fallen not in Thermidor, but in Fructidor, Vendemiaire or Brumaire. In short, it may have fallen sooner or perhaps later, but it certainly would have fallen, because the section of the people which supported Robespierre's party was totally unprepared to hold power for a prolonged period. At all events, results "opposite" to those which arose from Robespierre's energetic action are out of the question.

Nor could they have arisen even if Bonaparte had been struck down by a bullet, let us say, at the Battle of Arcole. What he did in the Italian and other campaigns other generals would have done. Probably they would not have displayed the same talent as he did, and would not have achieved such brilliant victories; nevertheless the French Republic would have emerged victorious from the wars it waged at that time, because its soldiers were incomparably the best in Europe. As for the 18th of Brumaire and its influence on the internal life of France, here too, in essence, the general course and outcome of events would probably have been the same as they were under Napoleon. The Republic, mortally wounded by the events of the 9th of Thermidor, was slowly dying. The Directoire was unable to restore order which the bourgeoisie, having rid itself of the rule of the aristocracy, now desired most of all. To restore order a "good sword," as Sieyes expressed it, was needed. At first it was thought that General Jourdan would serve in this virtuous role, but when he was killed at Novi, the names of Morcau, MacDonald and Bernadotte were mentioned.<sup>1</sup> Bonaparte was only mentioned later: and had he been killed, like Jourdan, he would not have been mentioned at all, and some other "sword" would have been put forward. It goes without saying that the man whom events had elevated to the position of dictator must have been tirelessly aspiring to power himself, energetically pushing aside and ruthlessly crushing all who stood in his way. Bonaparte was a man of iron energy and was remorseless in the pursuit of his goal. But there were not a few energetic, talented and ambitious egoists in those days besides him. The place Bonaparte succeeded in occupying would, probably, not have remained vacant. Let us assume that the other general who had secured this place would have been more peaceful than Napoleon, that he would not have

<sup>1</sup> "La vie en France sous le premier Empire," by de Broc, Paris, 1895, pp. 35-6, et seq.

roused the whole of Europe against himself, and, therefore, would have died in the Tuileries and not on the island of St. Helena. In that case, the Bourbons would not have returned to France at all; for them, such a result would certainly have been the "opposite" of what it was.

In its relation to the internal life of France as a whole, however, this result would have differed little from the actual result. After the "good sword" had restored order and had consolidated the power of the bourgeoisie, the latter would have tired soon of its barrack-room habits and despotism. A liberal movement would have arisen, similar to the one that arose after the Restoration; the fight would have gradually flared up, and as "good swords" are not distinguished for their yielding nature, the virtuous Louis-Philippe would, perhaps, have ascended the throne of his dearly-beloved kinsmen, not in 1830, but in 1820, or in 1825. All such changes in the course of events might to some extent have influenced the subsequent political and, through it, the economic life of Europe. Nevertheless, under no circumstances would the final outcome of the revolutionary movement have been the "opposite" of what it was. Owing to the specific qualities of their minds and characters, influential individuals can change the individual features of events and some of their particular consequences, but they cannot change their general trend, which is determined by other forces.

Furthermore, we must note the following. In discussing the role great men play in history, we nearly always fall victims to a sort of optical illusion, to which it will be useful to draw the reader's attention.

In coming out in the role of the "good sword" to save public order, Napoleon prevented all the other generals from playing this role, and some of them might have performed it in the same way, or almost the same way, as he did. Once the public need for an energetic military ruler was satisfied, the social organisation barred the road to the position of military ruler for all other talented soldiers. Its power became a power that was unfavourable to the appearance of other talents of a similar kind. This is the cause of the optical illusion, which we have mentioned. Napoleon's personal power presents itself to us in an extremely magnified form, for we place to his account the social power which had brought him to the front and supported him. Napoleon's power appears to us to be something quite exceptional because the other powers similar to it did not pass from the potential to the real. And when we are asked, "What would have happened if there had been no Napoleon?" our imagination becomes confused and it seems to us that without him the social movement upon which his power and influence were based could not have taken place.

In the history of the development of human intellect, the success of some individual hinders the success of another individual very much more rarely. But even here we are not free from the

above-mentioned optical illusion. When a given state of society sets certain problems before its intellectual representatives, the attention of prominent minds is concentrated upon them until these problems are solved. As soon as they have succeeded in solving them, their attention is transferred to another object. By solving a problem a given talent A diverts the attention of talent B from the problem already solved to another problem. And when we are asked: What would have happened if A had died before he had solved problem X?—we imagine that the thread of development of the human intellect would have been broken. We forget that had A. died, B, or C, or D might have tackled the problem, and the thread of intellectual development would have remained intact in spite of A's premature demise.

In order that a man who possesses a particular kind of talent may, by means of it, greatly influence the course of events, two conditions are needed. First this talent must make him more conformable to the social needs of the given epoch than anyone else: if Napoleon had possessed the musical gifts of Beethoven instead of his own military genius he would not, of course, have become emperor. Second, the existing social order must not bar the road to the person possessing the talent which is needed and useful precisely at the given time. This very Napoleon would have died as the barely known General, or Colonel, Bonaparte had the old order in France existed another seventy-five years.<sup>1</sup> In 1789, Davout, Desaix, Marmont and MacDonald were subalterns; Bernadotte was a sergeant-major; Hoche, Marceau, Lefebvre, Pichegru, Ney, Massena, Murat and Soult were non-commissioned officers; Augereau was a fencing master; Lannes was a dyer; Gouvion Saint-Cyr was an actor; Jourdan was a peddler; Bessieres was a barber; Brune was a compositor; Joubert and Junot were law students; Kleber was an architect; Martier did not see any military service until the Revolution.<sup>2</sup>

Had the old order continued to exist up to our days it would never have occurred to any of us that in France at the end of the last century, certain actors, composers, barbers, dyers, lawyers, peddlers, and fencing masters had been potential military geniuses.<sup>3</sup>

Stendhal observed that a man who was born at the same time as Titian, i.e., in 1477, could have lived forty years with Raphael, who died in 1520, and with Leonardo da Vinci, who died in 1519;

1 Probably Napoleon would have gone to Russia, where he had intended to go just a few years before the Revolution. Here, no doubt, he would have distinguished himself in action against the Turks or the Caucasian highlanders, but nobody here would have thought that this poor, but capable, officer could, under favourable circumstances, have become the ruler of the world.

2 Cf. *Histoire de France*, V. Dunay, Paris, 1893, t. II., pp. 524-5.

3 In the reign of Louis XV. only one representative of the third estate, Chevert, could rise to the rank of lieutenant-general. In the reign of Louis XVI. it was even more difficult for members of this estate to make a military career. Cf. Rambaud, *"Histoire de la Civilisation Francaise,"* 6th edition, t. II, p. 226.

that he could have spent many years with Corregio, who died in 1534, and with Michelangelo, who lived until 1563; that he would have been no more than thirty-four years of age when Giorgione died; that he could have been acquainted with Tintoretto, Bassano, Veronese, Julian Romano and Andrea del Sarto; that, in short, he would have been the contemporary of all the great painters, with the exception of those who belonged to the Bologna School, which arose a full century later.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, it may be said that a man who was born in the same year as Wouwermann could have been personally acquainted with nearly all the great Dutch painters,<sup>2</sup> and a man of the same age as Shakespeare would have been the contemporary of a number of remarkable playwrights.<sup>3</sup>

It has long been observed that great talents appear everywhere whenever the social conditions favourable to their development exist. This means that every man of talent who actually appears, i.e., every man of talent who becomes a social force, is the product of social relations. Since this is the case, it is clear why talented people can, as we have said, change only individual features of events, not their general trend; they are themselves the product of this trend; were it not for that trend they would never have crossed the threshold that divides the potential from the real.

It goes without saying that there is talent and talent. "When a fresh step in the development of civilisation calls into being a new form of art," rightly says Taine, "scores of talents who only half express social thought appear around one or two geniuses who express it perfectly."<sup>4</sup> If, owing to certain mechanical or physiological causes unconnected with the general course of the social-political and intellectual development of Italy, Raphael, Michelangelo, and Leonardo da Vinci had died in their infancy, Italian art would have been less perfect, but the general trend of its development in the period of the Renaissance would have remained the same. Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo did not create this trend; they were merely its best representatives. True, usually a whole school springs up around a man of genius, and his pupils try to copy his methods to the minutest details; that is why the gap that would have been left in Italian art in the period of the

1 "*Histoire de la Peinture en Italie*," Paris, 1889, pp. 23-5.

2 Terbourg, Brower and Rembrandt were born in 1608; Adrian Van-Ostade and Fedinand Bol were born in 1610; Van der Holst and Gerard Dow were born in 1615; Wouwermann was born in 1620; Werriko, Everdingen and Painaker were born in 1621; Bergham was born in 1624, and Paul Potter in 1629; Jan Steen was born in 1626; Ruissdal and Metsu were born in 1630; Van der Haiden was born in 1637; Hobbema was born in 1638, and Adrian Van der Velde was born in 1639.

3 "Shakespeare, Beaumont, Fletcher, Jonson, Webster, Massinger, Ford, Middleton and Heywood who appeared at the same time, or following each other, represented the new generation which, owing to its favourable position, flourished on the soil which had been prepared by the efforts of the preceding generation." Taine, *"Histoire de la litterature Anglaise,"* Paris, 1863, t. I, p. 468.

4 Taine, *"Histoire de la litterature Anglaise,"* Paris, 1863, t. I, p. 5.

Renaissance by the early death of Raphael, Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci would have strongly influenced many of the secondary features of its subsequent history. But, in essence, there would have been no change in this history, provided there were no important change in the general course of the intellectual development of Italy due to general causes.

It is well known, however, that quantitative differences ultimately pass into qualitative differences. This is true everywhere, and is therefore true in history. A given trend in art may remain without any remarkable expression if an unfavourable combination of circumstances carries away, one after the other, several talented people who might have given it expression. But the premature death of such talented people can prevent the artistic expression of this trend only if it is too shallow to produce new talents. As, however, the depth of any given trend in literature and art is determined by its importance for the class, or stratum, whose tastes it expresses, and by the social role played by that class or stratum, here, too, in the last analysis, everything depends upon the course of social development and on the relation of social forces.

Thus, the personal qualities of leading people determine the individual features of historical events; and the accidental element, in the sense that we have indicated, always plays some role in the course of these events, the trend of which is determined in the last analysis by so-called general causes, i.e., actually by the development of productive forces and the mutual relations between men in the social-economic process of production. Casual phenomena and the personal qualities of celebrated people are ever so much more noticeable than deep-lying general causes. The eighteenth century pondered but little over these general causes, and claimed that history was explained by the conscious actions and "passions" of historical personages. The philosophers of that century asserted that history might have taken an entirely different course as a result of the most insignificant causes; for example, if some "atom" had started playing pranks in one ruler's head (an idea expressed more than once in "*Système de la Nature*").

The adherents of the new trend in the science of history began to argue that history could not have taken any other course than the one it has taken, notwithstanding all "atoms." Striving to emphasise the effect of general causes as much as possible, they ignored the personal qualities of historical personages. According to their argument, historical events would not have been affected in the least by the substitution of some persons for others, more or less capable.<sup>1</sup> But if we made such an assumption then we must admit that the personal element is of no significance whatever in

<sup>1</sup> According to their argument, i.e., when they began to discuss the tendency of historical events to conform to laws. When, however, some of them simply described these phenomena, they sometimes ascribed even exaggerated significance to the personal element. What interests us now, however, are not their description, but their arguments.

history, and that everything can be reduced to the operation of general causes, to the general laws of historical progress. This would be going to an extreme which leaves no room for the particle of truth contained in the opposite opinion.

It is precisely for this reason that the opposite opinion retained some right to existence. The collision between these two opinions assumed the form of an antinomy, the first part of which was general laws, and the second part was the activities of individuals. From the point of view of the second part of the antinomy, history was simply a chain of accidents; from the point of view of the first part it seemed that even the individual features of historical events were determined by the operation of general causes. But if the individual features of events are determined by the influence of general causes and do not depend upon the personal qualities of historical personages, it follows that these features are determined by general causes and cannot be changed, no matter how much these personages may change. Thus, the theory assumes a fatalistic character.

This did not escape the attention of its opponents. Sainte-Beuve compared Mignet's conception of history with that of Bossuet. Bossuet thought that the force which causes historical events to take place comes from above, that events serve to express the divine will. Mignet sought for this force in the human passions, which are displayed in historical events as inexorably and immutably as the forces of Nature. But both regarded history as a chain of phenomena which could not have been different, no matter under what circumstances; both were fatalists; in this respect, the philosopher was not far removed from the priest ("*le philosophe se rapproche du pretre*").

This reproach was justified as long as the doctrine, that social phenomena conformed to certain laws, reduced the influence of the personal qualities of prominent historical individuals to a cipher. And the impression made by this reproach was all the more strong for the reason that the historians of the new school, like the historians and philosophers of the eighteenth century, regarded human nature as a higher instance, from which all the general causes of historical movement sprang, and to which they were subordinated. As the French Revolution had shown that historical events are not determined by the conscious actions of men alone, Mignet and Guizot, and the other historians of the same trend, put in the forefront the effect of the passions, which often rebelled against all control of the mind.

But if the passions are the final and most general cause of historical events, then why is Sainte-Beuve wrong in asserting that the outcome of the French Revolution might have been the opposite of what we know it was if there had been individuals capable of imbuing the French people with passions opposite to those which

had excited them? Mignet would have said: Because other passions could not have excited the French people at that time owing to the very qualities of human nature.

In a certain sense this would have been true. But this truth would have had a strongly fatalistic tinge, for it would have been on a par with the thesis that the history of mankind, in all its details, is predetermined by the general qualities of human nature. Fatalism would have appeared here as the result of the disappearance of the individual in the general. Incidentally, it is always the result of such a disappearance. It is said: "If all social phenomena are inevitable, then our activities cannot have any significance." This is a correct idea wrongly formulated. We ought to say: If everything occurs as a result of the general, then the individual, including my efforts, is of no significance. This deduction is correct; but it is incorrectly employed. It is senseless when applied to the modern conception of history, in which there is room also for the individual. But it was justified in the period of the Restoration.

At the present time, human nature can no longer be regarded as the final and most general cause of historical progress: if it is constant, then it cannot explain the extremely changeable course of history; if it is changeable, then obviously its changes are themselves determined by historical progress. At the present time we must regard the development of productive forces as the final and most general cause of the historical progress of mankind, and it is these productive forces that determine the consecutive changes in the social relations of men. Parallel with this general cause there are particular causes, i.e., the historical situation in which the development of the productive forces of a given nation proceeds and which, in the last analysis, is itself created by the development of these forces among other nations, i.e., the same general cause.

Finally, the influence of the particular causes is supplemented by the operation of individual causes, i.e., the personal qualities of public men and other "accidents," thanks to which events finally assume their individual features. Individual causes cannot bring about fundamental changes in the operation of general and particular causes which, moreover, determine the trend and limits of the influence of individual causes. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that history would have had different features had the individual causes which had influenced it been replaced by other causes of the same order.

Monod and Lamprecht still adhere to the human nature point of view. Lamprecht has categorically, and more than once, declared that in his opinion social mentality is the fundamental cause of historical phenomena. This is a great mistake, and as a result of this mistake the desire, very laudable in itself, to take into account the sum total of social life may lead only to vapid eclecticism or, among the most consistent, to Kablitz's arguments concerning the relative significance of the mind and the senses.

But let us return to our subject. A great man is great not because his personal qualities give individual features to historical events, but because he possesses qualities which make him most capable of serving the great social needs of his time, needs which arose as a result of general and particular causes. Carlyle, in his well-known book on heroes and hero-worship, calls great men beginners. This is a very apt description. A great man is precisely a beginner because he sees further than others and desires things more strongly than others. He solves the scientific problems brought up by the preceding process of intellectual development of society; he points to the new social needs created by the preceding development of social relationships; he takes the initiative in satisfying these needs. He is a hero. But he is not a hero in the sense that he can stop, or change, the natural course of things, but in the sense that his activities are the conscious and free expression of this inevitable and unconscious course. Herein lies all his significance; herein lies his whole power. But this significance is colossal, and the power is terrible.

Bismarck said that we cannot make history and must wait while it is being made. But who makes history? It is made by the social man, who is its sole "factor." The social man creates his own, i.e., social, relationships. But if in a given period he creates given relationships and not others, there must be some cause for it, of course; it is determined by the state of his productive forces. No great man can foist on society relations which no longer conform to the state of these forces, or which do not yet conform to them. In this sense, indeed, he cannot make history, and in this sense he would advance the hands of his clock in vain; he would not hasten the passage of time, nor turn it back. Here Lamprecht is quite right: even at the height of his power Bismarck could not cause Germany to revert to natural economy.

Social relationships have their inherent logic: as long as people live in given mutual relationships they will feel, think and act in a given way, and no other. Attempts on the part of public men to combat this logic would also be fruitless; the natural course of things (i.e., this logic of social relationships) would reduce all his efforts to naught. But if I know in what direction social relations are changing owing to given changes in the social-economic process of production, I also know in what direction social mentality is changing; consequently, I am able to influence it. Influencing social mentality means influencing historical events. Hence, in a certain sense, I can make history, and there is no need for me to wait while it "is being made."

Monod believes that really important events and individuals in history are important only as signs and symbols of the development of institutions and economic conditions. This is a correct although very inexact idea; but precisely because this idea is correct it is wrong to oppose the activities of great men to "the slow progress" of the conditions and institutions mentioned.



The more or less slow changes in "economic conditions" periodically confront society with the necessity of more or less rapidly changing its institutions.

This change never takes place "by itself"; it always needs the intervention of men, who are thus confronted with great social problems. And it is those men who do more than others to facilitate the solution of these problems who are called great men. But solving a problem does not mean being only a "symbol" and a "sign" of the fact that it has been solved.

We think that Monod opposed the one to the other mainly because he was carried away by the pleasant catch-word "slow." Many modern evolutionists are very fond of this catch-word.

Psychologically this passion is comprehensible: it inevitably arises in the respectable milieu of moderation and punctiliousness. . . . But logically it does not bear examination, as Hegel proved.

And it is not only for "beginners," not only for "great" men that a broad field of activity is open. It is open for all those who have eyes to see, ears to hear and hearts to love their neighbours. The concept great is a relative concept. In the ethical sense every man is great who, to use the Biblical phrase, "lays down his life for his friend."

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THE END.

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